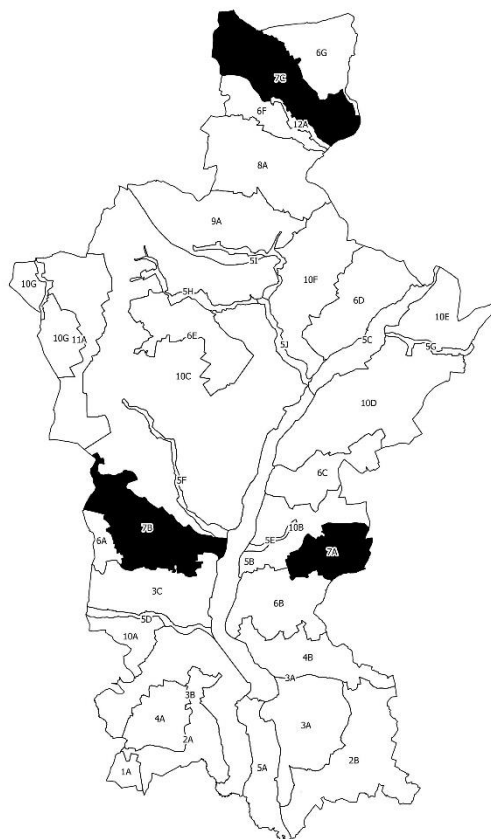


# **LCT7 Semi Enclosed Chalk and Clay Farmland**

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## **General Description**

- 7.1 The Semi Enclosed Chalk and Clay Farmland shares some of the characteristics of the Open Chalklands landscape type but has a greater incidence of hedgerow and tree cover where the clay overlies chalk on the ridges and hilltops.
- 7.2 Semi Enclosed Chalk and Clay Farmland consists predominantly of large and medium scale arable fields, with some smaller fields adjacent to settlements with areas of pasture. The presence of woodland and a more undulating landform gives this landscape type some visual containment and enclosure but the scale of the field pattern allows distant views and creates a more semi-enclosed character.
- 7.3 This is a sparsely settled landscape with a limited number of small linear settlements often located on areas of clay with flints or in sheltered valleys. Farmsteads are also scattered throughout the area.



## **Location**

- 7.4 This landscape type can be found throughout the chalk downlands, where clay and flint over lay the chalk. South of Stockbridge the type is found as a transition from the small enclosed character of LCT6 to the open chalklands of LCT10. To the north it forms a part of a matrix of enclosed to semi-enclosed landscapes rising up into the North Wessex Downs.

- LCA7A Ashley Downs
- LCA7B Broughton Downs
- LCA7C Linkenholt Downs

## **Physical Influences**

- 7.5 **Geology and Soils:** Chalk with areas of Clay with Flints, predominantly located on hill tops and ridge lines, forming a softer relief. The soil in these areas is generally loamy.

**Landform:** A rolling landform of pronounced ridges and valleys, predominantly grassland and woodland. A feature of this landscape is the dramatic steep scarps which encircle valleys and overlook more extensive vales.

**Drainage:** Due to the pervious nature of the chalk there is no evidence of surface water features.

## **Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern**

- 7.6 This type is dominated by medium scale arable and pasture farmland. The hedgerows are relatively intact and link with small areas of woodland. There are areas of unimproved calcareous grassland that have high conservation value.

### **Notable habitats**

- Unimproved and semi-improved chalk grassland

## **Historical Influences**

- 7.7 The principal historic landscape type across this landscape character type is the parliamentary field system with some areas of later prairie field development. More upland areas still retain some scattered woodland and earlier elements of field systems such as small regular fields with wavy boundaries and irregular fields bounded by roads, tracks and paths. Also present within this Landscape Character Type are several extant areas of downland ridge which traditionally functioned as open pasture for the surrounding villages.

## **Settlement Pattern**

- 7.8 Settlements within this Landscape Character Type tend to be small with a dispersed pattern and one or more medieval or early post-medieval 'historic core' elements. This would indicate the development of a widely spread settlement focused upon one or more older farmsteads. These settlements include Chalk Downland: Hilltop settlement types which, in some cases display evidence of settlement drift at some point in the past away from the more exposed hilltops and ridgelines down slope and towards shelter and water.

## **Communication Network**

- 7.9 The road systems through the parliamentary enclosures have clearly been planned at the time of the surveying out of the fields. These roads run alongside the field boundaries and are, in almost all cases, straight. Where earlier field systems survive, the associated road pattern changes to become more sinuous following the boundaries of the older and more 'wavy' fields.

## **Key Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues**

- 7.10 Key natural and cultural landscape issues as follows:
- Continuing intensification of farming, in particular conversion of permanent pasture to arable resulting in loss of biodiversity and archaeological features
  - Lack of appropriate management of woodlands
  - Loss and fragmentation of hedgerow boundaries, mature hedgerow trees and adjacent grass verges
  - Scrub encroachment on scarps
  - Potential change in farming practices, with increased areas managed as 'hobby farms' or as horse paddocks, characterised by rank weedy grassland and poorly managed boundaries
  - Increased traffic on the road network, leading to road improvements to the lanes, creating a more urban character
  - Communication masts, transmitters, and wind turbines, if not carefully sited, will be particularly visually intrusive in the predominantly open skyline, eroding the present sense of remoteness and tranquillity

- Amalgamation of farms resulting in large areas managed as single units and larger farm building
- Conversion of farm buildings
- Loss of chalk downland to arable or scrub encroachment
- Lack of coppice management leading to a reduction of specialised species such as butterflies
- Loss of unimproved mesotrophic grassland to arable or through application of fertilisers, leading to isolation of small patches of habitat.

