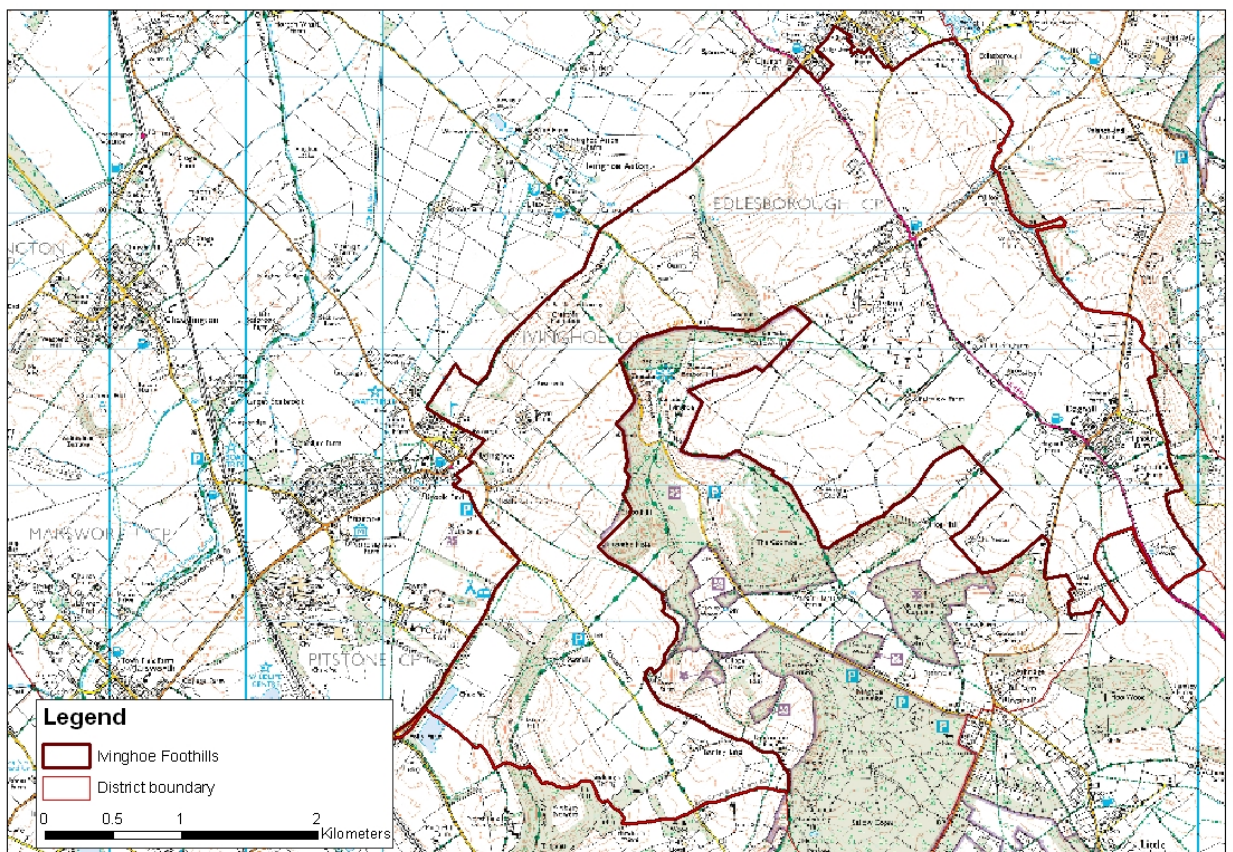
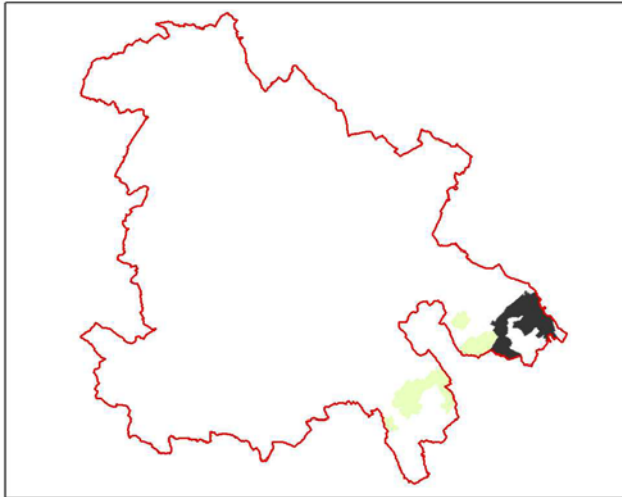


