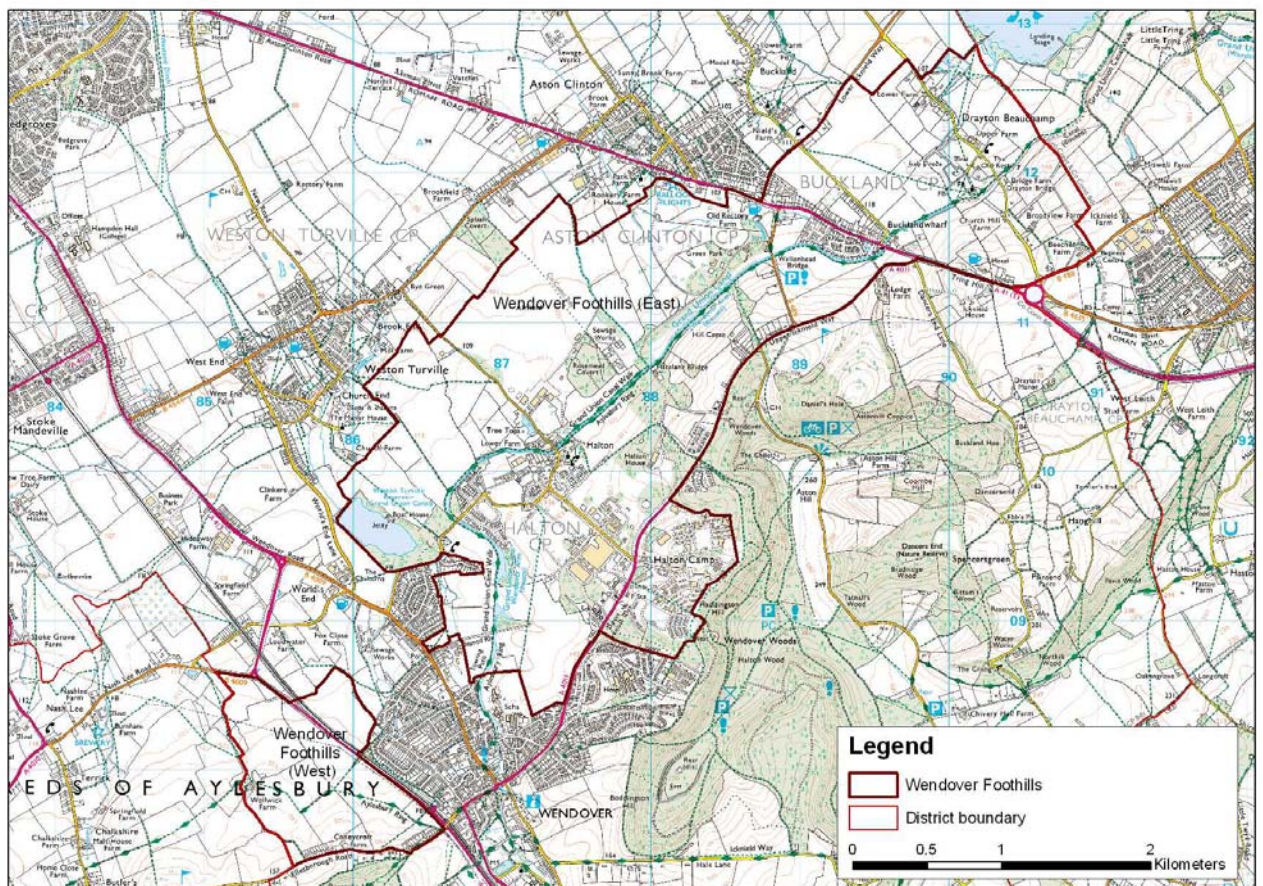
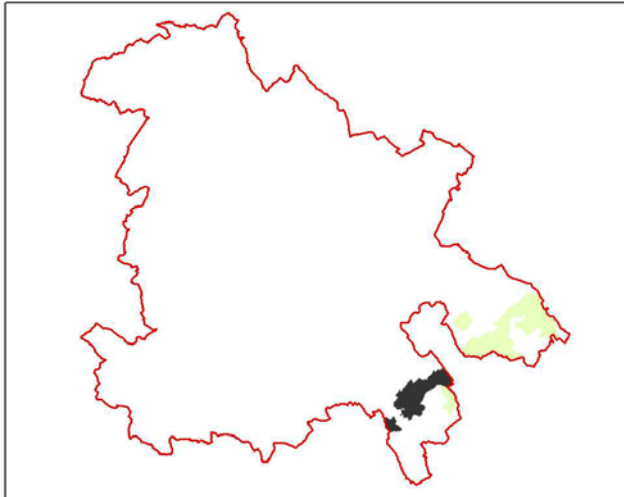


LCA 10.4 Wendover Foothills

Landscape Character Type: LCT 10 Chalk Foothills



LCA 10.4 Wendover Foothills (LCT 10)