## **Land Management Guidelines**

7.11 All of the Borough wide land management guidelines in the introduction apply to this Landscape Character Type. Specific to this Landscape Character Type are:

### **7.12 Landscape Distinctiveness**

- Maintain the present sense of remoteness and tranquillity

### **7.13 Agriculture**

- Discourage further amalgamation of fields and loss of hedgerows
- Manage the agricultural landscapes for biodiversity such as incorporating hedgerows or grass field margins
- Encourage replanting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Ensure the careful siting of new agricultural buildings

### **7.14 Hedgerows**

- Seek opportunities to provide hedgerow links with adjacent woodland and encourage replanting of former hedgerow lines, ensure oak standards grow up to form hedgerow trees

### **7.15 Biodiversity**

- Conserve, manage and restore chalk grassland
- Introduce buffer strips at the edge of arable fields

## **Land Use and Development Guidelines**

7.16 All of the Borough wide land use and development guidelines apply to this Landscape Character Type. Specific to this Landscape Character Type are:

#### 7.17 **Built Development**

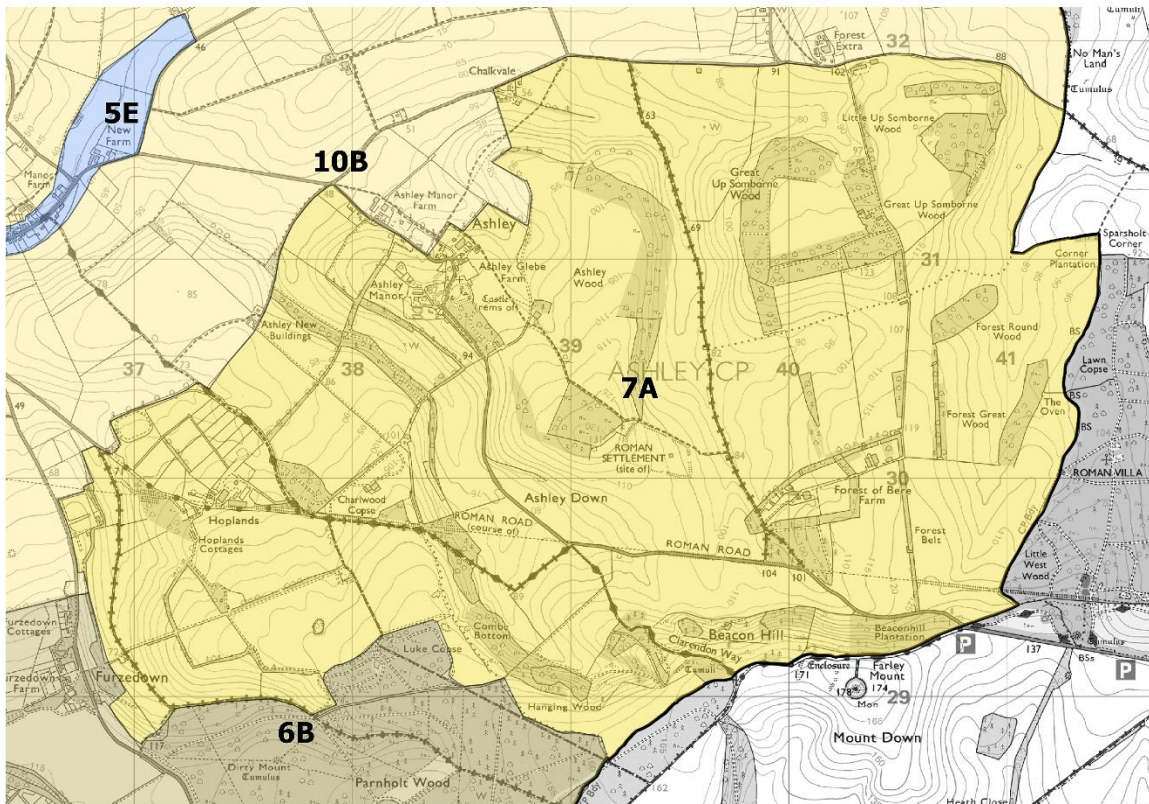
- Limit development in order to conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquillity

#### 7.18 **Recreation, Tourism and Access**

- Encourage management of woodlands to enable greater access

## LCA7A Ashley Downs

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### General Description

- 7A.1. The topography of Ashley Downs lies in a northwest to south east alignment, containing a number of steep dry river valleys which eventually lead down to a tributary of the River Test to the north. Scarps form part of the dry valleys, with one dramatic sinuous scarp leading off from Beacon Hill. This scarp is covered with a mix of woodland, scrubland and grassland. Another scarp can also be found east of Ashley Wood, again wooded.
- 7A.2. The Ashley Downs woodland areas are predominantly associated with, and limited to, the steep valley sides, and are loosely linked by shelter belts and hedgerows, providing areas of containment. In between these wooded areas there are large open tracts of arable fields with a limited hedgerow structure.
- 7A.3. The Clarendon Way runs through the area.

