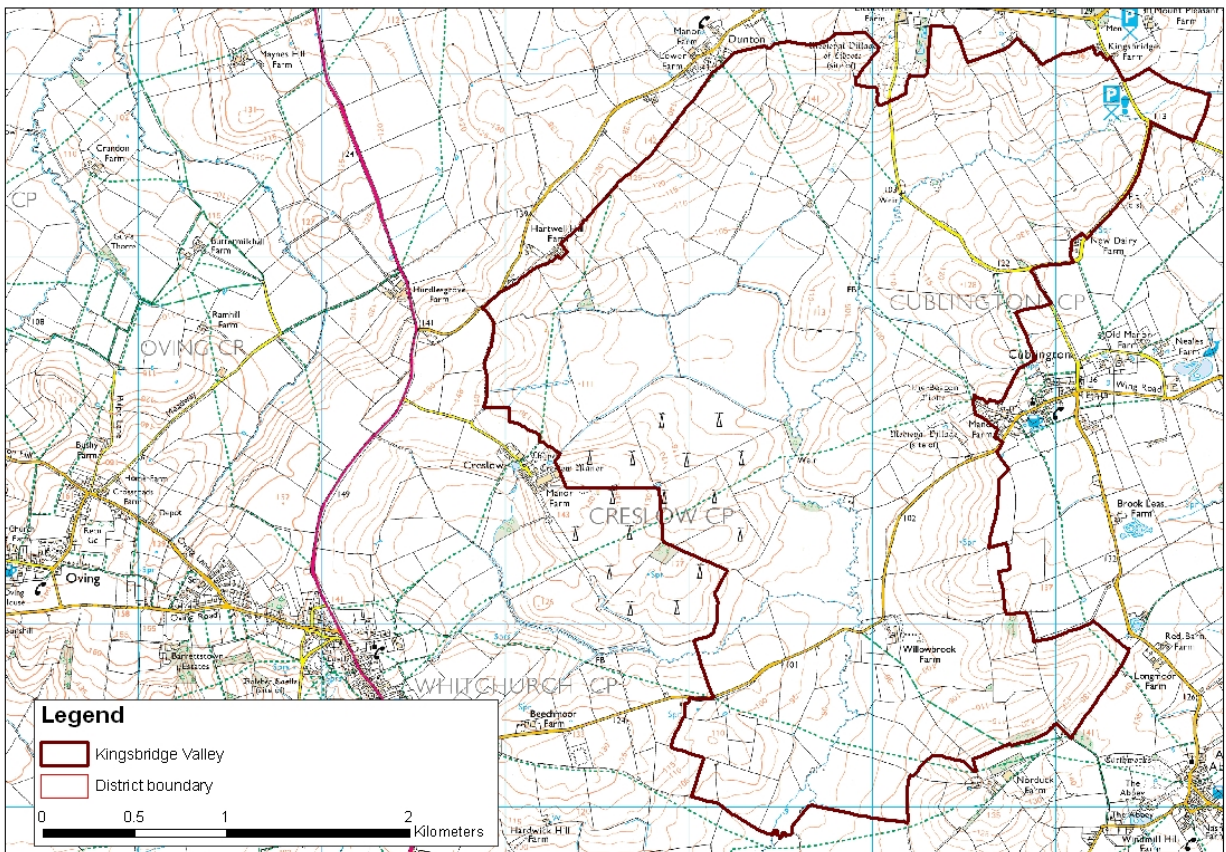
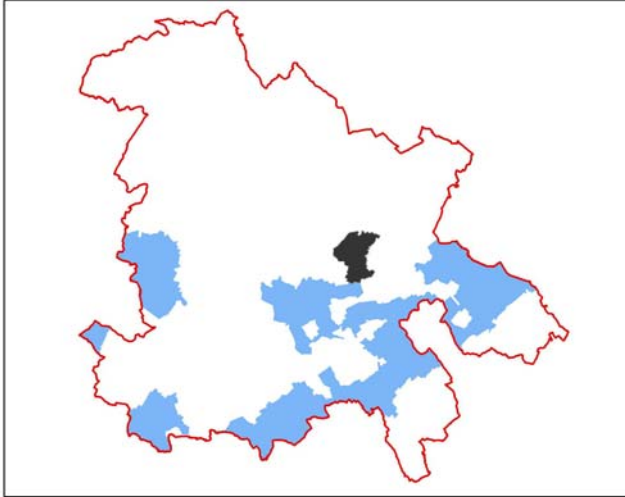


LCA 8.2 Kingsbridge Valley

Landscape Character Type: LCT 8 Vale



## LCA 8.2 Kingsbridge Valley (LCT 8)

### Key Characteristics

- Wide shallow valley with well defined edges
- Gently rolling landform containing local ridges and shallow hills
- Meandering stream fed by local ditches and tributaries
- Valley crossed by local roads
- Predominantly arable land use
- Large open fields with clipped hedges
- Remoteness
- Lack of woodland cover
- Pastoral land use on upper reaches of the valley

### Distinctive Features

- Small pockets of willow scrub along stream alignment
- Car park and picnic site at Kingsbridge
- Historic earthworks at Cublington
- Ridge and furrow at Creslow
- Smaller parcels of grazing land south of Kingsbridge Farm
- Large areas of arable habitat
- Pre 18<sup>th</sup> century and parliamentary fields

**Location** The LCA lies to the east of Whitchurch within a valley that curves gently around the village of Cublington.

**Landscape character** The rolling landform contains a winding valley with local tributaries cut from the adjoining claylands. There is a meandering stream in the valley bottom identified by the associated mature willow and scrub. The land is predominantly in arable use with large fields and some clipped hedges. No development is present in the valley bottom. The area is remote but overlooked by isolated farmsteads around edges of valley. Land use changes to pasture on the upper fringes especially adjacent to farmsteads and settlements. A picnic site and car parking is available south of Kingsbridge Farm.

