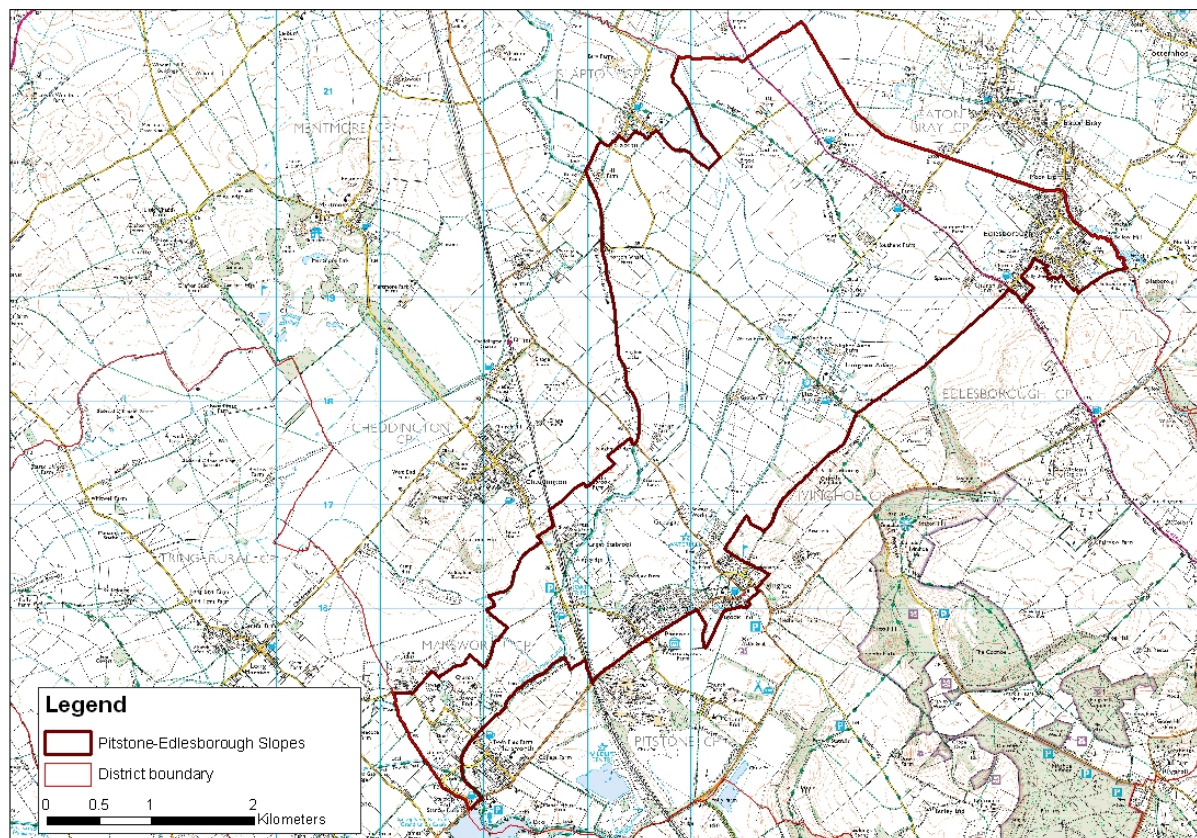
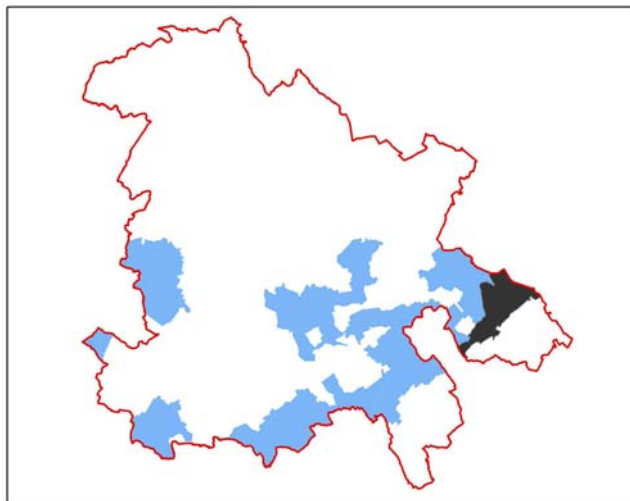


LCA 8.4 Pitstone-Edlesborough Slopes

Landscape Character Type: LCT 8 Vale



LCA 8.4 Pitstone-Edlesborough Slopes (LCT 8)

Key Characteristics

- Area of transition between Foothills and Vale LCAs
- Network of improved drains and streams draining northwards
- Irregular field pattern
- Mixed land use
- Large arable fields around Ivinghoe Aston

Distinctive Features

- Grand Union Canal
- Settlements at Edlesborough, Pitstone and Ivinghoe
- Orchards
- Fish ponds, moated properties and former watermill
- Fragmented ribbon development along the A4146 Leighton Road
- Iron Age, Roman and medieval archaeology
- Ancient co-axial trackways
- Edlesborough Church

Intrusive Elements

- Pylon lines
- West coast mainline railway

Location Broader in the east, defined by the county boundary and stretching between the settlements of Slapton and Edlesborough. To the west the LCA funnels into a narrow corridor between Pitstone and Cheddington extending to the county boundary at Marsworth.

