
General Description

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Location

- LCA 12A River Swift Valley
- LCA 12B River Bourne Valley

Physical Influences

- Landform:** A 'V' shaped river valley, often with steeper valley sides.
- Drainage:** Seasonal surface streams (bournes) which retreat underground in the dry summer months.

Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern

- 12.4 The vegetation pattern of this landscape is typical of chalk downland valleys with seasonal water flow in the valleys. Areas of both neutral and calcareous grasslands are found in the valley bottoms, although much of the grassland is often agriculturally improved. Some arable farmland is found on higher ground. Fields are divided by hedgerows and there are occasional patches of scrub and woodland.

Notable habitats

- Unimproved neutral grassland.

Historical Influences

- 12.5 The historic character of this landscape has been considerably altered during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the formal development of the parliamentary field system. This process has removed much of the earlier network of field systems and roads through the area although roads aligned with the river and contour lines would appear to be earlier than this episode of parliamentary activity.

Settlement Pattern

- 12.6 Settlements within this landscape character type tend to have developed in linear form following the prevailing contours of the valley. Their historic cores tend to be located upon the valley floors and only extend up and away from the lower lying contours during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This later settlement expansion often occurs at right angles to the main settlement axis along roads which cut across and down the contour profile.

Communication Network

- 12.7 The principal roads through the bourne valleys tend to follow the contours of the land within the valley bottom. These roads represent the easiest path to take with few severe changes in gradient along their course and are often early routes along the valley floor. Some roads do cross the valley at right angles to the main valley alignment providing entrance into and egress from the valley. The junctions between these roads and those which run along the

valley floor are generally to be found in valley floor settlements with nineteenth century settlement extending up the valley slope along these routes.

Key Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues

12.8 Key natural and cultural landscape issues as follows:

- Loss of riparian landscape features, rivers and associated vegetation
- Loss of small fields and hedgerows
- Potential erosion of quiet seclusion as a result of greater urban intrusion and increase in traffic
- Infill development within the linear villages.

Land Management Guidelines

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

12.10 Landscape Distinctiveness

- Safeguard the distinctive valley floor wetland character

12.11 Agriculture

- 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, avoid built development breaking the skyline

12.12 Hedgerows

- Encourage traditional methods of hedge management
- Maintain hedgerow field boundaries
- Restore hedgerows and encourage replanting of former hedgerow lines
- Encourage restoration of field boundaries with local native species

12.13 Biodiversity

- Conserve, enhance and manage riparian habitats
- Undertake ecological assessment of watercourse to understand ecological condition and inform positive management changes and opportunities

12.14 **Settlement Fringe**

- Protect and enhance the important green spaces around and within the settlement fringe and their contribution to green infrastructure, links with the wider countryside, nature conservation and the setting of settlement
- Avoid highway improvements which will urbanise the urban fringe and settlements and erode the existing rural character
- Avoid new types of and poor-quality boundary treatment (i.e. high close boarded fencing) which will urbanise the area and impact on the open rural landscape character and views across and within settlements
- Avoid overly dominant signage in the undeveloped rural landscape
- Avoid the extension of gardens and domestic curtilage which will erode the undeveloped landscape character of the undeveloped rural valley floor
- Avoid the poor design of horse paddocks and stabling. Field stables should be sited to avoid visual intrusion, with field boundaries carefully located to avoid the loss of the simple landscape character of pasture and meadow grassland

