

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Bath & North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment 2021

Draft final report

Prepared by LUC

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Bath & North East Somerset Council

Bath & North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment 2021

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Chapter 1

Introduction and landscape context

This chapter gives an overview of the study

Context

1.1 This Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) forms part of a suite of evidence prepared by LUC to provide robust information on the landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES). It is designed to inform plan-making, development management and land use decisions within B&NES, in support of the forthcoming Local Plan 2016-2036.

1.2 The updated **B&NES Landscape Character Assessment** (2021) covers the rural areas of the district outside the setting of the City of Bath World Heritage Site (WHS). It provides a new spatial framework of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and component Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The LCAs are fully described to provide up-to-date information on the different rural landscapes found within B&NES. The LCA profiles can be found in **Chapters 5**.

Background and purpose of the Bath & North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment

1.3 This LCA covers the rural areas of the district outside the setting of the City of Bath WHS (which is covered in the 2017 'Bathscape LCA'). The location and extent of the study area is shown on **Figure 1.1**. This report provides an update to the previous LCA 'The Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment' SPG which was produced by the Bath & North East Somerset Planning Services in 2003.

1.4 The aim of this LCA is to create a comprehensive and up to date strategic district scale landscape evidence to provide a framework for more detailed landscape studies and sensitivity assessments.

1.5 The LCA provides a robust evidence base to underpin the review of the Local Plan and to assist in the local planning process. It is intended to both inform work on policy development and development management, guiding development that is sympathetic to local character and the qualities of the landscape. It can help inform locational policies

for strategic development as well as appropriate design and mitigation, providing baseline evidence for more detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

1.6 In summary, the document can be used to consider landscape character when considering any type of change. This includes opportunities for conserving existing character, strengthening, and enhancing character as well as opportunities to create new character.

The role of landscape character assessment

1.7 Landscape character is defined as “a *distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*”¹

1.8 Landscape character assessment is the process of identifying and describing such variations in character across a landscape – in this case the local authority area of Bath & North East Somerset. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of features and attributes (characteristics) that make different landscapes distinctive. The landscape is the result of the interaction between people and place which gives an area a local identity. The ‘landscape wheel’ below illustrates how the different natural, cultural, and perceptual attributes of a landscape combine to produce character.

1.9 The process of Landscape Character Assessment is described in “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Natural England, October 2014).

1.10 Understanding the character of place and evaluating an area’s defining characteristics is a key component in managing growth sustainably and ensuring that the inherent quality of the landscape in Bath and North East Somerset can continue to be celebrated, creating places that people can be proud of. Understanding of character can be used to ensure that any change or development does not undermine whatever is valued or characteristic in a particular landscape and help guide positive change that conserves, enhances, restores, or creates local character.



The 'landscape wheel' (Natural England, 2014)

¹ Natural England (2014), An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment can be found [here](#).