Key Characteristics

- Gently sloping landform rising steeply to the south
- Transition from open arable fields in the north to more wooded landscape in the south
- Loss of field pattern and structure in the south
- Extensive areas of development adjacent to Halton within woodland setting
- Settlement of Wendover lies within a gap in the Chilterns and interrupts continuity of the area
- Village of Drayton Beauchamp

Distinctive Features

- Airfield and training camp at RAF Halton
- Parkland at Green Park
- House and Gardens at Halton House
- Weston Turville Reservoir
- Grand Union Canal - Wendover Arm
- Fen

Intrusive Elements

- Chilterns railway west of Wendover
- Wendover bypass
- Pylon line
- Large scale buildings, hangars and sewage works at RAF Halton
- Loss of field pattern/structure at site of airfield

Location The area extends in a broad band running across the District at the base of the Chilterns escarpment as far northwards as Weston Turville and Aston Clinton and beyond into Hertfordshire¹. This description refers only to the area within Buckinghamshire. The Wendover Gap (LCA 13.1) interrupts the continuity of the LCA, which is divided between a larger area northeast of Wendover and a smaller segment to the west.

Landscape character The LCA is an area of transition between the flat landscapes of the Aylesbury Vale and the Chiltern Scarp, characterised by rising ground and mixed land uses widely seen from the north in association with the narrower Chiltern Scarp above. The area is open to the north but on the southern boundaries merges into a wooded landscape.

Geology Lower chalk merging into the Gault clay of the vale landscape to the north.

Topography The northern fringes lie at approximately 95m AOD rising to a range of heights varying between 140 to 160m AOD at the base of the scarp. The tree cover on the southern fringe of the area camouflages the sharp change of slope between the scarp face and the foothills.

Hydrology The area is crossed by a number of streams emanating from springs in the lower chalk. There are a number of manmade features which carry or contain water, these being the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal and the Weston Turville Reservoir, built to supply the canal. The Wendover Arm ends in the centre of Wendover and dries out at Drayton Beauchamp to the east.

Land use and settlement Agricultural land use is arable farming - the dominant feature on the lower slopes but becoming fragmented by other uses on the upper slopes. The large fields to the north change shape becoming long and narrow as they climb over higher ground. Notable features such as the extensive accommodation, sports and training facilities at RAF Halton, the associated airfield and the notable parkland areas at Green Park and around Halton House disrupt the continuity of the field pattern.

The settlement of Wendover lies within the Wendover Gap isolating a fragment of the foothills to the west of the town. Aston Clinton, which lies on the Roman Road of Akeman Street, also separates a section of the foothills. Between Aston Clinton and the District boundary the area retains its agricultural land use and provides the setting to the villages of Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp. Green Park situated to the south of Aston Clinton is an extensive area of woodland and parkland.

Tree cover The open fields of the vale merge gradually into the wooded lower slopes of the Chilterns scarp at Halton. There are significant blocks of woodland at Weston Turville Reservoir and around RAF Halton. The trees at Halton merge into the well-wooded slopes of the chalk scarp.

At Green Park there is extensive woodland cover, incorporating a wide range of ornamental trees. The woodland merges into parkland to the north and is defined by the canal to the south. The line of the canal can be distinguished elsewhere by groups of mature poplar found along its length.

¹ See 'Tring Gap Foothills' in the 'Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment' available at www.hertsdirect.gov/infobase/docs/pdfstore/Area_113pdf

LCA 10.4 Wendover Foothills (LCT 10)

The historic landscapes at Halton House are English Heritage Registered Parks and Gardens of Grade II.

Biodiversity Parkland and the broad habitat type of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland, form a significant component of the eastern section of the Wendover Foothills. The remaining areas are dominated by a mixture of arable and grassland habitat. Although most of the grassland is improved a small area of neutral grassland can be found in the southwest of the eastern section.

Additional habitat diversity is provided by patches of fen found in the west of the eastern section, and the open standing water – a broad habitat type, which is scattered throughout the eastern section, a large area of which forms Weston Turville Reservoir SSSI and the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal which threads through the area and provides excellent connectivity between habitats both within and beyond the LCA including the Tring Reservoirs SSSI to the northeast in Hertfordshire.

The only priority habitat type is the parkland associated with Green Park which has a wide species range and condition, and at Halton. There are numerous BNS within this LCA but all within the eastern part which is the most interesting from a biodiversity perspective. .