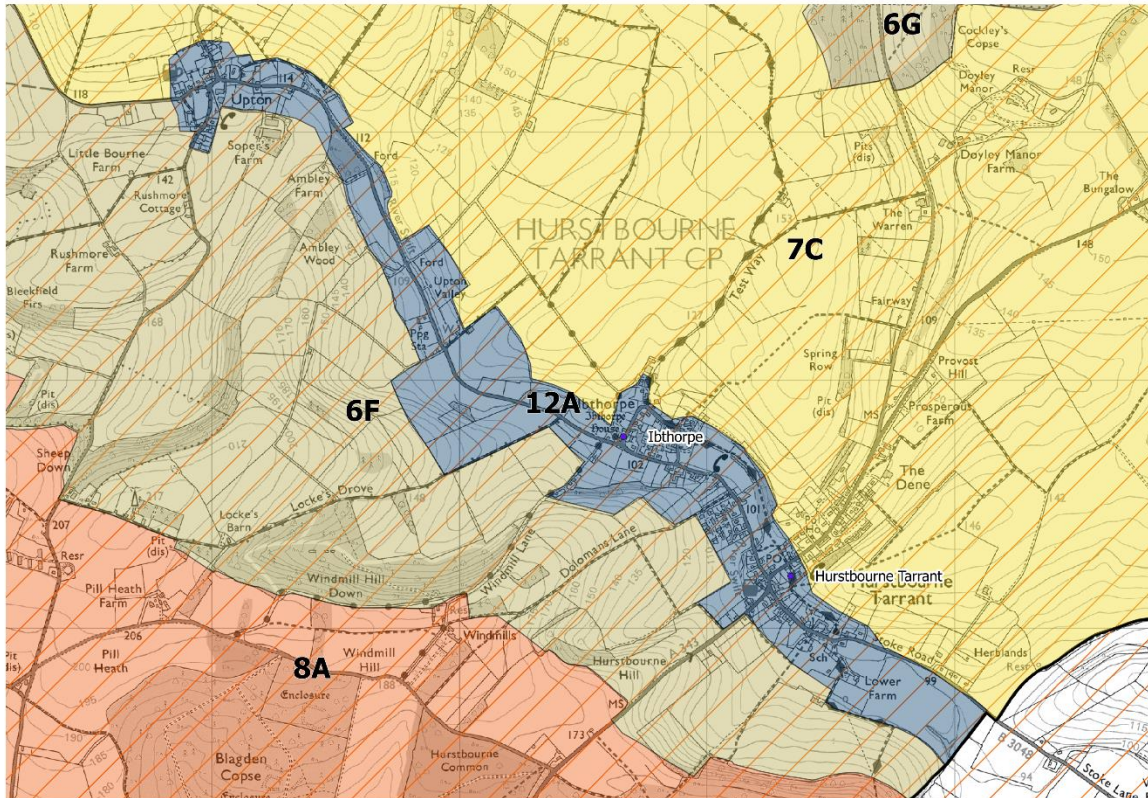
Land Use and Development Guidelines

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

12.16 **Built Development**

- Limit development in order to conserve the existing settlement forms
- Resist development within the settlement-free character of the valley floor
- Resist further linear expansion (ribbon development) and infill along valley floor and approach roads and avoid loss of separate identity of existing settlements through coalescence and homogeneous design
- Avoid overdevelopment and redevelopment of existing housing plots which will have an urbanising impact on the rural character of the area with urban features i.e. large gateways and urban style fencing (high close boarded timber fencing) and urban style non-native planting
- Light pollution to be minimised within this predominantly dark area

LCA12A River Swift Valley



North Wessex Downs AONB area indicated with orange line hatch.

General Description

- 12.A.1. The River Swift Valley is a shallow narrow winterbourne valley, typical of this part of the North Wessex Downs.

Location

- 12.A.2. The River Swift Valley runs along the valley floor from Upton down to Hurstbourne Tarrant.

Local Physical Influences

- 12.A.3. **Geology and Soils:** Alluvium flanked by Chalk.
Landform: Narrow valley, flanked by the adjacent winding steeper slopes of the exposed Chalk.

Drainage: Winterbourne with the stream emerging intermittently along the valley.

Local Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern

- 12.A.4. This area is a narrow river valley; the Swift is a winterbourne stream and the winterbourne sections are likely to support particularly niche characteristic habitats and species due to the ephemeral nature of the stream. Further downstream, the flow becomes more permanent and will exhibit different characteristics more akin to permanent chalk stream habitat, although the watercourse is not designated as a SINC.
- 12.A.5. Most of the land around the watercourse is improved pasture / grassland although there are several patches and belts of woodland along the valley. There are also small fragments of higher-value grassland including both calcareous (such as at Upton Meadows SINC) and neutral grassland (such as at Yew Tree Farm Down SINC).
- 12.A.6. The River Swift is known to support otters, and there are numerous bat records associated with Hurstbourne Tarrant and surrounding hamlets, so the river corridor is likely to be an important local bat foraging resource.
- 12.A.7. The table below identifies the broad habitat types for LCA12A.