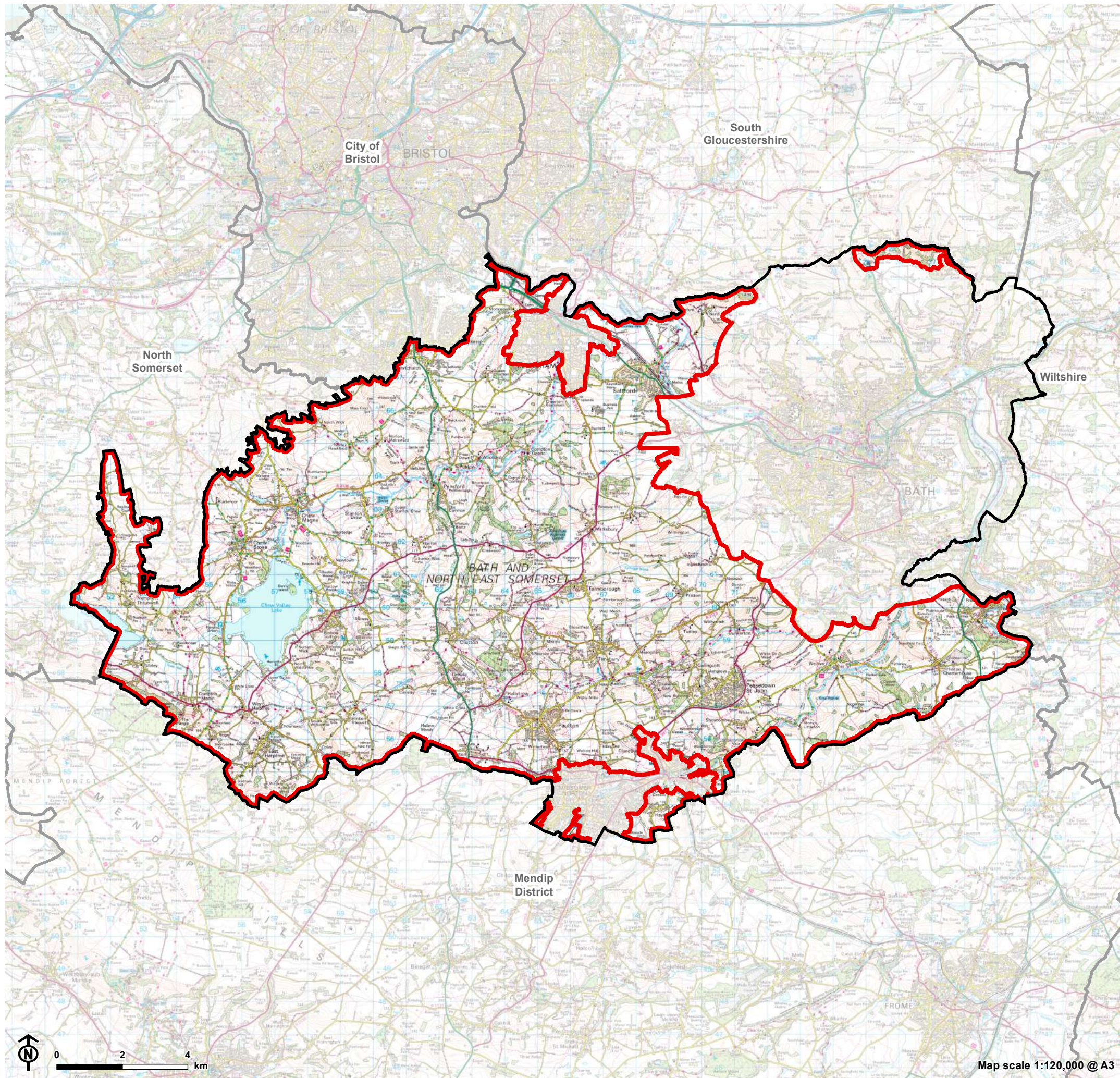


Figure 1.1: Location of the district and extent of the study area

- Bath and North East Somerset
- Neighbouring Local Authority boundary
- Landscape Character Assessment study area

Bath and North East Somerset Context

1.11 Bath & North East Somerset is a unitary authority covering an area of 35,112 hectares (135.57 sq miles). The B&NES boundary stretches from the picturesque lakes of the Chew Valley in the west to the World Heritage City of Bath and the Wiltshire border to the east.

1.12 Much of the District falls within nationally protected landscapes including the Mendip Hills and Cotswolds Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and also the City of Bath World Heritage Site (WHS). The location and extent of these protected landscapes and the WHS are mapped at **Figure 1.2**. This map also shows the indicative setting of the WHS

1.13 . The City of Bath World Heritage Site (WHS) is internationally recognised, and although this designation primarily relates to the Georgian city, the interaction of the landscape within and around Bath are also important. The landscape setting of the city is cited as part of the Outstanding Universal Values of the designation, with its open green character and complex landform which contains the city within a 'bowl'. Also included in the attributes of the World Heritage Site are the views both within the city and to the hills and ridges of the surrounding landscape.

1.14 The eastern part of the district lies within the nationally designated Cotswolds AONB. The special qualities of the AONB include the limestone geology, Cotswold escarpment and high wolds, big skies, and long-distance views. Other special qualities relate to the Cotswold stone vernacular, ecologically important habitats, and tranquillity of the area, which is in high demand for recreation.

1.15 A small area in the west of B&NES lies within the Mendip Hills AONB. The special qualities of the AONB include the distinctive limestone ridges and scarp slopes, the limestone geology including caves and aquifers, ecologically important habitats, and the sparse population, providing a tranquil, natural-feeling landscape

The European Landscape Convention

1.16 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management, and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded, or outstanding:

"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"

1.17 The ELC puts emphasis on the whole landscape and all its values and is forward looking in its approach, recognising the dynamic and changing character of landscape. Specific measures promoted by the ELC of direct relevance to this study include:

- The identification and assessment of landscape; and
- Improved consideration of landscape in existing and future sectoral and spatial policy and regulation.

