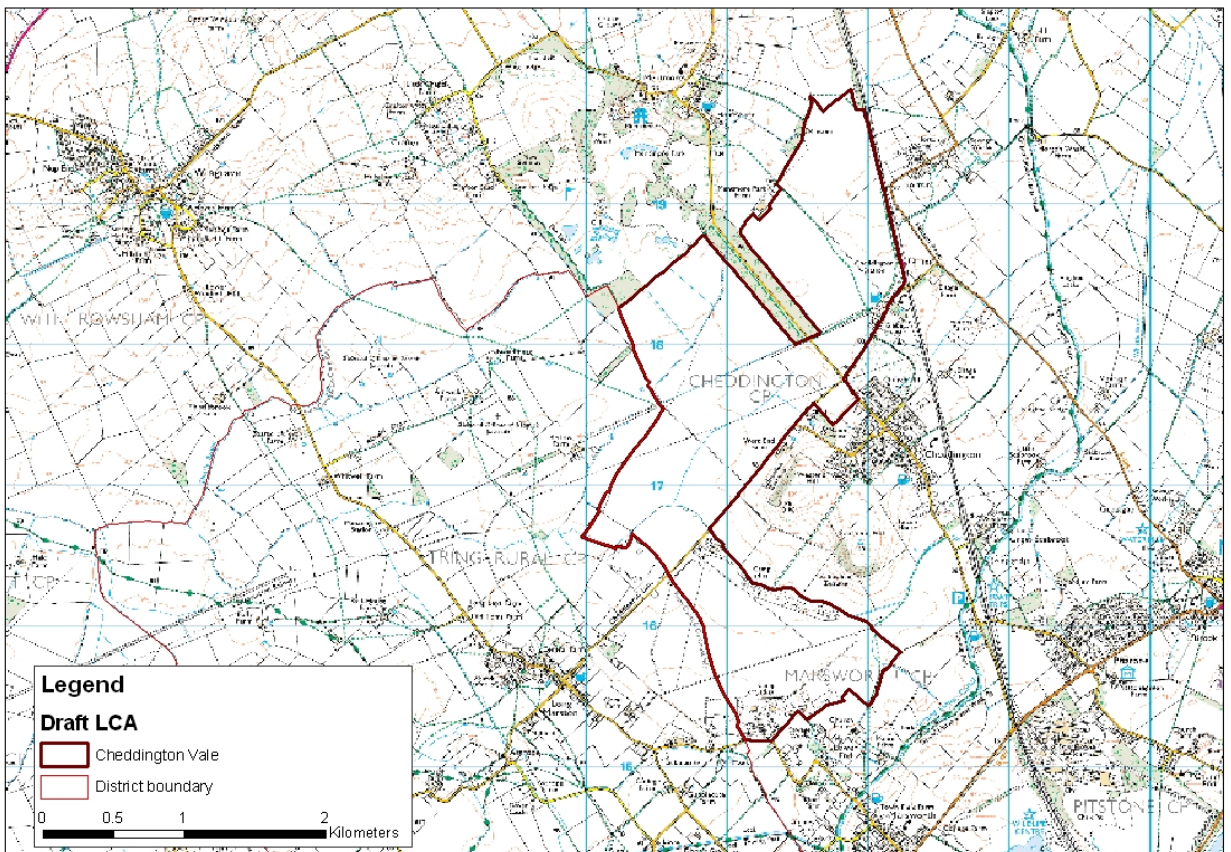
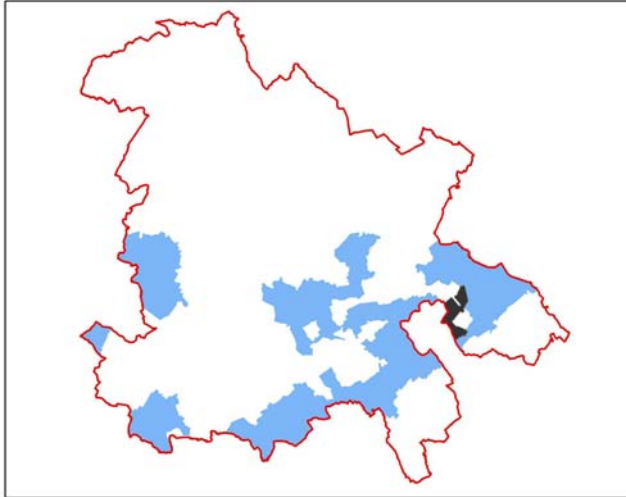