## Location

- 7A.4. Ashley Downs lie to the south and east of Ashley, leading across to the eastern edge of the Test Valley Borough boundary.

## Local Physical Influences

- 7A.5. **Geology and Soils:** Chalk with several discrete areas of Clay with Flints.  
**Landform:** Undulating landform with higher ground rising to 150m  
**Drainage:** Well drained down to the King's Somborne river.

## Local Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern

- 7A.6. This area is principally arable farmland and improved grassland, divided by hedgerows. There are several generally smaller to medium sized copses and shelter belts, many of which are ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW) / SINC, and the hedgerow structure provides generally good linkages between these. There are records of hazel dormouse in some wooded areas.
- 7A.7. There are important areas of calcareous grassland along the Beacon Hill scarp to the southern part of the LCA.
- 7A.8. The table below identifies the broad habitat types for LCA7A.

Broad habitat type	Area of habitat (Hectares)	Percentage of the LCA (%)
Arable and horticulture	727.67	69.94
Boundary and linear features	5.18	0.50
Bracken	0.01	0.01
Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland	141.99	13.65
Built-up areas and gardens	11.88	1.14
Calcareous grassland	14.74	1.42
Coniferous woodland	6.01	0.58
Improved grassland	124.54	11.97
Neutral grassland	0.21	0.02
Unidentified habitat	7.97	0.77
Unidentified water	0.31	0.03
Total	1040.49	

## Local Historical Influences

- 7A.9. Ashley Downs is dominated by 19th century parliamentary enclosure although stands of pre-1810 assarted woodland remain to attest to the previous agricultural landscape during the earlier post-medieval period. This would

have been a more wooded environment interspersed with a great deal of assarting as observed elsewhere on the uplands to the east of the River Test.

- 7A.10. A surviving area of downland common remains upon Beacon Hill possibly associated with common rights belonging to the settlement of Ashley during the medieval period.
- 7A.11. The remains of a Roman Road have been charted extending throughout this LCA from west to east. This ancient route survives fossilised within the current road network although surviving earthworks can be visited within pre-1810 hanger at Combe Bottom.

### **Designations**

- 7A.12. Designations that lie wholly or in part within this Landscape Character Area comprise:

7A.13. **Nature Conservation**

SINC

- 21 SINCS, mostly ancient semi-natural woodland and some agriculturally unimproved grassland and sites that support notable species.

7A.14. **Historic**

Scheduled Monuments

- Group of round barrows at Withering Corner
- Bowl barrow on Ashley Down Plantation, 1000m south west of Forest of Bere Farm
- Bowl barrow on Ashley Down Plantation, 1010m south west of Forest of Bere Farm
- Ashley Wood camp
- Gains Castle: a 13th century ringwork and bailey
- Hilltop enclosure 190m north west of Farley Mount (partially within LCA)

Listed buildings

- A group of listed buildings lies within Ashley

### **Settlement Pattern**

- 7A.15. Ashley is the only settlement located within this LCA. It is associated with Ashley Castle which is located at the south eastern end of the settlement



within the historic core. The hamlet has developed away from the castle during the later medieval and throughout the post-medieval period along the road to King's Somborne to the west.

7A.16. Within the open 19th century agricultural landscape surrounding the hamlet of Ashley the network of farmsteads is very well dispersed.

7A.17. There is one road, which runs across this LCA, this is located within one of the dry river valleys.

### **Local Settlements**

7A.18. Local Settlements and their corresponding Settlement Type (see Appendix 2 for more information):

- Ashley: Chalk Downland: Hilltop Settlement Type

### **Remoteness and Tranquillity**

7A.19. Largely due to the dramatic chalk land topography of this landscape, the area has a strong rural tranquil character.

### **Key Valued Characteristics**

7A.20. Key valued attributes of LCA7A are as follows:

- Small but dramatic wooded scarps, with remnants of unimproved chalk grassland
- Remote steep dry valleys
- Large tracts of open arable fields
- Patches of woodland linked by hedgerows
- Remote rural and tranquil landscape
- Narrow single-track rural winding lanes, sometimes sunken
- Distinctive mature Yew tree standards in hedgerows
- Well-dispersed farmsteads and small settlement of Ashley, otherwise built form is limited
- Landscape generally displays extensive areas of parliamentary enclosure although some evidence of assarting and pre-1810 woodland survives

- A Roman road extends through the area with evidence fossilized in the road network and also does survive as upstanding earthworks in Combe Bottom.
- Key views include far-reaching views from high ground and views to undeveloped skylines and wooded scarps
- Clarendon Way runs through the area
- Traditional building styles include brick, white rendered and brick and flint walls with clay tile and thatched roofs.

### **Key Detractors**

7A.21. Key detractors of LCA7A are as follows:

- Disused pits

### **Local Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues**

7A.22. Local natural and cultural landscape issues for LCA7A are as follows:

- Potential erosion of the surrounding historic landscape
- Potential expansion of equestrian development and uses

### **Landscape Strategy and Guidelines**

7A.23. Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCA7A Ashley Downs are as follows:

- The Ashley Downs is distinguished by its wooded scarp slopes and open arable landscape. The overall strategy is therefore to enhance the landscape structure of the arable areas and conserve the pattern of woodland on the scarps within Ashley Downs and protect and enhance the key valued characteristics.