1.18 This updated Landscape Character Assessment will continue to make a key contribution to the implementation of the ELC in Bath and North East Somerset. It helps to reaffirm the importance of landscape, coordinate existing work and guide future work to protect, manage and plan the landscape.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.19 The revised NPPF, published in July 2021, states in paragraph 174 that:

1.20 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- ...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality)
- ...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland ...'

1.21 The NPPF is supported by Planning Practice Guidance which recognises the role that Landscape Character Assessment plays in helping to understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape. This assessment for Bath & North East Somerset provides evidence to help protect valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic value and beauty of the countryside.

Bath & North East Somerset District Policy Context

1.22 This Landscape Character Assessment forms a sound evidence base to support the landscape policy and other character policies in the local plan.

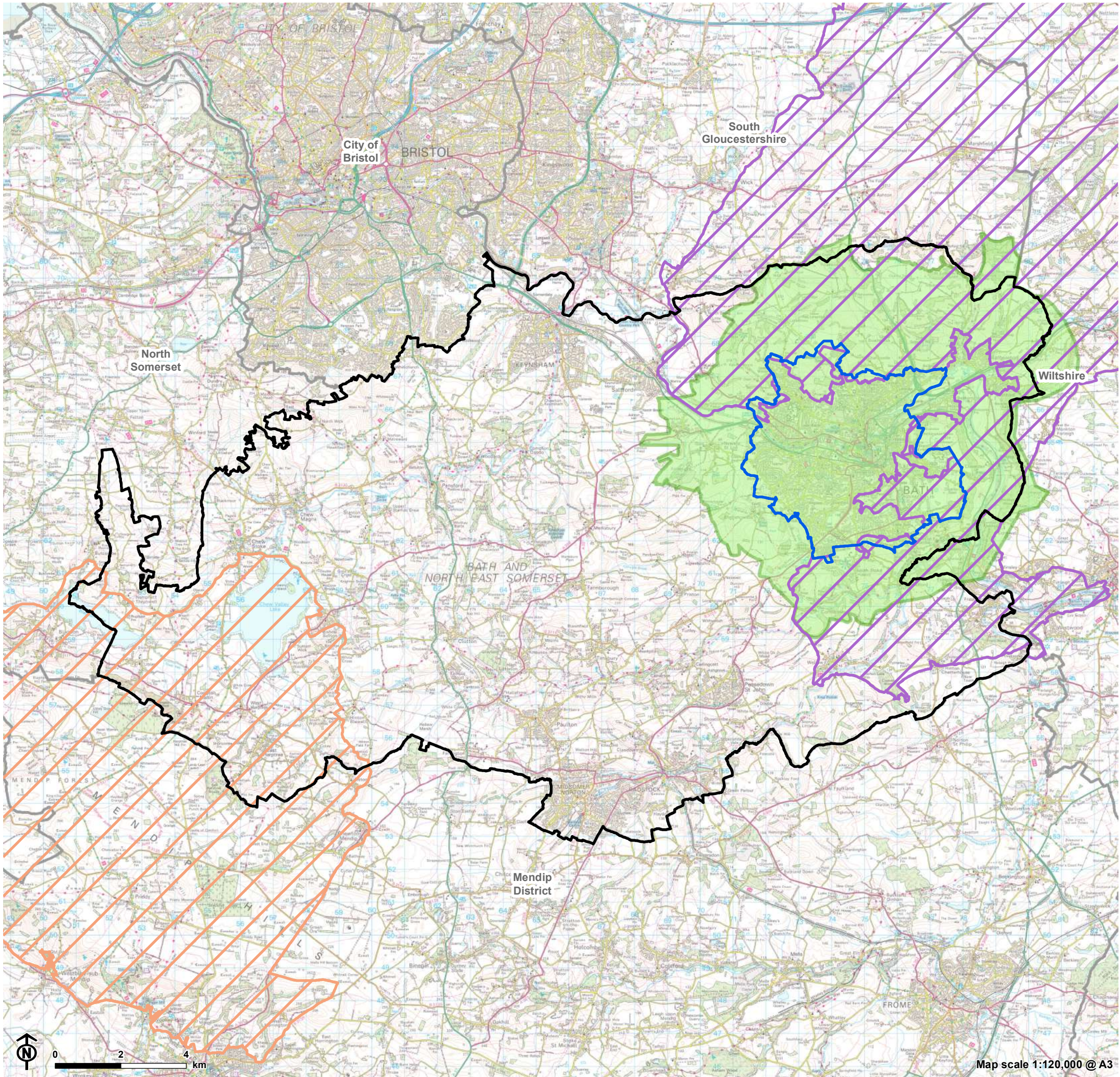


Figure 1.2 Location and extent of protected
landscapes and City of Bath WHS

- Bath and North East Somerset
- Neighbouring Local Authority boundary
- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting

Relationship to published landscape studies

1.23 Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at a variety of scales and levels of detail. The Bath & North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2021) is part of a hierarchy of landscape character assessment information cascading down from the national to local level.