Broad habitat type	Area of habitat (Hectares)	Percentage of the LCA (%)
Arable and horticulture	10.99	8.19
Boundary and linear features	5.78	4.31
Bracken	0.15	0.11
Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland	5.47	4.08
Built-up areas and gardens	23.55	17.55
Calcareous grassland	3.58	2.67
Improved grassland	74.40	55.46
Neutral grassland	0.17	0.13
Standing open water and canals	0.02	0.02
Unidentified habitat	8.34	6.22
Unidentified water	1.69	1.26
Total	134.14	

Local Historical Influences

- 12.A.8. The valley sides of the Bourne Rivulet have been completely given over to later 18th and 19th century parliamentary field systems. A single catchwork water meadow (Type 1) is evident immediately to the south east of Hurstbourne Tarrant.

Designations

- 12.A.9. Designations that lie wholly or in part within this Landscape Character Area comprise:

12.A.10. **Landscape**

- North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty¹

12.A.11. **Nature Conservation**

SINC

- 2 SINC including Upton Meadows, an agriculturally unimproved grassland

12.A.12. **Historic**

Conservation Areas

- Upton
- Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe

Listed buildings

- Significant clusters in Upton and Hurstbourne Tarrant (including the Grade I listed St Peters Church)

Settlement Pattern

- 12.A.13. This Landscape Character Area is largely occupied by the large linear settlement of Hurstbourne Tarrant which is centred upon the intersection of two roads and has developed subsequently along each of these roads. The historic core of Hurstbourne Tarrant is located at the T-junction formed by the intersection and later post-medieval development has extended largely up the valley sides and along the valley floor.

- 12.A.14. The smaller village of Ibthorpe is located at the north western end of the valley floor. A minor road extends down the valley to meet with Hurstbourne

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

Tarrant to the south-east and post-medieval settlement has extended along this road to join with its larger neighbour.

12.A.15. Lower Farm located immediately to the south of Hurstbourne Tarrant is the only farmstead to occupy this character area.

Local Settlements

12.A.16. Local Settlements and their corresponding Settlement Type (see Appendix 2 for more information):

- Hurstbourne Tarrant: Chalk River Valley Settlement Type
- Ibthorpe: Chalk River Valley Settlement Type
- Upton: Chalk River Valley Settlement Type

Remoteness and Tranquillity

12.A.17. With the exception of the area at the junction at Hurstbourne Tarrant, the river valley is quiet and secluded. The pastures have an air of older pastoral landscapes.

Key Valued Characteristics

12.A.18. Key valued characteristics of LCA12A are as follows:

- Narrow river valley, enclosed by the adjacent winding steeper slopes of the exposed Middle Chalk, creating a small scale intimate landscape
- Winding course of the River Swift winterbourne through open pasture, sometimes flanked by riverside vegetation and trees, is a unifying feature of the area
- In settlements, characteristic small bridged crossing points provide access to dwellings
- High groundwater levels giving rise to wet mesotrophic grassland and diversity of flora and fauna
- Strong pastoral character with fields retained as pasture due to recurrent waterlogging
- Fields divided by hedgerows with occasional blocks of broadleaved woodland
- 19th century Parliamentary enclosures flank the Bourne Rivulet

- A single catchwork water meadow surviving at the south eastern end of the bourne
- One valley road connecting the settlements with open views across the valley
- Area of intimate quiet seclusion
- Sweeping views up the valley and valley sides including to undeveloped, tree lined and wooded horizons which often form a backdrop
- Settlements largely lie in the base of the valley at river crossing points and have a strong vernacular character. Hedge boundary treatments and garden trees within the settlements blend with, and provide an important contribution to, the wider landscape character
- The villages are largely hidden in views from the wider area due to their valley bottom location
- Traditional farmsteads
- Buildings are largely of the local vernacular brick and flint and tile and slate roofs, with some thatch
- General absence of street lighting minimises light pollution

Key Detractors

12.A.19. Key detractors of LCA12A are as follows:

- Dilapidated modern agricultural barns
- Suburbanising boundary fencing in villages and adjacent to open pasture fields (e.g. high close boarded fencing), particularly in Hurstbourne Tarrant
- Loss of the rural character of the undeveloped water meadows and valley floor including within domestic curtilages
- Spread of equestrian activity into water meadows, causing loss of simple landscape character
- Overhead power lines can be intrusive

Local Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues

12.A.20. Local natural and cultural landscape issues for LCA12A are as follows:

- Increased need for water abstraction leading to wet grasslands and woodlands drying out causing a reduction in biodiversity and a downwards movement of the spring head
- Increased silt loading through erosion of previously permanent pasture
- Scrub and reed encroachment through changes in land management
- Loss of unimproved mesotrophic grassland to arable or through application of fertilisers
- Loss of water meadow
- Enrichment of the stream through aquaculture ventures (water cress beds).
- Pressure for development with expansion of small scale villages within the narrow river corridor and amalgamation into a continuous ribbon along the valley
- This area is particularly vulnerable to the impact of changes on the surrounding valley slopes of adjacent LCA (character areas)
- Expansion of properties within settlements urbanising the rural settlement character
- Expansion of farmsteads and conversion of farm buildings to residential
- The potential for solar and other renewable energy development to erode the rural character of the area
- Sensitivity of the narrow, intimate scale valley to any form of new development

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

12.A.21. Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCA12A are as follows:

- River Swift Valley is noted for its intimate scale and winterbourne landscape, which is being threatened by changing patterns in water levels. The overall strategy is to conserve the quiet pastoral seclusion of the River Swift Valley and protect and enhance the key valued characteristics.

Land Management

12.A.22. All of the Borough wide and landscape type land management guidelines apply to this Landscape Character Area. Specific to this Landscape Character Area are:

12.A.23. **Landscape Distinctiveness**

- Maintain the intimate pastoral landscape pattern, which is also a feature which continues through the settlements
- Avoid visual intrusion from development in the valley

12.A.24. **Agriculture**

- Maintain existing field pattern and pastoral use
- Protect area from adverse changes arising from the management of open arable land in the adjoining uplands

12.A.25. **Woodland and Trees**

- Retain the valley as being generally free of woodland while also recognising the importance of some level of structural habitat diversity and the value of woody debris in watercourses

12.A.26. **Biodiversity**

- Maintain the current pattern of water levels
- Conserve, manage and restore unimproved grassland

12.A.27. **Historic Landscapes**

- Conserve remaining patchwork water meadow

Land Use and Development

12.A.28. 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:

12.A.29. **Built Development**

- Retain the separate identities of the villages of Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe
- Protect the areas away from settlement from further development
- Avoid further development up onto valley sides out of the villages which will intrude into the skyline and degrade the rural character and setting of these settlements
- Maintain the existing relationship of open spaces adjacent to the River Swift throughout the settlements with their simple design and landscape features

12.A.30. **Infrastructure**

- Protect the area from further noise intrusion from the A343

- Seek to avoid introduction of tall features on the adjacent slopes or hill tops that might be visually intrusive
- Development to be small in scale and well sited, taking advantage of vegetation cover, to conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquillity



Winding course of the River Swift winterbourne through open pasture

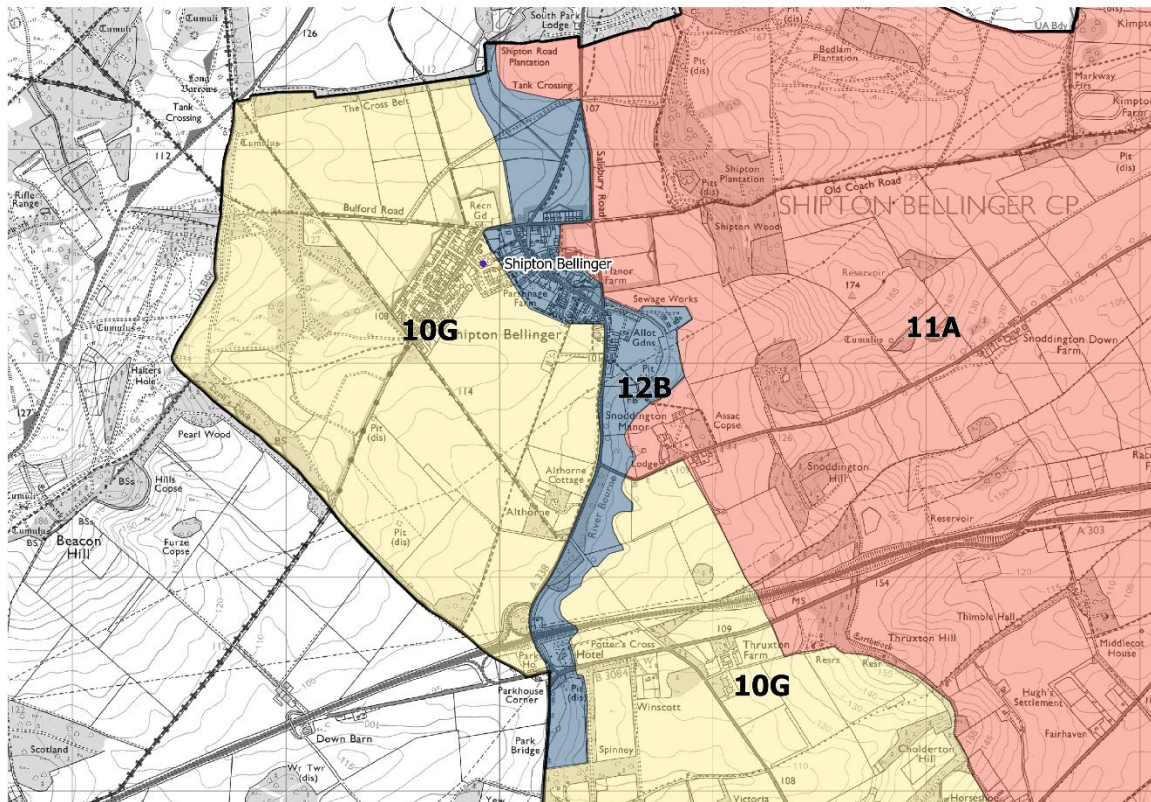


Woodland on the valley slopes providing a backdrop in views along the valley floor



Pollarded willow trees along the River Swift

LCA12B River Bourne Valley



General Description

- 12.B.1. The River Bourne Valley is an open meandering shallow narrow valley lying at the foot of the western slopes of Quarley Hill Downs, passing through the village of Shipton Bellinger.

Location

- 12.B.2. The River Bourne Valley runs from north of Cholderton to south of Tidworth in Wiltshire.

Local Physical Influences

- 12.B.3. **Geology and Soils:** Valley Gravels overlying Chalk.

Landform: Shallow valley with gentle slopes rising west into the Cholderton Chalk Downlands and more steeply east into Quarley Hill Downs.

Drainage: A winterbourne.

Local Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern

- 12.B.4. This area is a narrow river valley; the Bourne is a winterbourne stream and the winterbourne sections are likely to support particularly niche characteristic habitats and species due to the ephemeral nature of the stream. Further downstream, the flow becomes more permanent and will exhibit different characteristics more akin to permanent chalk stream habitat, although the watercourse is not designated as a SINC.
- 12.B.5. The land around the watercourse is largely improved pasture / grassland with occasional patches of woodland. There are no areas identified as SINC's or Ancient Woodland.
- 12.B.6. The table below identifies the broad habitat types for LCA12B.

Broad habitat type	Area of habitat (Hectares)	Percentage of the LCA (%)
Arable and horticulture	30.48	34.17
Boundary and linear features	5.05	5.66
Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland	2.49	2.80
Built-up areas and gardens	13.90	15.58
Coniferous woodland	3.84	4.31
Fen, marsh and swamp	0.85	0.96
Improved grassland	26.01	29.16
Standing open water and canals	0.03	0.03
Unidentified habitat	5.27	5.91
Unidentified water	1.28	1.43
Total	89.20	

Local Historical Influences

- 12.B.7. The River Bourne Valley Landscape Character Area extends through the northwestern portion of the chalk uplands within Test Valley. The landscape both within the valley, upon its slopes and along its flanks is predominantly taken up with eighteenth and nineteenth century parliamentary field systems. These later field systems have effectively removed much evidence of the earlier local historic landscape belonging to this Character Area.
- 12.B.8. At the southern end of the valley, the valley floor is mainly occupied by miscellaneous valley floor enclosures. These elements represent a largely

undatable landscape feature. On the eastern bank of the River Bourne lies a small estate and parkland developed post 1810 (Snoddington Manor). This park may have had an effect on the surrounding landscape and may have represented a force for change and development within the surrounding agricultural landscape.

Designations

12.B.9. Designations that lie wholly or in part within this Landscape Character Area comprise:

12.B.10. **Historic**

Listed buildings

- A small cluster at Shipton Bellinger

Settlement Pattern

12.B.11. One settlement is present within this Landscape Character Area; Shipton Bellinger. This village has a small nucleated historic core centred upon a crossing point of the river, around which a linear settlement has developed which follows the valley floor as it winds southwards towards Snoddington Manor. The later nineteenth century settlement activity extended westwards away from the village centre along the main road which heads southwest to the Borough boundary. There are no farmsteads present within the Landscape Character Area.