### **Land Management**

7A.24. All of the Borough wide and landscape type land management guidelines apply to this Landscape Character Area. Specific to this Landscape Character Area are:

7A.25. **Landscape Distinctiveness**

- Retain the characteristic undeveloped skylines and wooded scarps

7A.26. **Hedgerows**

- Protect the distinctive yew trees within the hedgerows

- Allow oak and yew trees to grow up in hedgerows

#### 7A.27. **Woodland and Trees**

- Reinforce pattern of small copses, spinneys and shelter belts
- Manage woodland for biodiversity and to ensure succession

#### 7A.28. **Biodiversity**

- Conserve and enhance the network of calcareous grassland across the southern slopes of the LCA and explore opportunities for reversion of improved pasture / arable land to more species-rich calcareous habitats to overall improve calcareous grassland habitat stepping stones across the LCA
- Explore opportunities to enhance habitat linkages between isolated woodlands through hedge / tree belt planting and enhancement of field margins
- Explore opportunities for encouraging traditional management of woodlands to benefit woodland butterflies and hazel dormouse

#### 7A.29. **Historic Landscapes**

- Ensure the survival of the Roman road earthworks in Combe Bottom

### **Land Use and Development**

7A.30. All of the Borough wide and Landscape Character Type land use and development guidelines apply to this Landscape Character Area. Specific to this Landscape Character Area are:

#### 7A.31. **Built Development**

- Development to be small in scale and well-sited, taking advantage of vegetation cover, to conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquillity



Undulating landform of Ashley Down



Scarp at Beacon Hill



Woodland with Yew trees at Beaconhill

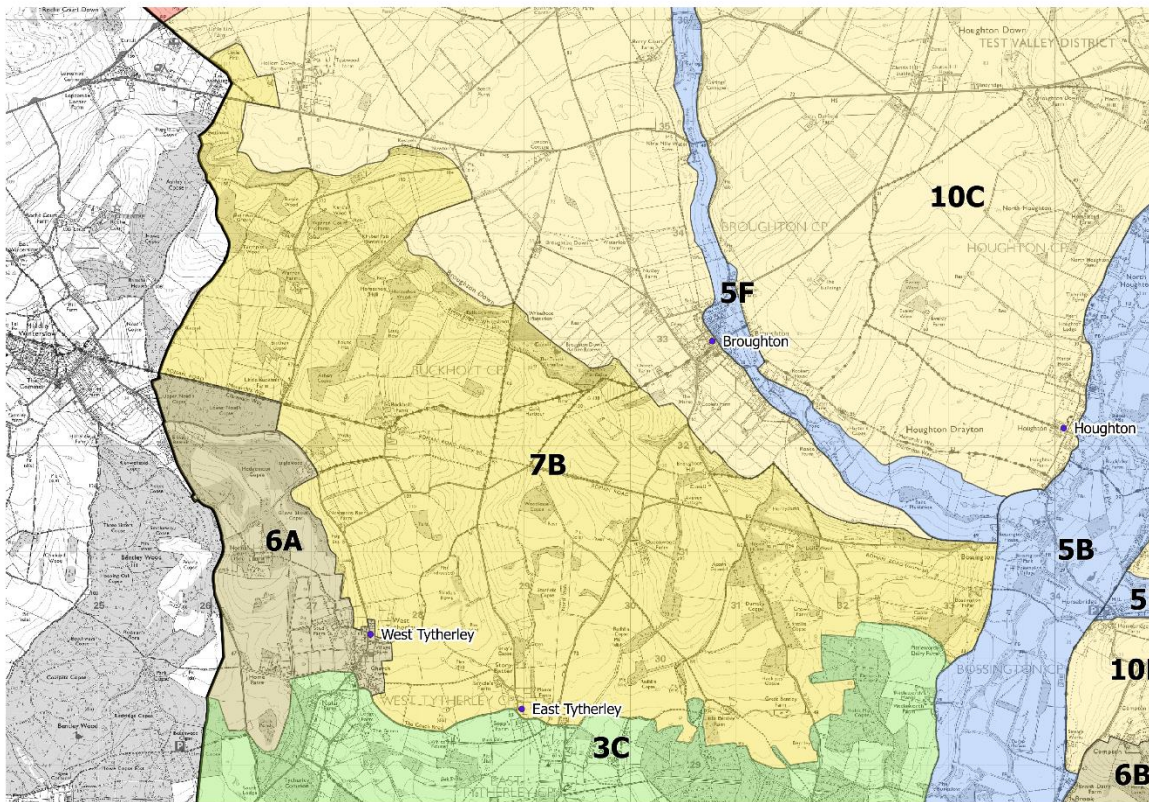


Far-reaching views northwards across amalgamated fields framed by woodland and shelterbelts, showing small copses and spinneys



## LCA7B Broughton Downs

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### General Description

- 7B.1. Broughton Downs is an elevated landscape, rising from around 55m in the south to a ridge around 150m on the southern side of Broughton Downs in the north. The underlying geology is predominantly chalk, with only a small number of areas (limited to the ridges) covered with clay and flint, creating a generally uniform topography of undulating and rolling downland with a pronounced scarp slope along Broughton Down.
- 7B.2. The woodland cover is limited to small copses with larger woodlands mainly associated and in close proximity to large parks and farmed estates. These areas of woodland in places are linked by long thick hedgerows and shelter belts as seen around Queenwood Farm. Tracts of adjoining arable fields form large open areas within this semi-enclosed landscape. Areas of woodland are also found on steep slopes, which are generally uncultivated.