National level

1.24 At a national level, England is divided into 159 distinct National Character Areas (NCAs). Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity. There are descriptive profiles available for each NCA (published in 2014 by Natural England) setting out information on landscape character, changes in the landscape and an assessment of ecosystem services delivered.

1.25 Bath & North East Somerset District lies within three NCAs:

- NCA 107 Cotswolds: A limestone belt with steep scarps crowned by a high, open wold and a series of wooded valleys. Parkland and estates are common, and there is a high number of beech and mixed oak woodlands. The valleys are dominated by pasture, with meadows and tree-lined watercourses along the valley bottoms.
- NCA 118 Bristol and Avon Valleys and Ridges: A landscape characterised by alternating ridges and broad valleys, with areas of steep, wooded slopes and open rolling farmland. Species-rich grasslands and ancient woodlands are frequently found.
- NCA 141 Mendip Hills: A striking landscape formed of a Carboniferous Limestone ridge and sandstone peaks. The weathering of the geology has resulted in a classic karst landscape of caves, gorges, dry valleys and fast flowing springs.

1.26 The NCAs form the overall landscape character framework for this study, with the local classifications falling within that framework. National Character Areas within and surrounding Bath & North East Somerset district are illustrated on **Figure 1.3**.

Local level

1.27 Landscape does not stop at administrative boundaries but continues seamlessly into surrounding districts. This assessment therefore sits alongside the Landscape Character Assessments of the adjacent authorities of North Somerset, Mendip, South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. This study aims to provide an integrated classification across administrative boundaries.

Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2004)

1.28 The landscape character assessment for the Cotswolds AONB, identifies 19 Landscape Character Types and 68 Landscape Character Areas. Within B&NES there are four Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Types and 12 Landscape Character Areas.

Mendip Hills AONB Landscape Character Assessment (1998)

1.29 The landscape character assessment for the Mendip Hills AONB identifies 11 landscape character areas, of which three are within B&NES district.

Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment (2017)

1.30 The 2021 Bath & North East Somerset LCA excludes the area covered by the 'Bathscape LCA', which was published in 2017. The extent of the project area for the Bathscape LCA is defined by the landscape of the City of Bath World Heritage Site and its setting. The assessment is based on the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2004), although was undertaken at a more detailed scale. The assessment identifies seven Landscape Character Types and 18 Landscape Character Areas. The Bathscape LCA can be found [here](#).

