

LCA10G Cholderton Downs

General Description

The Cholderton Chalk Downs form two areas valley farmland which run down to and are divided by the River Bourne Valley LCA12B. South of the River Bourne Valley, the land gently rises to the east to LCA11A Quarley Hill Downs, and to the west to Beacon Hill, outside the Borough.

It is predominantly arable, with some woodlands which loosely link together across the landscape, by hedgerows and shelter belts.

Cholderton Park covers an extensive area within the centre of this LCA, with its associated small woodlands, shelter belts, lodges and farms, creating an area of contrast to the open arable fields to the north and south.

Location

Cholderton Chalk Downs is located to the far west of the Borough, on the western and south western side of the low lying hills of Quarley Hill, Thruxton Hill, Snoddington Hill and the River Bourne Valley.

Local Physical Influences

Geology and soils: Upper chalk.

Landform: Very gently undulating landform on higher ground rising to 150m AOD.

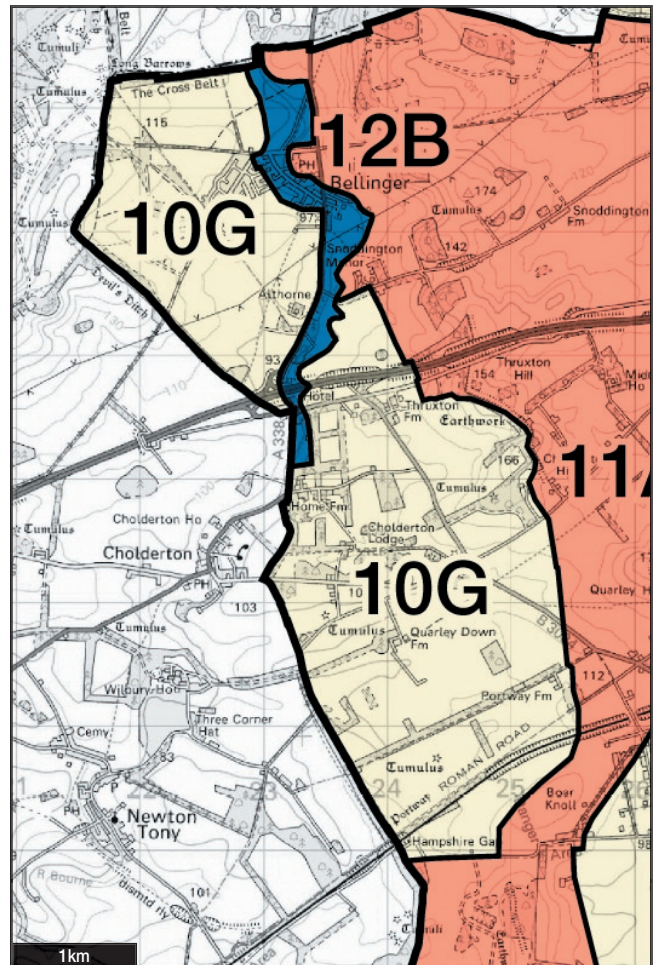
Drainage: Well drained area, outside the River Test catchment area.

Local Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern

The character area is typical of the character type.

Local Historical Influences

This Landscape Character Area is a very varied environment surrounded to the east and south by a downland ridge and to the north and west by the Borough boundary. Within this area of largely



arable-based agriculture late 18th and 19th century parliamentary field enclosure abounds.

At the southern edge of this area and immediately to the south of Cholderton Park, a series of regular ladder fields survive associated with post-medieval informal enclosure of downland to produce a workable arable environment.



A series of Bronze Age burial mounds survive at the southern end of Cholderton Park and to the east on Cholderton Hill.

Settlement Pattern

Shipton Bellinger is the only formal settlement within this character area and only the western portion of this village lies within this LCA. The historic core lies within LCA 12B to the east and extends along the valley of the River Bourne. The majority of the settlement within LCA 10G dates to the 20th century and has developed along a road which extends south west away from the main settlement centre.

Few farms are located within this predominantly 19th century managed landscape. Those that do survive tend to be located close to major routes through the character area and towards the 'corner' of large areas of open field as opposed to within the center of a field system. Conversely the regular ladder fields to the south of Cholderton Park have a single farm (Quarley Down Farm), located centrally within the field system and connected to the main road system via a single formal trackway. Additional to this Cholderton Park and its associated buildings, of lodges and the Home Farm occupy a central area within this LCA.

The settlement pattern within this LCA is limited to the western element of the linear village of Shipton Bellinger, individual dwellings, for example Althorne Cottage, and a few isolated farmsteads, for example Quarley Down Farm.

Local Settlements and Features of Built Form

- Shipton Bellinger (W portion Chalk Downland). Dry Valley Settlement Type

Traditional building styles include brick and brick with flint walls with clay tiled roofs.

Community Perceptions

Few comments were made on this area. There were concerns that extensive recent flooding is being caused by poor management of the land and that the area may be affected by the future expansion of the MOD activities at Tidworth in Wiltshire.

Remoteness and Tranquillity

Although not particularly remote, the area has an air of quiet but intensive agricultural use.

Key Characteristics

- Gentle valley form, with a chalk stream, the River Bourne in the valley running up into Shipton Bellinger
- Predominantly arable
- Shelter belts and linear woodlands
- Large area of parkland at Cholderton Park and Snoddington Manor providing diversity in the landscape
- Large areas of remoteness and tranquillity
- Impact of the A303(T) and the railway line
- Overhead pylons
- Largely a landscape dominated by 19th century parliamentary enclosure
- Prehistoric monuments survive within Cholderton Park and upon the downland and hilltops immediately to the east.

Local Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues

- Loss of historically important open downland and associated prehistoric earthworks in this area to pressures from modern farming practices
- Retention of landscape diversity
- Future expansion of MOD activity at Tidworth.

Designations

Landscape

- North Wessex Downs AONB: Small area east of Smannell

Nature Conservation

SAC / SPA

- Porton Down & Salisbury Plain - See below SSSI
- Porton Down (<1% of SSSI) - Broadleaved woodland
- Salisbury Plain (<1% of SSSI) - Broadleaved woodland and improved calcareous grassland SINC
- 4 SINC, improved grassland with elements of relic unimproved grassland and sites supporting notable species or an outstanding assemblage of species