**Geology** A small local valley cut out of Kimmeridge clay. The top edges of the valley are capped with Gault clays and glacial deposits. The erosion of the valley has exposed some local calcareous outcrops. There are head deposits on the western flank of the valley with alluvium along the valley floor.

**Topography** The stream passes under the road running south from Kingsbridge Farm. The level of the road being at 112m AOD. The stream falls to a level of 90m AOD at the southern boundary of the area. The sides of the valley rise to 150m AOD to the west and approximately 138m AOD at Cublington to the east.

**Hydrology** The stream that flows down the Kingsbridge valley rises from land to the west of Stewkley picking up a few other minor tributaries from the enclosing valley to the north and west, and drains south into the catchment of the river Thames.

**Land use and settlement** Predominantly arable land use but with some pasture land on the upper slopes of the valley. Generally unsettled with exception of the farmstead at Willowbrook Farm.

**Tree cover** There is no significant woodland cover other than small groups of willow following the stream alignment.

**Biodiversity** The range of habitats is limited in this LCA due to the heavy concentration of arable farming throughout. This dominance is relieved by some grassland around the fringes of the area, most of which is improved; and a few small fragments of woodland habitat, several of which are adjacent to the small watercourses providing the principal aquatic habitat – there are also some ponds. The stream and hedgerow network provide habitat connectivity, although the value of some hedges may be reduced by the clipping regime.

The single CWS at Cublington motte is very interesting comprising a hedge-bound field with a matrix of dry and damp unimproved grassland. The marshy grassland, set in shallow ditches, supports a wide range of grasses including species unusual in Buckinghamshire and is noted for dragonflies, butterflies and grasshoppers.

**Historic environment** The historic landscape is a mixture of pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure land in the west and south with parliamentary enclosure land in the north and east. There is no settlement of note. There are several areas of well preserved ridge & furrow, including fine examples around Creslow which occupy a large and now sub-divided late medieval great field.

## LCA 8.2 Kingsbridge Valley (LCT 8)

However, the most notable archaeological site is the earthworks of a deserted settlement and motte and bailey castle to the west of Cublington. An excavation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century indicated that the remains of medieval village earthworks are within the bailey. It is thought that this also included a church and associated graveyard which eventually moved to its present position in Cublington village around 1400 AD. There is also a Roman villa site to the north east of Creslow. The area is also associated with archaeology from more recent times as the hill at Creslow was once the location for a radio transmitter station built during the Second World War.

The station operated until the early 1990s and was decommissioned, the masts that were once a characteristic of the landscape have been demolished. The only surviving part of the complex is a solitary building.

There are a couple of promoted routes that run through the area.

### ***Designations***

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Deserted Village  
Archaeological Notification Areas – 8 No.  
CWS – 1 No.

## LCA 8.2 Kingsbridge Valley (LCT 8)



The Kingsbridge Valley looking west.



Mature trees adjacent to water course.

## LCA 8.2 Kingsbridge Valley (LCT 8)

### Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Strongly unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak
<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Very weak
Landform:	Dominant
Tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Very high
<b>Guidelines</b>	<b>Conserve and Enhance</b>

### Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be moderate. The valley which is sparsely settled constitutes a tributary of the River Thames however, the configuration of the landform enables a sense of visual containment and separates the valley from the vale landscape. The intrinsic rural character of the area with few visual detractors supports the assessment that the pattern of elements and the visual amenity are strongly unified. Cultural integrity overall is variable despite some loss of field pattern and encroachment of 20<sup>th</sup> century fields there are good examples of historic fields, ridge and furrow and archaeological earthworks. Ecological integrity is weak despite strong connectivity, due to the low areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Functional integrity is weak.

### Sensitivity

Arable intensification and lack of tree cover have diluted the distinctiveness of the area. Continuity is also dissipated and consequently sense of place is very weak. The dominance of the landscape lies in the landform. The lack of tree cover, other than the willow scrub which follows the stream alignment, ensures high visibility and long distance views across the valley. Overall the sensitivity is considered to be moderate.



Rustic bridge over stream.

## LCA 8.2 Kingsbridge Valley (LCT 8)

### Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Enhance

The landscape guidelines for Kingsbridge Valley are as follows:

- Promote management of hedgerows by traditional cutting regimes and establishment of new hedgerow trees.
- Encourage the establishment of small areas of woodland and groups of hedgerow trees.
- Encourage the establishment of a buffer zone of semi-natural vegetation along the watercourse to enhance biodiversity, interconnecting and landscape quality.
- Encourage landowners to enhance biodiversity by adopting varied land maintenance regimes to benefit landscape and habitats.
- Encourage the conservation and interpretation of the historic heritage.
- Encourage a policy of low density, low impact development to ensure that the valley retains its qualities of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Encourage the development of new footpath links especially in the north of the area.
- Encourage the preservation of historic earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining a continuous grass sward and do not allow bare patches of soil to develop.



Picnic site at Kingsbridge Farm (Managed by Buckinghamshire County Council).