- 7B.3. Smaller enclosed fields of pasture are located adjacent to areas of settlements and adjacent farmsteads, while other areas of grassland form parts of designed parkland.
- 7B.4. The Clarendon Way and Monarch's Way pass through this Landscape Character Area.

## Location

- 7B.5. Broughton Downs is defined by and includes the Broughton Down scarp face to the north, and extends to the Borough boundary in the north-west, to the east of Norman Court in the west and to West Tytherley in the south.

## Local Physical Influences

- 7B.6. **Geology and Soils:** Chalk with small patches of Clay with Flints.  
**Landform:** Undulating landform rising to higher ground in the west and a steep north facing slope.  
**Drainage:** Well drained, within Wallop Brook catchment.

## Local Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern

- 7B.7. This area is principally arable farmland, with larger fields divided by hedgerows. There are several smaller patches of woodland, generally isolated copses and game thickets, with some moderate linkages to the hedge network and other features. A small number of these are designated Ancient Woodland / SINC.
- 7B.8. Broughton Down lies along the northern boundary of the LCA; this supports important areas of calcareous grassland with beech and yew woodland patches.

- 7B.9. The table below identifies the broad habitat types for LCA7B.

Broad habitat type	Area of habitat (Hectares)	Percentage of the LCA (%)
Arable and horticulture	1522.32	70.94
Boundary and linear features	18.76	0.87
Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland	241.34	11.25
Built-up areas and gardens	23.50	1.09

Calcareous grassland	52.36	2.44
Coniferous woodland	8.55	0.40
Improved grassland	260.46	12.14
Standing open water and canals	0.26	0.01
Unidentified habitat	18.09	0.84
Unidentified water	0.28	0.01
Total	2145.91	

## Local Historical Influences

- 7B.10. A Roman Road extends through this Landscape Character Area from west to east. The earthworks associated with such a feature do not survive although its course is fossilised within the route of the 'Monarch's Way' which crosses Test Valley at this point.
- 7B.11. Parliamentary fields extend to the south of the Roman Road although the pattern is less well defined. Here there is an expanse of fields bounded only by trackways and paths which would appear to be the result of post-medieval enclosure. Also present within this area are a series of small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries; evidence of late 17th and 18th century informal enclosure.
- 7B.12. To the north of the Roman Road is largely a landscape of parliamentary field systems interspersed with some pre-1810 woodland.

## Designations

- 7B.13. Designations that lie wholly or in part within this Landscape Character Area comprise:

7B.14. **Nature Conservation**

SSSI

- Broughton Down - Unimproved calcareous grassland, broadleaved woodland and scrub

SINC

- 27 SINCS, mostly ancient semi-natural woodland and other woodland; some agriculturally unimproved and semi-improved grassland

**Historic**

Conservation Areas

- West Tytherley Conservation Area lies partly within this LCA

### Scheduled Monuments

- Section of Roman road by Upper and Lower Noad's Copse
- Roman road immediately south east of Buckholt Farm
- Bowl barrow 90m west of Hill Lodge: one of a group of round barrows on Broughton Hill
- Bowl barrow 20m south west of Hill Lodge: one of a group of round barrows on Broughton Hill
- Two bowl barrows 90m south of Hill Lodge: part of a group of round barrows on Broughton Hill
- Beach Barrow
- Iron Age Hill Fort in Ashley's Copse

### Listed buildings

- A small number of listed buildings are present in this LCA with a cluster in East Tytherley.

### Settlement Pattern

7B.15. No villages or other formal settlements are wholly located within LCA 7B. The farmsteads which occupy this character area are generally well dispersed particularly throughout the 19th century parliamentary field systems but also in the small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries. This may have resulted from the nearby presence of pre-1810 parkland with a 'Home Farm' remaining which may have managed this outlying farmland on behalf of the estate during the 17th and 18th centuries.

7B.16. Roads and routeways lie in a north-southerly alignment following the dry river valleys and ridgelines.

### Local Settlements

7B.17. Local Settlements and their corresponding Settlement Type (see Appendix 2 for more information):

- East Tytherley: Chalk-Clay Spring Line Settlement
- Buckholt: Scattered Clay Lowland Settlement Type



## **Remoteness and Tranquillity**

- 7B.18. Due to the lack of settlements, this is a landscape with high tranquillity levels particularly within the intricate series of dry river valleys and around the gentle hill tops. Although generally quiet, there is some noise of overhead planes/helicopters from nearby airfield.