Local Settlements

12.B.12. Local Settlements and their corresponding Settlement Type (see Appendix 2 for more information):

- Shipton Bellinger: Chalk Downland: Hill Top Settlement Type.

Remoteness and Tranquillity

12.B.13. The area is disturbed by major roads, the A338 and its junction with the A303(T) and Ministry of Defence (MOD) activity to the north.

Key Valued Characteristics

12.B.14. Key valued characteristics of LCA12B are as follows:

- Shallow river valley with gentle slopes rising west into the Cholderton Chalk Downlands and more steeply east into Quarley Hill Downs
- Winding course of the River Bourne winterbourne through open pasture, sometimes flanked by riverside vegetation, trees and woodland (in the south), is a unifying feature of the area
- Characteristic small bridged crossing points within Shipton Bellinger provide access to dwellings and the church
- Fields are divided by hedgerows with occasional blocks of broadleaved woodland
- High groundwater levels giving rise to wet mesotrophic grassland and diversity of flora and fauna
- Pastoral character with fields retained as pasture due to recurrent waterlogging
- 19th century Parliamentary enclosures flank the Bourne Rivulet with only a single catchwork water meadow evident along its course
- Traditional building styles are brick walls with clay tiled roofs and tile hanging
- One main valley road with connecting roads at Shipton Bellinger with open views across the valley
- Sweeping views up the valley and valley sides including to undeveloped, tree-lined and wooded horizons
- Shipton Bellinger largely lies in the base of the valley with hedge boundary treatments and garden trees blending with the wider landscape character
- General absence of street lighting minimises light pollution

Key Detractors

12.B.15. Key detractors of LCA12B are as follows:

- Area disturbed by roads and MOD activity to the north
- Some limited visual intrusion from solar farm adjacent to A303 within adjacent LCA (10G)
- Visually intrusive pylons crossing the centre of the character area

Local Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues

12.B.16. Local natural and cultural landscape issues for LCA12B are as follows:

- Increased need for water abstraction leading to wet grasslands and woodlands drying out causing a reduction in biodiversity and a downwards movement of the spring head
- Increased silt loading through erosion of previously permanent pasture
- Loss of unimproved mesotrophic grassland to arable or through application of fertilisers
- Increase in activity and changes in use on MOD land
- Modernisation and development of the sewage work potentially causing visual intrusion and dilution of the rural character within the River Bourne Valley
- The potential for solar and other renewable energy development to erode the rural character of the area

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

12.B.17. Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCA12B are as follows:

- The River Bourne Valley landscape has been eroded by the development of Shipton Bellinger and the main roads running through the area. The overall strategy is to restore the pastoral character of the River Bourne Valley and seek opportunities to reinforce the pattern of valley floor vegetation and protect and enhance the key valued characteristics.

Land Management

12.B.18. 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:

12.B.19. **Landscape Distinctiveness**

- Seek opportunities to create separation between the built form and open valley bottom to restore a sense of seclusion
- Ensure that new planting reflects the characteristics of a winterbourne

12.B.20. **Agriculture**

- Seek opportunities to revert to unintensive grassland management

12.B.21. **Hedgerows**

- Replace hedgerows to recreate a small field pattern

12.B.22. **Woodland and Trees**

- Seek opportunities to remove conifer planting and replace with native woodland species, with preference given to the creation of wet woodland habitats

12.B.23. **Biodiversity**

- Monitor water levels and seek opportunities to prevent the loss of wetland habitats

12.B.24. **Historic Landscapes**

- Maintain and enhance existing parkland features associated with Snoddington Manor

Land Use and Development

12.B.25. 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:

12.B.26. **Built Development**

- Care to be taken to avoid visually intrusive development within Shipton Bellinger
- Proposals for solar development should consider the impact on the rural character of the valley and potential cumulative effects with nearby existing solar development
- Development to be small in scale and well sited, taking advantage of vegetation cover, to conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquillity

12.B.27. **Infrastructure**

- Seek opportunities to provide new planting along the roadsides in character with the winterbourne landscape



Shallow river valley with gentle slopes rising west into the Cholderton Chalk Downlands and more steeply east into Quarley Hill Downs



River Bourne winterbourne flanked by riverside vegetation



Pasture fields are divided by hedgerows