LCA 8.7 Cheddington Vale

Landscape Character Type: LCT 8 Vale



## LCA 8.7 Cheddington Vale (LCT 8)

### Key Characteristics

- Flat clay vale
- Large open arable fields
- Area split visually by the wooded drive of the Mentmore Road
- No discernable woodland cover
- Trimmed hedgerows

### Distinctive Features

- Lack of settlement
- Local roads run in straight lines
- Cheddington crossroads
- Woodland scrub follows line of dismantled railway

### Intrusive Elements

- Cheddington Station and west coast mainline railway
- Pylons
- Industrial use of airfield

**Location** The LCA forms part of the vale landscape to the east of Aylesbury, the continuity being interrupted by a promontory of land at Long Marston located within Hertfordshire. The LCA covers that land between the Mentmore ridge to the north running around the chalk hills of Cheddington to the east and extending to the village of Marsworth in the south.

**Landscape character** A flat vale landscape, the area contains large scale arable fields with sparse tree cover. Loss of hedgerows is an issue. The southern part of the site is occupied by a former airfield where the associated hard standing on the airfield perimeter has been developed for industrial use. The area is generally open and exposed but some scrub woodland is forming on fringes of the airfield where there is no development. The area is overlooked by Mentmore Towers to the north. The west coast mainline railway forms part of the eastern boundary.

**Geology** An area exclusively of Gault clay.

**Topography** The vale landscape is notably flat, remaining fairly constant at a level of approximately 95m AOD over the northern section but falling imperceptibly to approximately 85m AOD at the point where the stream crosses the border with Hertfordshire.

**Hydrology** No known watercourses cross the area other than the stream which forms the common boundary with the Cheddington Hills LCA. This stream crosses the county boundary north of Long Marston before continuing westwards to form part of river Thames catchment.

**Land use and settlement** Predominantly arable land use. The area is not settled other than small group of houses at Cheddington Station.

**Tree cover** Some scrub woodland has developed along the line of the former railway. Generally sparse tree cover with only a few hedgerow trees.

**Biodiversity** The biodiversity of the area is limited by the dominance of arable habitat relieved only by small areas of grassland to the far south and north, a small fragment of broadleaved woodland in the north, the limited amount of aquatic habitat, and hedgerows. The majority of the grassland is improved.

**Historic environment** Primarily prairie field landscape but with a small group of pre 18<sup>th</sup> century field enclosures north of Cheddington. There are a few Roman finds adjacent Cheddington Hill and some listed cottages on the edge of Cheddington.

### Designations

EHRHP&G at Mentmore Towers  
BNS – 1 No.

## LCA 8.7 Cheddington Vale (LCT 8)



Grassland to the west of the west coast mainline railway.



Vale landscape looking west from Cheddington crossroads.

## LCA 8.7 Cheddington Vale (LCT 8)

### Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Poor
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Very weak

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Low</b>
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Insignificant
Tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Moderate

<b>Guidelines</b>	<b>Enhance and Reinforce</b>
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### Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be moderate. The area is low lying flat vale landscape which has been significantly altered by arable intensification and field amalgamation. The south of the area has been previously used as an airfield with consequent loss of field structure. There are a few visual detractors including development at the former airfield site. With the degraded field pattern cultural integrity is poor and arable land use supports a weak ecological integrity in combination with a dominance of improved grassland and lack of designated sites. Overall the functional integrity is stated as being very weak.

### Sensitivity

Sense of place is weak, suffering from loss of field pattern and lack of distinctiveness. Landform is insignificant and tree cover is poor. In the north, much of the character is derived from the strength of the parkland which lies on the ridge that defines the northern boundary but which lies outside the area. The other boundaries to the area lack distinctiveness. Visibility is moderate due to the open nature of the area. Overall the degree of sensitivity is low.



View west from Cheddington Station over large arable fields with clipped hedgerows.

## LCA 8.7 Cheddington Vale (LCT 8)

### Landscape Guidelines Enhance and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Cheddington Vale are as follows:

- Restore and enhance 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.
- Encourage the establishment of new hedgerow trees.
- Encourage planting of new woodlands and hedgerow trees particularly to reduce the visual impact of intrusive elements.
- Encourage the development of native vegetation.
- 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.



Large arable field between Cheddington Station and Mentmore Ridge.