Historic environment The historic landscape in this area is diverse. There are small dispersed parcels of pre 18th century irregular enclosure on the fringes of the LCA northeast of Wendover. However the dominant characteristics are the parkland landscapes and the military base and infrastructure associated with Halton RAF base. The landscape that forms Green Park training centre (south of Aston Clinton) was at one time Aston Clinton park, containing the mansion of Anthony de Rothschild. The building was demolished c. 1960 however some of the parkland features still remain. Field fences and sports grounds etc have been superimposed onto the original landscape. The Rothschild family were also responsible for the construction of Halton House, a 19th century park and garden designed for Alfred de Rothschild. Halton House is a Grade II* listed building and much of the surrounding formal gardens still survive, while the extensive parkland landscape extends into the military base. The house and grounds were taken over by the RAF in 1919 and is used today as the officers' mess.

The association with the military extends to the establishment of Halton camp, the base has a history dating back to the First World War. Recent surveys at Halton have given greater appreciation and understanding of its early history, and there are later structures in the camp, which may date to the Cold War. There are military buildings dating to the 1920s and 1930s including the Groves and Anderson Barracks which are worthy of listing. Other military infrastructure is the grass airfield of Aston Clinton which dates to the 1950s and is still in use as a training airfield for air cadets.

The remaining landscape is made up of a mosaic of fields and woodland; the majority to the north of the area are parliamentary enclosures although these are of varying quality, there are a number of prairie fields around the fringes of the LCA and larger parcels of 20th century enclosure south of Drayton Beauchamp.

Besides the military infrastructure of Halton camp and Halton house the settlements of Drayton Beauchamp, Buckland, Weston Turville and Halton are designated as conservation areas. These all contain a number of listed buildings including the Grade I church of St Mary at Drayton Beauchamp.

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In terms of the archaeology the area has a number of sites, most notably, the earthworks of the medieval manor and fishponds at Drayton Beauchamp. To the south west of the settlement of Halton there is evidence for a former medieval manor. The landscape has a number of important communication routes, not least the Roman road of Akeman Street (the A41) which runs diagonally through the western end of the area. The landscape also possesses some industrial heritage, in form of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal which was built in the late eighteenth early 19th century. As part of the canal infrastructure the reservoir at Weston Turville was created to provide water for the canal, making it one of the oldest reservoirs in Buckinghamshire. The 20th century saw the construction of the Wendover to Halton railway, this was a narrow gauged railway built during the WWI to transport troops and supplies from Halton camp to the main railway at Wendover.

This area has a high amenity value, with the presence of a number of promoted routes the most notable being the popular Wendover canal towpath walk. The reservoir at Weston Turville is now a boating lake and angling club.

Designations

Chilterns AONB

Conservation Areas at Weston Turville, Buckland, Drayton Beauchamp (3) and Halton

EHRHP&G at Halton House

Archaeological Notification Areas – 7 No.

SSSI: Tring Reservoir, Weston Turville Reservoir

CWS – 2 No.

BNS – 17 No.

LCA 10.4 Wendover Foothills (LCT 10)



Fields below Halton with canal towpath to the right.



Looking west across a large arable field to the foot of the Chilterns Scarp (LCA 11.1).

LCA 10.4 Wendover Foothills (LCT 10)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Very good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Very strong

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

Guidelines **Conserve and Reinforce**

Condition

Generally the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. There is a transition within the LCA between the open field pattern in the north to the wooded upper slopes further south. This is more pronounced to the east of Wendover and less so to the west. The general pattern of elements is considered to be coherent and there are few detracting features, the most prominent being concentrated around RAF Halton. Cultural integrity is good, despite some of the fields having been modified by agricultural intensification of the lower slopes; the landscape contains the nationally important park and garden of Halton House and potentially important former military infrastructure at Halton RAF Camp. Ecological integrity is strong due to good connectivity, and large areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance compared to

other areas. Overall the functional integrity is very strong.

Sensitivity

The area has a distinctive transitional character, which describes the change between the vale landscapes to the north and the Chilterns Hills. Overall the sense of place is considered to be moderate. The degree of visibility increases as the land level rises towards the south providing panoramic views over the vale landscape to the north. The overall degree of sensitivity is moderate.



Weston Turville reservoir.

LCA 10.4 Wendover Foothills (LCT 10)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

Guidelines for the Wendover Foothills are as follows:

- Conserve the existing field pattern.
- Maintain and improve condition of existing hedgerows by traditional cutting regimes and ‘gapping up’ of hedgerows.
- Encourage planting of new woodlands on the lower slopes.
- Reinforce the hedgerow network by planting new hedgerow trees.
- Screen the edges of existing and new development by planting new hedges and reinforcing existing belts of vegetation.
- Maintain the condition and extent of calcareous, improved and semi-improved grassland.
- Encourage traditional management by grazing.
- Maintain connectivity of habitats.
- Maintain extent and condition of fen and parkland habitats.
- Encourage landowners to improve ecological diversity through varied land management regimes.
- Encourage the establishment of buffer zones consisting of semi-natural vegetation along the Grand Union Canal.
- Encourage some of the restoration of Aston Clinton Park.
- Undertake further work to investigate the structures within Halton Camp to assess their importance.



One of several mature avenues at Halton.