LCA 10.2 Ivinghoe Foothills

Landscape Character Type: LCT 10 Chalk Foothills



LCA 10.2 Ivinghoe Foothills (LCT 10)

Key Characteristics

- Chalk foothills
- Steep sided dry valleys
- Chalk outliers
- Large open arable fields
- Network of local roads
- Scattering of small parcels of scrub woodland
- Long distance views over the vale
- Smaller parcels of grazing land adjacent to settlements

Distinctive Features

- Redundant chalk pits
- Pitstone Hill
- Coombe Bottom Valley
- Hemel Hempstead Gap
- Settlement at Dagnall
- Setting of Ivinghoe Beacon hillfort
- Icknield Way
- Ancient co-axial trackways
- Road junction on the A4146 and Tring Road
- Calcareous grassland

Intrusive Elements

- Chalk quarrying
- Pylon line
- Traffic on A4146

Location An extensive area of land which surrounds the Ivinghoe Beacon including the chalk pit at Pitstone Hill to the west and the Hemel Hempstead Gap to the east. The eastern and western boundaries are determined by the County boundary with Hertfordshire.

Landscape character The LCA comprises chalk foothills including dry valleys and lower slopes below the chalk scarp. Also included is part of the former chalk pits at Pitstone and at Ivinghoe Aston. The landscape is one of gently rounded chalk hills with scrub woodland on steeper slopes, and predominantly pastoral use elsewhere with some arable on flatter slopes to the east. At Dagnall the A4146 follows the gap cut into the Chilterns scarp. The LCA is generally sparsely settled other than at the Dagnall Gap. The area is crossed by the Ridgeway long distance footpath (to the west). The steep sided valley at Coombe Hole has been eroded by spring.

Geology The foothills are made up of three layers of chalk. The west Melbury marly chalk overlain by a narrow layer of Melbourn Rock which in turn is overlain by Middle Chalk. The highest parts of the area are overlain glacial head deposits.

Topography The area generally falls from the Chilterns scarp in the south to the gently sloping area of LCA 8.4 Pitstone-Edlesborough Slopes in the north. From Beacon Hill the contours fall away steeply in places to the west, north and east. There is a fall of approximately 50m, typically between 100m AOD and 150m AOD in the north. Pitstone Hill is a distinctive local landmark with its steep northern edge made to look even steeper by the quarry face excavated into its north and eastern flank.

Dagnall stands at the topographical watershed in the Hemel Hempstead Gap. The settlement lies at a level of 135m AOD. To the north the valley widens out dropping to a level of approximately 110m AOD at Willow Farm on the northern boundary at Edlesborough. The south of the Gap narrows and the valley sides become steeper however, the valley passes out of the district a short distance south of the settlement. There is a small group of shallow chalk outliers at the northern corner of the area notably south of Edlesborough.

Hydrology There are a number of springs that rise within this area and drain off to the north notably at Coombe Bottom and at Willow Farm on the eastern boundary to the area. The Hemel Hempstead Gap sits within a dry valley in the Chilterns. Part of Pitstone Quarry lies within the area. The pit contains a permanent water body.

Land use and settlement Predominantly arable land use with small fields of grassland around Pitstone and Dagnall settlements and a scattering of scrub and broadleaved woodland. Dagnall is the largest settlement elsewhere there are dispersed farmsteads.