Landscape character The gently undulating landscape lying below the Chiltern Foothills gradually merges into the flat vale landscape to the north. The area is crossed by the west coast mainline railway and the Grand Union Canal. Drained by numerous streams and brooks fed by local springs rising at the interface with the Foothills to the south. Extensive arable field system but with smaller paddocks adjacent to settlements and remnant orchards. Extensive settlements at Pitstone and Edlesborough.

Geology Predominantly Gault clay extending to the chalk formation on the southern boundary. In the east are smaller pockets of greensand as well as deposits of head and alluvium.

Topography The northern part has similar characteristics to the flat vale landscape, however, the land falls gently from south to north. The village of Slapton in the north lies at a level of between 85 – 90m AOD. The boundary with the Foothills LCA to the south broadly follows the 100m AOD contour.

Hydrology To the south of the LCA water courses rise from the chalk foothills and drain northwards across the area to the River Ouzel catchment. One of these, Whistle Brook has been diverted into a channel which runs in a distinctive straight line across the landscape. The south western boundary follows a short section of the Grand Union Canal which also appears to be a source of a number of small feeder streams the course of which disappear into the chalk landscape.

Land use and settlement Predominantly arable land use in the east but with a belt of pastoral land running parallel to the Grand Union Canal to the west. Also groups of pastoral field around settlements. The main settlements are at Edlesborough, Pitstone and Ivinghoe. Elsewhere there are smaller clusters of properties and farmsteads at Lower End (Marsworth), Ivinghoe Aston and along the A4146 corridor between Northall and Church End.

Tree cover Small pockets of broadleaved woodland are associated with the pastoral areas in the west and adjacent to settlements. Willows predominate on the wetter areas, oak and ash on drier ground. Orchards are a distinctive feature found adjacent to the settlements on the A4146.

Biodiversity The principle habitats are a mixture of arable and grassland often in large fields. The distribution is uneven, with grassland being more prevalent in the west. The majority of the grassland is improved, although some unimproved pasture is also present.

The agricultural habitats are enhanced by the hedgerows and orchards and by the broad habitat types of the streams, Grand Union Canal and woodland areas. There are no recorded priority habitat types.

The scale of the fields is smaller closer to some settlements and where this also coincides with the above habitats the biodiversity interest may be greater than elsewhere.

LCA 8.4 Pitstone-Edlesborough Slopes (LCT 8)

Historic environment Many finds of Iron Age and Roman material indicate that this area was extensively settled. Running on a southeast-northwest alignment several co-axial (parallel) roads may be part of a wider system of such ancient trackways linking the Chilterns to the vale. Medieval moated sites are also fairly common, including three scheduled ancient monuments. There is a conservation area at Ivinghoe, which was formerly a small market town, and a prominently situated medieval church at Edlesborough. The core of the area is dominated by parliamentary enclosure land; although there are clusters of pre 18th century fields along the A4146 corridor. Prairie fields and modern enclosures are also dispersed along this corridor as well as along the southern boundary fragmenting the historic field patterns to the east. There are also several surviving examples of orchards which were once an extensive feature of the area.

Designations

Conservation Area at Ivinghoe

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Fishpond, Moat, Barn & Dovecote at Church Farm, Butters Manor moated site, Moated site NE of Ashby Villas,

Archaeological Notification Areas – 18 No.

BNS – 9 No.

LCA 8.4 Pitstone-Edlesborough Slopes (LCT 8)



Edlesborough Church.



Pasture land north of Ivinghoe Aston.

LCA 8.4 Pitstone-Edlesborough Slopes (LCT 8)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

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

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

Guidelines **Conserve and Reinforce**

Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be good. The area is crossed by numerous chalk streams which rise on the foothills to the south running towards the Ouzel catchment to the north. The field pattern and the communication patterns follow a sympathetic alignment. There are few visual detractors and visual unity is held together by the landform and field pattern elements. However, this is breaking down in some parts where loss of hedgerows and field amalgamation are notable. Cultural integrity is variable as although the historic field patterns are fragmented in places there is a wide scatter of historic buildings and archaeological sites. Ecological integrity is moderate because although connectivity is good, the areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance is average compared to other areas. Overall the functional

integrity of the area is considered to be coherent.

Sensitivity

The sense of place is moderate being dissipated over a large area of varying character, a large part of which is open arable farmland. The landform although apparent is not a dominant feature. Tree cover is intermittent, notably an area of old orchards in the north east, along the A4146 corridor. Visibility is moderate particularly from the higher slopes in the south east. Overall the degree of sensitivity is moderate.



Marina on The Grand Union Canal north of Pitstone.

LCA 8.4 Pitstone-Edlesborough Slopes (LCT 8)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Pitstone – Edlesborough Slopes are as follows:

- Restore and reinforce the original field pattern, where practical, including support for initiatives for management and replanting of hedgerows and infilling of gaps.
- Maintain and improve condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Maintain connectivity of habitats.
- Encourage the establishment of new hedgerow trees.
- Consider encouraging the establishment of additional small copses, extending the existing landscape pattern to reduce the impact of visually intrusive elements.
- Where arable farming occurs next to watercourses encourage the creation of buffer strips of grassland and bank side vegetation to provide more diverse habitats enhance the landscape and reduce impact of run off of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers.
- Encourage the conservation and interpretation of the areas rich historic environment including that of the canal.
- Ensure the preservation of archaeological earthworks by maintaining grassland.



Grassland east of the Grand Union Canal at Great Seabrook.