## **Key Valued Characteristics**

- 7B.19. Key valued attributes of LCA7B are as follows:
- Varied elevated downland topography of steep valleys and softer ridges
  - Pronounced scarp slope along Broughton Down
  - Small sinuous woodland copses and shelter belts
  - Remnant unimproved chalk grassland
  - Contrasting areas of enclosure and areas of openness with wide views
  - More enclosed areas result in a strong sense of seclusion
  - Isolated farmsteads
  - Limited built form
  - Narrow single-track rural winding lanes, sometimes sunken
  - Distinctive mature Yew tree standards in hedgerows
  - Distinctive beech hedging along arable field boundaries north of Queenswood Farm
  - A remote tranquil landscape with inaccessible valleys and undeveloped skylines
  - 19th century parliamentary enclosure abounds within this area although some earlier 17th and 18th century informal enclosure does survive
  - A Roman Road extends through the area with evidence fossilised within the line of the 'Monarch's Way'.
  - Key views include long-reaching views from high ground, some to wooded ridges; open views across to scarp slope along Broughton Down; views to undeveloped skylines
  - Veteran trees
  - Parkland at Hildon House
  - Traditional building styles include brick, white rendered and brick and flint walls with clay tile and thatched roofs.

## **Key Detractors**

7B.20. Key detractors of LCA7B are as follows:

- Visually prominent motocross track north-east of Ashley's Copse in open downland
- Views from the high ground in the north-west of the area to visually prominent groups of large scale buildings within adjacent LCA 10C Thruxton And Danebury Chalk Downland
- Incongruous conifer shelter belts

## **Local Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues**

7B.21. Local natural and cultural landscape issues for LCA7B are as follows:

- Vulnerability of remaining unimproved chalkland
- This area is particularly vulnerable to the visual impact of changes with surrounding adjacent LCAs, especially the visibility of solar panels and large modern large scale buildings
- Vulnerability of impacts on undeveloped skylines including from inappropriate siting of large modern agricultural sheds
- Inappropriate planting of conifer shelter belts
- Expansion of visually intrusive recreational uses within open downland

## **Landscape Strategy and Guidelines**

7B.22. Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCA7B Broughton Downs are as follows:

- The Broughton Downs is noted for its woodland and nationally important unimproved calcareous grasslands. It is also an open landscape, which retains a tranquil remote character. The overall strategy is therefore to conserve the pattern of woodland and grassland habitats whilst enhancing the hedgerow structure of Broughton Downs and protect and enhance the key valued characteristics.

## **Land Management**

7B.23. All of the Borough wide and Landscape Character Type land management guidelines apply to this Landscape Character Area. Specific to this character area are:

#### **7B.24. Landscape Distinctiveness**

- Maintain contrast of varied enclosed and open views and characteristic undeveloped skylines

#### **7B.25. Hedgerows**

- Maintain existing thick hedgerows linking woodland
- Protect the distinctive yew trees within the hedgerows
- Allow oak and yew trees to grow up in hedgerows
- Protect the distinctive beech hedges

#### **7B.26. Woodland and Trees**

- Reinforce pattern of small copses, spinneys and shelter belts especially on steeper slopes
- Replace incongruent conifer shelter belts with locally appropriate planting

#### **7B.27. Biodiversity**

- Explore opportunities for reversion of improved pasture / arable land to more species-rich calcareous habitats to overall improve calcareous grassland habitat stepping stones across the LCA with Broughton Down SSSI as the core
- Explore opportunities to enhance habitat linkages between isolated shelter belts and small woodlands through hedge / tree belt planting and enhancement of field margins

#### **7B.28. Historic Landscapes**

- Protect parkland and parkland features at Hildon House

### **Land Use and Development**

7B.29. All of the Borough wide and Landscape Character Type land use and development guidelines apply to this Landscape Character Area. Specific to this character area are:

#### **7B.30. Built Development**

- Proposals for development within adjacent LCAs should take account of views from Broughton Downs
- Development to be small in scale and well sited, taking advantage of vegetation cover, to conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquillity

#### 7B.31. **Infrastructure**

- Wider impact of tall structures to be considered in view of openness of this landscape