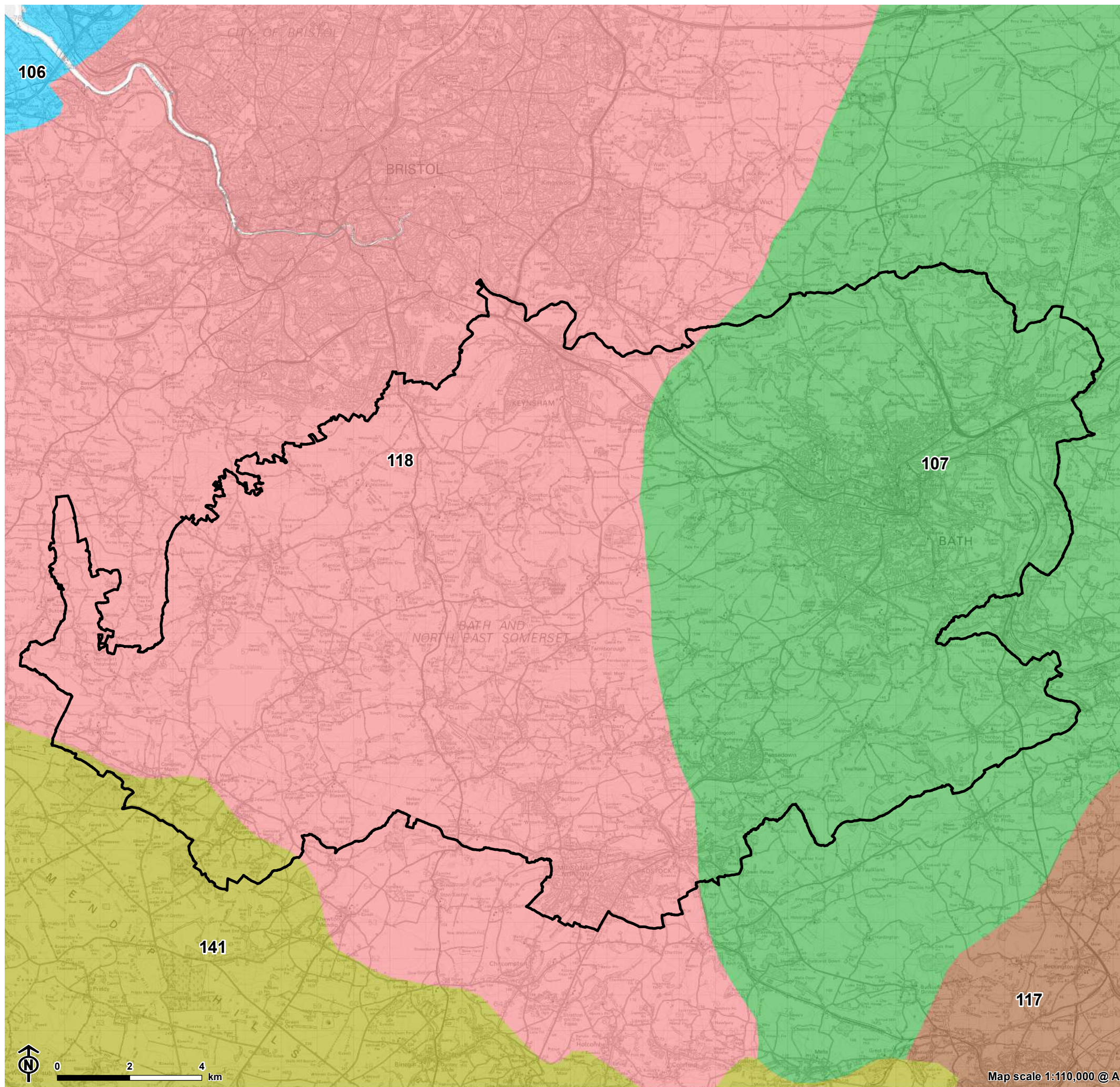


Figure 1.3: National Character Areas

- Legend**
- Bath and North East Somerset
 - National Landscape Character Areas**
 - 106: Severn and Avon Vales
 - 107: Cotswolds
 - 117: Avon Vales
 - 118: Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges
 - 141: Mendip Hills

Chapter 2

Methodology

This chapter sets out the method for the Landscape Character Assessment

Approach

2.1 The Landscape Character Assessment follows the method promoted by Natural England through 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014) which embeds the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) within it.

2.2 The assessment draws on the previous 'Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset' (2003) LCA.

Process of assessment

2.3 The process for undertaking the study involved three main stages, described below.

Desk study and classification

- Inception
- Baseline data collection/collation
- Review of existing Landscape Character Assessments
- Classification
- Desk-based characterisation
- Interim Report, for client comments

Field Survey

2.4 A systematic field survey was undertaken to review and refine the draft classification and descriptions presented in the interim report. This involved:

- Verifying and fine-tuning the classification of the landscape types and areas identified including review of boundaries;
- Checking and identifying key characteristics;
- Collecting aesthetic/perceptual information;
- Taking photographs to provide a visual record of the landscape;

Reporting

- Updating the interim report with field observations
- Submitting a draft for client review followed by a final report

2.5 GIS was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating, and presenting data.

Desk study

2.6 The initial desk-based stage involved the collation of a wide range of up to date mapped information to 'sense-check' the existing landscape classifications of Landscape Character Areas, and consider their potential for nesting within new Landscape Character Types.

2.7 The baseline, including designations relating to cultural heritage, nature conservation and landscape were checked for any changes since the original LCA.

2.8 Data used within the report, including data collated in the GIS database is shown in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: GIS data

Name	Source
Base OS mapping at 1:25k and 1:50k	Ordnance Survey
Terrain 50 Contour data	Ordnance Survey
Linear features, mass movement, artificial ground, superficial deposits, and bedrock geology 1:50K	British Geological Survey
Administrative boundaries	Bath & North East Somerset Council
National Character Areas	Natural England
Existing Bath & North East Somerset LCA - 'The Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment' SPG	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment (2017)	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Landscape Character Assessment for neighbouring districts	North Somerset, Mendip, South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire

Name	Source
Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2004)	Cotswolds AONB
Mendip Hills AONB Landscape Character Assessment (1998)	Mendip Hills AONB
Public Rights of Way, and access land	Natural England
River features & flood zones	Environment Agency
Nature conservation designations	Natural England (national datasets) and Bath & North East Somerset District Council (local datasets)
Priority habitats	Natural England and Bath & North East Somerset Council
Forestry	Forestry Commission
Historic Landscape Characterisation dataset	Historic England
Heritage designations	Historic England (national datasets) and Bath & North East Somerset Council (local datasets)
Dark skies and tranquillity	CPRE
Infrastructure	Ordnance Survey
Local Plan designations and policy areas	Bath & North East Somerset Council

Classification

2.9 Classification is concerned with dividing the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable, and consistent common character and grouping areas of similar character together.

- **Landscape Character Types (LCTs)** share broadly similar patterns of geology, topography, vegetation, and human influences in each area in which they occur. Although not identical they share a common pattern of elements.
- **Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)** – Each landscape type is divided into geographically specific character areas. These share generic characteristics with other

areas of the same type but have their own particular identity or 'sense of place'.

2.10 The update of the landscape classification for Bath & North East Somerset is based on a review of the 2003 landscape character area boundaries. Some adjustments were made to landscape character area boundaries, testing their alignment with key variances in landscape character. The Character Areas were nested into a framework of new Landscape Character Types.

2.11 The new classification was integrated with the 2017 Bathscape LCA and aligned with surrounding authority LCAs (both local authority and AONBs).

This process resulted in the definition of 10 LCTs and 23 LCAs for Bath & North East Somerset district. The classification is shown on **Figure 4.1** below.

Field Survey

2.12 A field survey was undertaken in January 2021 to verify the classification. This specifically focussed on information that is less easily gathered from desk work alone:

- verifying and fine-tuning the classification of the LCTs;
- verifying information on landscape character and key characteristics and noting local variations in character;
- gathering information on perceptual qualities and views;

Reporting

2.13 The Landscape Character Assessment is presented at LCA level and arranged by their respective LCT as set out in **Chapter 5**. These are structured as follows:

Map and summary of location and landscape character

- A location map (1:25,000 scale) which shows the extent of the LCT and its component LCAs
- A location map for each LCA
- Representative photos to help the reader appreciate the character of the LCT

Landscape description

2.14 A description of the landscape character of the LCA is provided under each of the following headings:

- Location and summary
- Key characteristics:
- Geology and soils
- Landform and drainage pattern
- Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

- Agriculture and land use
- Fields and boundaries
- Historic environment
- Development and infrastructure
- Views and perceptual qualities

Chapter 3

Formative Influences

This chapter sets out the formative influence on the landscape of Bath & North East Somerset

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Chapter 4

Landscape Character of Bath & North East Somerset District

This chapter sets out the classification for the landscape of Bath & North East Somerset.