Tree cover Small pockets of scrub woodland, mainly hawthorn and blackthorn are dispersed over the area occurring on the steepest slopes. Beech woodland is present at Goldings Spring in the south and west of Dagnall.

Biodiversity The habitat of the area is largely arable however significant amounts of grassland and some broadleaved woodland, a broad habitat type, and of scrub woodland are also present throughout. Most of the

LCA 10.2 Ivinghoe Foothills (LCT 10)

grassland is improved, but areas of unimproved grassland are scattered throughout. A block of the priority habitat type lowland calcareous grassland is found in the south at Pitstone Hill SSSI and some calcareous grassland – abroad habitat type is also present in the centre of the LCA and is the subject of a BNS. Two areas of chalk quarry in the south and centre of the area also form part of the landscape.

A small part of the chalk downland Ivinghoe Hills SSSI is included within the area but is more extensive in the neighbouring LCA 11.1A.

Aquatic habitats are limited except for the springs and part of the open standing water - a broad habitat type, within Pitstone Quarry (the remainder is within LCA 10.3.) Although hedgerows are not strong throughout, habitat connectivity is also provided by the proximity and relationship between the non arable habitats.

Historic environment The area is traversed by the Icknield Way (a supposed prehistoric trackway) and overlooked by the Late Bronze Age hillfort on Ivinghoe Beacon. Running on a southeast-northwest alignment are several co-axial roads (parallel) which may be part of a wider system of such ancient trackways linking the Chilterns to the Vale. There are a scattering of cropmark sites and findspots indicative of later prehistoric, Roman and Saxon occupation. The only listed buildings are a small cluster in Dagnall, including an unusual mid-19th century mission room and day school in Italian basilican style. There are pre 18th century enclosures to the north and south of Dagnall and parliamentary enclosure east of Ivinghoe. Elsewhere the landscape is fragmented by mineral extraction and extensive prairie fields along northern boundary and south at Pitstone Hill and modern field patterns east of Ivinghoe Beacon.

Designations

Chilterns AONB
Archaeological Notification Areas – 15 No.
SSSI: Pitstone Hill, Ivinghoe Hills
BNS –11No.

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Coombe Bottom seen from the Chiltern scarp.



The Pitstone chalk quarry seen from Pitstone Hill. The quarry is very prominent in this view.

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Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition **Very good**

Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Strong

Sensitivity **High**

Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Guidelines **Conserve**

Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. There is a transition across the area between the lower slopes to the northwest and the steep scarp at Ivinghoe which divides the area into two aspects. The general pattern of elements is considered to be coherent however, at the west end of the area the site has been quarried for chalk and the disturbed character remains. Cultural integrity is variable, the landscape having lost some of its integrity through field amalgamation and hedgerow removal, there are few historic buildings but moderate archaeological interest. Ecological integrity is strong due to good connectivity and relatively large areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Overall the functional integrity is strong.

Sensitivity

The area has a distinctive character based on the chalk landform rising steeply across the area. Overall the sense of place is considered to be moderate. The degree of visibility increased with elevation above the lower slopes to the north. Tree cover is intermittent. Overall the degree of sensitivity is considered to be high.



The Junction of Tring Road and Leighton Road is in a woodland setting.

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Landscape Guidelines Conserve

The landscape guidelines for Ivinghoe Foothills are as follows:

- Conserve the existing network of hedgerows and mature tree cover.
- Encourage the replanting of mature hedgerows to fill gaps and replace losses.
- Conserve the balance between existing agricultural use and management of grassland for ecological interest.
- Preserve the character of narrow winding lanes.
- Restore the land use to agricultural use at Pitstone Chalk Pit.
- Maintain the condition and extent of lowland calcareous, unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible.
- Maintain and improve connectivity of habitats.
- Consider the establishment of new woodlands especially where they will provide mitigation for visually intrusive elements.
- Encourage arable reversion or minimum cultivation to protect buried archaeological remains.



Wide sweep of pasture below the scarp.