Views to undeveloped skylines



Scarp slope along Broughton Down



Shelter belt



Long-reaching veiws to wooded ridge

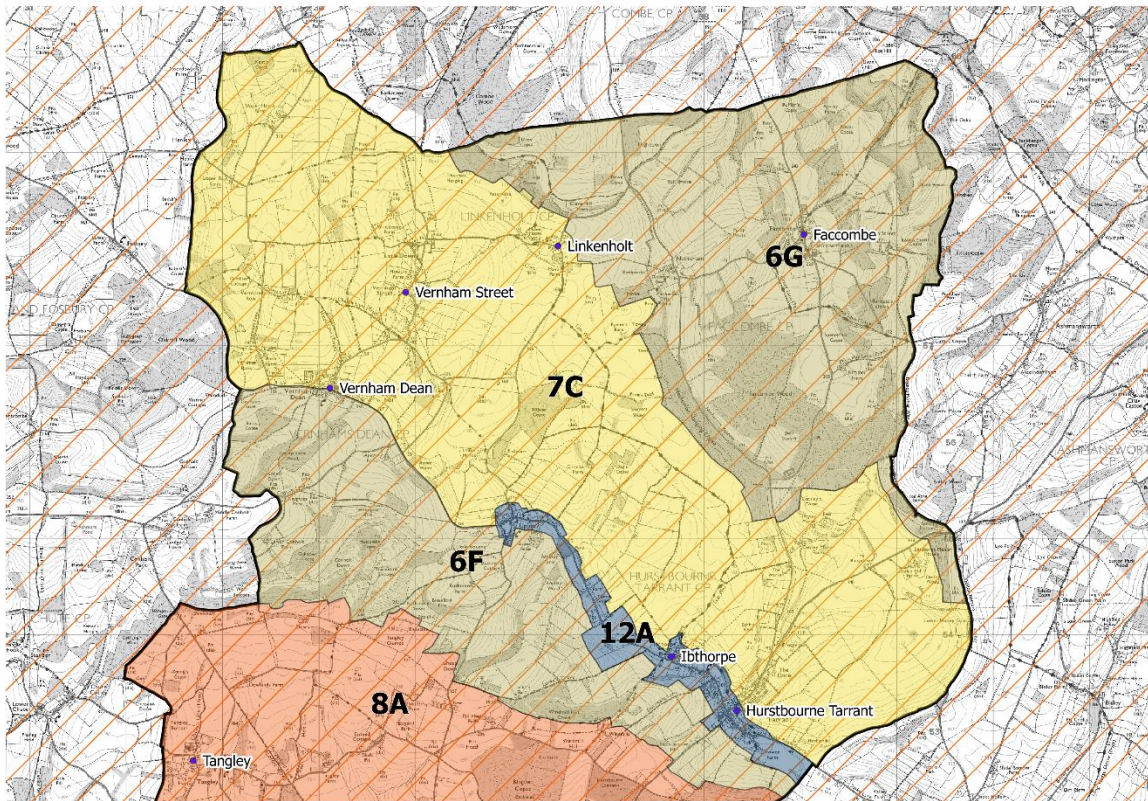


Roman road



## LCA7C Linkenholt Downs

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North Wessex Downs AONB area indicated with orange line hatch.

### General Description

- 7C.1. Linkenholt Downs has a rising landform from the River Swift at around 100m to the ridgeline at Rockmore Down (230m) across to the settlement of Linkenholt (200m) and the domed Heaven Hill at 197m.
- 7C.2. The topography is a result of the underlying chalk, which is responsible for the system of dry river valleys and the Clay and Flint which produces the softer ridgelines as seen south of Netherton Hanging Copse. Defined dry 'V' shaped river valleys align in a north southerly direction leading down to the Valley of the River Swift. Scarps are limited to the east of this Landscape Character Area with one sinuous scarp found located at Sidley Bottom. This scarp has a mixed covering of woodland and grassland.

- 7C.3. A mix of large tracts of open arable fields, predominantly found on the ridges of clay and flint, for example to the west of Lower Doiley Farm, contrast with smaller pasture fields associated with settlements, as seen within the valley leading up from The Dene and the settlement of Littledown.
- 7C.4. Wilster Copse forms the largest woodland within this LCA, with other woodlands forming small copses and spinneys, which are then linked together by hedgerows of varying thickness. Towards the west, the landscape is dominated by smaller hedged arable fields.

### **Location**

- 7C.5. Linkenholt Downs is located within the northern part of the Borough, to the north of the road which links Vernham Dean to Upton, and the northern edge of the river valley of the River Swift. The northern boundary is formed by the ridgeline which links Linkenholt to Netherton Hanging Copse and the southern side of Faccombe Wood.

### **Local Physical Influences**

- 7C.6. **Geology and Soils:** Chalk with scattered Clay with Flints, along with areas of clay, silt, sand and gravels.

**Landform:** Gently undulating landform rising to over 200m (the highest point in the Borough) in the north-west.

**Drainage:** Well drained, and within River Swift catchment area.

### **Local Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern**

- 7C.7. The LCA forms a mosaic of smaller arable fields within an established mature network of countryside hedges. There are a few small patches of woodland, some of which is Ancient Woodland, which are also designated as SINC's, such as Wilster Copse and Kents Copse. There are occasional fragments of calcareous grassland.
- 7C.8. The ecological value of this LCA is very much in its denser network of hedges and small copses, rather than in expansive areas of higher-quality habitat.

Dormice have been recorded in the LCA and this sort of network provides good habitat for this species.

7C.9. The table below identifies the broad habitat types for LCA7C.

Broad habitat type	Area of habitat (Hectares)	Percentage of the LCA (%)
Arable and horticulture	1781.88	78.96
Boundary and linear features	21.65	0.96
Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland	104.84	4.65
Built-up areas and gardens	51.61	2.29
Calcareous grassland	5.93	0.26
Coniferous woodland	10.18	0.45
Improved grassland	227.65	10.09
Neutral grassland	1.02	0.05
Unidentified habitat	51.52	2.28
Unidentified water	0.41	0.02
Total	2256.70	

## Local Historical Influences

7C.10. The surviving historic landscape of Landscape Character Area 7C is largely that of 19th century parliamentary enclosure. These field systems occupy the bottom of the dry valley, the valley sides and the flanking upland within this area of the Borough. Some earlier 17th and 18th century informal enclosure do survive at the north western end of the character area.

7C.11. The north-western end of this area retained elements of the earlier small regular field systems with wavy boundaries indicative of later 17th and 18th century informal enclosure and some remnants of assarting. Also present were stands of pre-1810 woodland and some 19th century plantations, possibly part of Chute Forest.