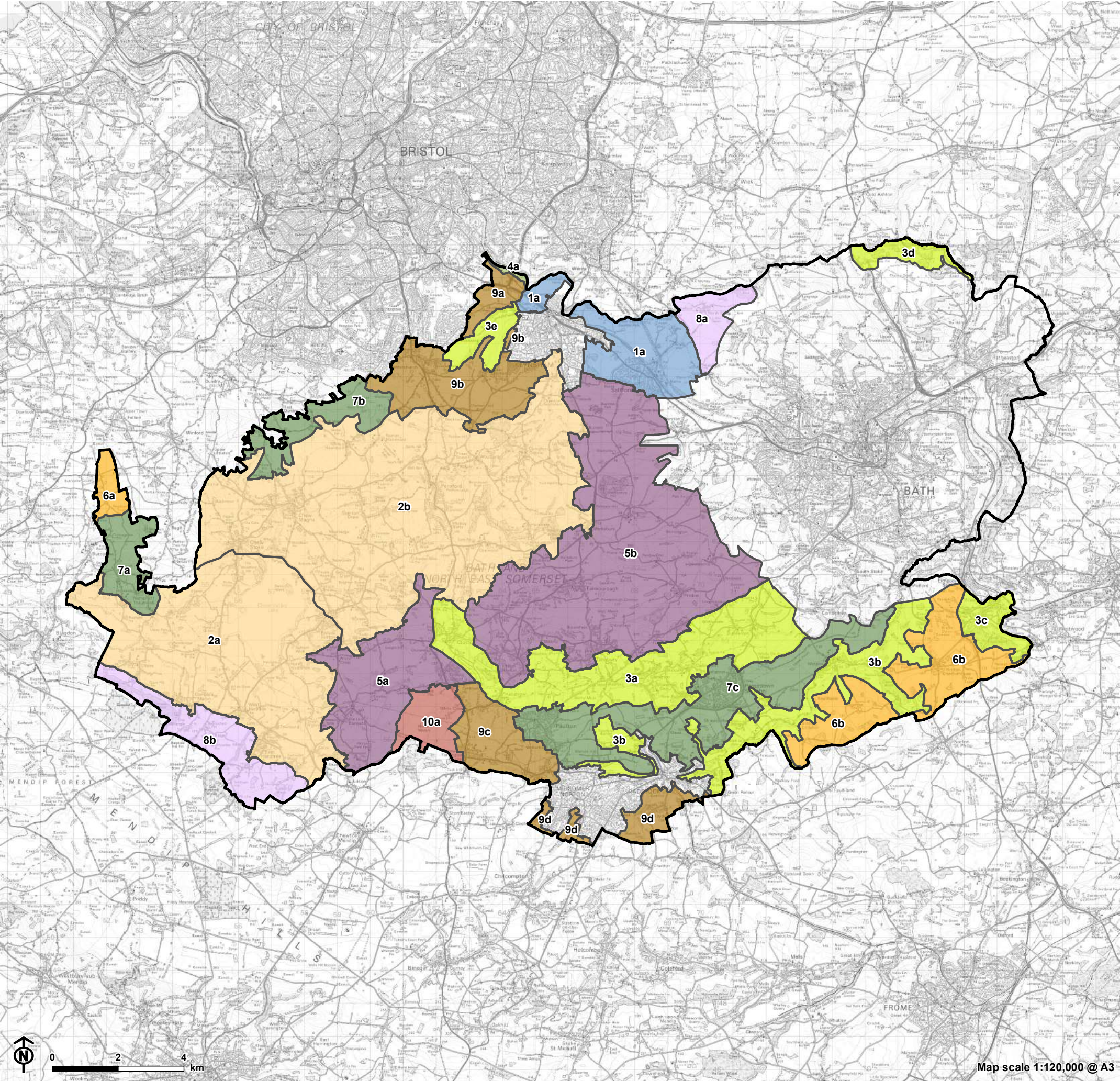
Landscape character types and areas

- 4.1** The updated landscape classification identifies ten generic landscape character types (LCTs), each representing a distinct identity and common geology, topography, land use and cultural pattern.
- 4.2** The LCTs are subdivided into local landscape character areas (LCAs), which are discrete geographic areas that possess the characteristics described for the landscape type but have a recognisable local identity. The LCTs and LCAs are listed in **Table 4.1** below and shown on **Figure 4.1**.
- 4.3** It is important to note that boundaries between one LCT or LCA and the next are transitional and there is rarely a clear-cut change 'on the ground'.
- 4.4** This assessment has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 which provides an appropriate level of detail for the landscape character assessment at the strategic district scale. In considering any change in one character area the impact on views to/ from and the character of neighbouring areas should also be considered.
- 4.5** The classification covers the area within Bath and North East Somerset outside the City of Bath World Heritage Site Setting. The WHS Setting has its own landscape character assessment, Bathscape LCA (2017).

Table 4.1: Landscape classification for B&NES

LCA no.	LCA name
LCT 1: Settled River Valleys	
1a	Avon Valley
LCT 2: Rolling Valley Farmland	
2a	Upper Chew and Yeo Valleys and Chew Valley Lake
2b	Chew Valley
LCT 3: Enclosed Valleys	
3a	Cam Brook Valley
3b	Wellow Brook Valley
3c	Frome Valley (Freshford to Iford)
3d	St Catherine's Valley
3e	Stockwood Vale and Charlton Bottom
LCT 4: Limestone Gorges	
4a	Bickley Wood Gorge
LCT 5: Limestone Plateaux and Brook Valleys	
5a	Hinton Blewett Plateau and Brook Valleys
5b	Farmborough Plateau and Brook Valleys
LCT 6: Limestone Plateaux	
6a	Thrubwell Farm Plateau
6b	Hinton Charterhouse and Baggridge Plateau
LCT 7: Hills and Ridges	
7a	Nempnett Thrubwell Hills and Ridges
7b	Dundry Hill and Maes Knoll
7c	Peasedown St John Ridge
LCT 8: Escarpments and Slopes	
8a	North Stoke Scarp
8b	Mendip Slopes
LCT 9: Open Farmland and Urban Fringe	
9a	Hicks Gate Farmland
9b	Whitchurch Farmland
9c	Farrington Gurney Farmland
9d	Norton Radstock Southern Farmland
LCT 10: Levels	
10a	Hollow Marsh