7C.12. At the south-eastern end of the Landscape Character Area are a series of open prairie fields.

## Designations

7C.13. Designations that lie wholly or in part within this Landscape Character Area comprise:



#### 7C.14. **Landscape**

- North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty<sup>1</sup>

#### 7C.15. **Nature Conservation**

##### SINC

- 14 SINCs, mostly ancient semi-natural woodland and some agriculturally unimproved grassland and sites which support notable species

#### 7C.16. **Historic**

##### Conservation Areas

- Linkenholt
- Vernham Dean, Upton, Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe all lie partly within the LCA

##### Listed Buildings

- A number of listed buildings are present in this LCA with clusters at Vernham Dean, Verham Street and Linkenholt and on the edges of Ibthorpe and Hurstbourne Tarrant, including Grade II\* Vernham Manor House near Vernham Dean.

### **Settlement Pattern**

7C.17. The village settlement pattern within this area has developed relatively little since the medieval and early post-medieval period. These settlements appear to be focused upon a nucleus such as a church or manor farm. Only at Linkenholt has the settlement extended in a linear progression during the later post-medieval period.

7C.18. Farmsteads throughout the major portion of this area are well dispersed within the area of 19th century parliamentary enclosure. This pattern is repeated within the small area of large irregular assarts at the north western end of the area.

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<sup>1</sup> Regard should also be had to the North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment.

7C.19. A number of settlements occupy the sheltered valleys, for example Vernham Dean, while others such as Linkenholt and Littledown are located on the ridges.

7C.20. There is a good network of roads predominantly following ridges and valleys orientated in a north south direction. A number of shorter roads cross the landform additionally linking settlements.

### **Local Settlements**

7C.21. Local Settlements and their corresponding Settlement Type (see Appendix 2 for more information):

- Hurstbourne Tarrant: Chalk River Valley Settlement Type
- Linkenholt: Chalk Downland: Hilltop Settlement Type
- Littledown: Chalk Downland: Hilltop Settlement Type
- Vernham Dean: Chalk Downland: Dry Valley Settlement Type

### **Remoteness and Tranquillity**

7C.22. A rural landscape with remote valleys and ridges, creating a landscape with areas of high levels of tranquillity.

### **Key Valued Characteristics**

7C.23. Key valued attributes of LCA7C are as follows:

- Varied downland topography of steep valleys with softer ridges, dry V-shaped river valleys and few scarps
- Small copses and spinneys are linked together across the landscape by thick hedgerows and, in places, shelter belts
- Remnants of unimproved calcareous grassland
- Large tracts of open arable land with smaller fields close to settlements
- Small hedged arable fields in the west
- A remote landscape, with a number of inaccessible valleys
- Well-dispersed farmstead pattern
- Formal and informal open spaces within and on the edges of Vernham Dean provide attractive leafy recreation areas and contribute to the rural setting of the village

- Historic landscape features associated with Manors including parkland trees
- Network of rural single-track lanes often bound by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees
- Long-reaching rural views to wooded ridges
- Predominantly medieval settlement pattern only modified at Linkenholt.

### **Key Detractors**

7C.24. Key detractors of LCA7C are as follows:

- Intrusive overhead pylons

### **Local Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues**

7C.25. Local natural and cultural landscape issues for LCA7C are as follows:

- Protection of historic settlement pattern
- Vulnerability to visual intrusion due to openness of landscape.

### **Landscape Strategy and Guidelines**

7C.26. Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCA7C Linkenholt Downs are as follows:

- The Linkenholt Downs is typical of the delicate balance between woodland and open arable land found within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The overall strategy is therefore to conserve this balance and to enhance the woodland and hedgerow structure of Linkenholt Downs and protect and enhance the key valued characteristics.

### **Land Management**

7C.27. All of the Borough wide and Landscape Character Type land management guidelines apply to this Landscape Character Area. Specific to this Landscape Character Area are:

7C.28. **Agriculture**

- Maintain the smaller field pattern near the settlements

7C.29. **Woodland and Trees**

- Reinforce pattern of small copses, spinneys and shelter belts with wooded scarps

#### 7C.30. **Biodiversity**

- Restore, enhance and positively manage the woodland, hedge and shelter belt habitat to enhance the network, with particular reference to butterflies
- Explore opportunities for chalk grassland restoration and reversion
- Explore opportunities for improving the diversity of arable field margins

#### 7C.31. **Historic Landscapes**

- Conserve the present settlement pattern and form
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting to settlements and historic landscapes
- Conserve historic landscape features associated with Manors

### **Land Use and Development**

7C.32. All of the Borough wide and Landscape Character Type land use and development guidelines apply to this Landscape Character Area. Specific to this Landscape Character Area are:

#### 7C.33. **Built Developments**

- Limit development in order to conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquillity, and the settlement form

#### 7C.34. **Infrastructure**

- Development to be limited and well-sited to conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquillity
- Seek an opportunity to bury power lines underground



Small fields east of Upton



Remnant small field retained close to settlement with larger fields beyond



Varied downland topography with small copses



Historic tree line at Vernham Manor



Field amalgamation, long-reaching views to wooded ridges with some visual intrusion from pylons north of Hurstbourne Tarrant