Figure 4.1 Landscape Character Types and Areas



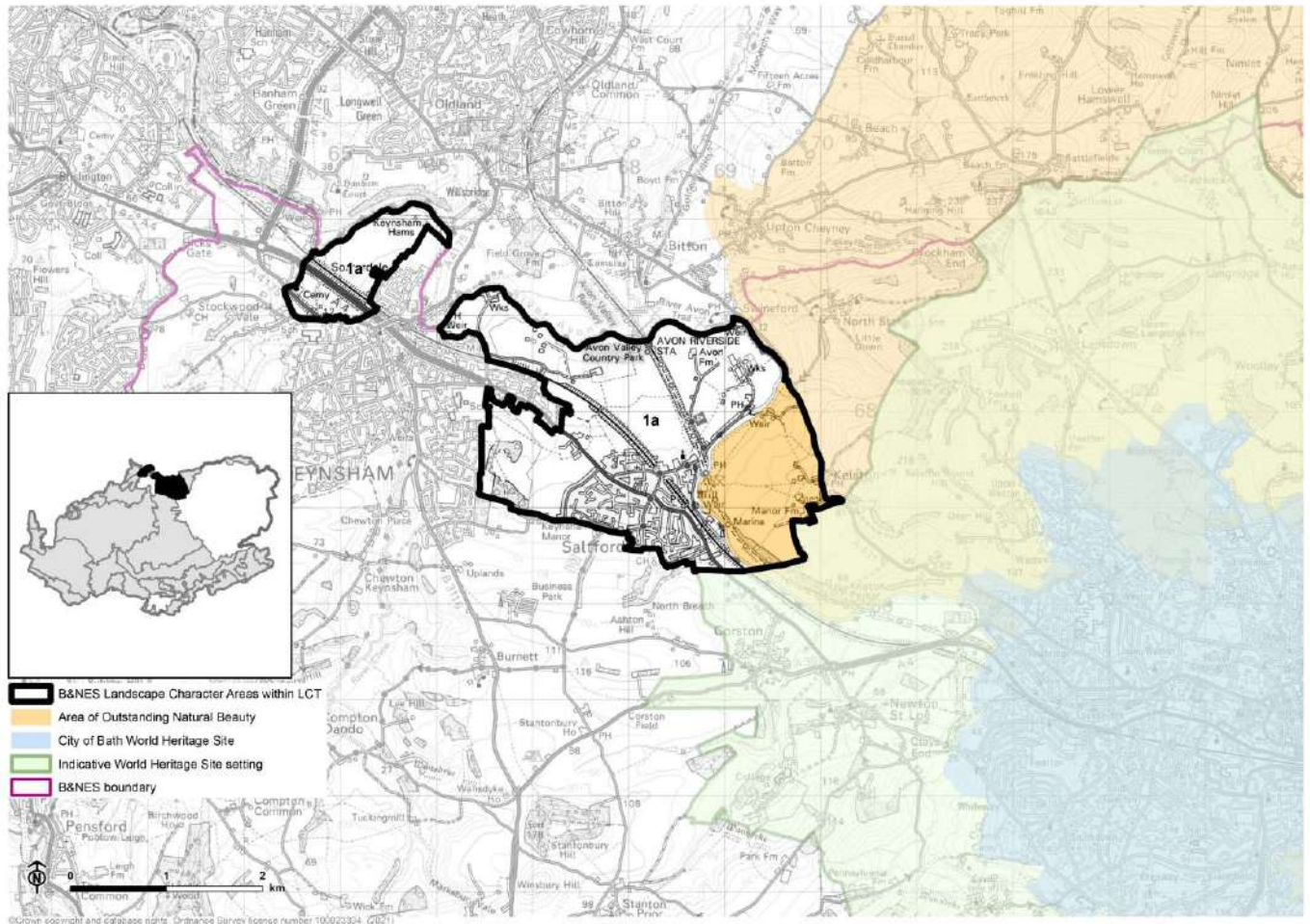
Chapter 5

Bath and North East Somerset Landscape Character Profiles

LCT 1 Settled River Valleys



LCT 1: Settled River Valleys



Landscape Character Areas:

The Settled River Valleys LCT has one LCA:

- 1a: Avon Valley

LCA 1a: Avon Valley



View across the flat floodplain towards the eastern settlement edge of Salford, showing infrastructure on the valley floor (including a marina) and the susceptibility of the area to seasonal flooding.

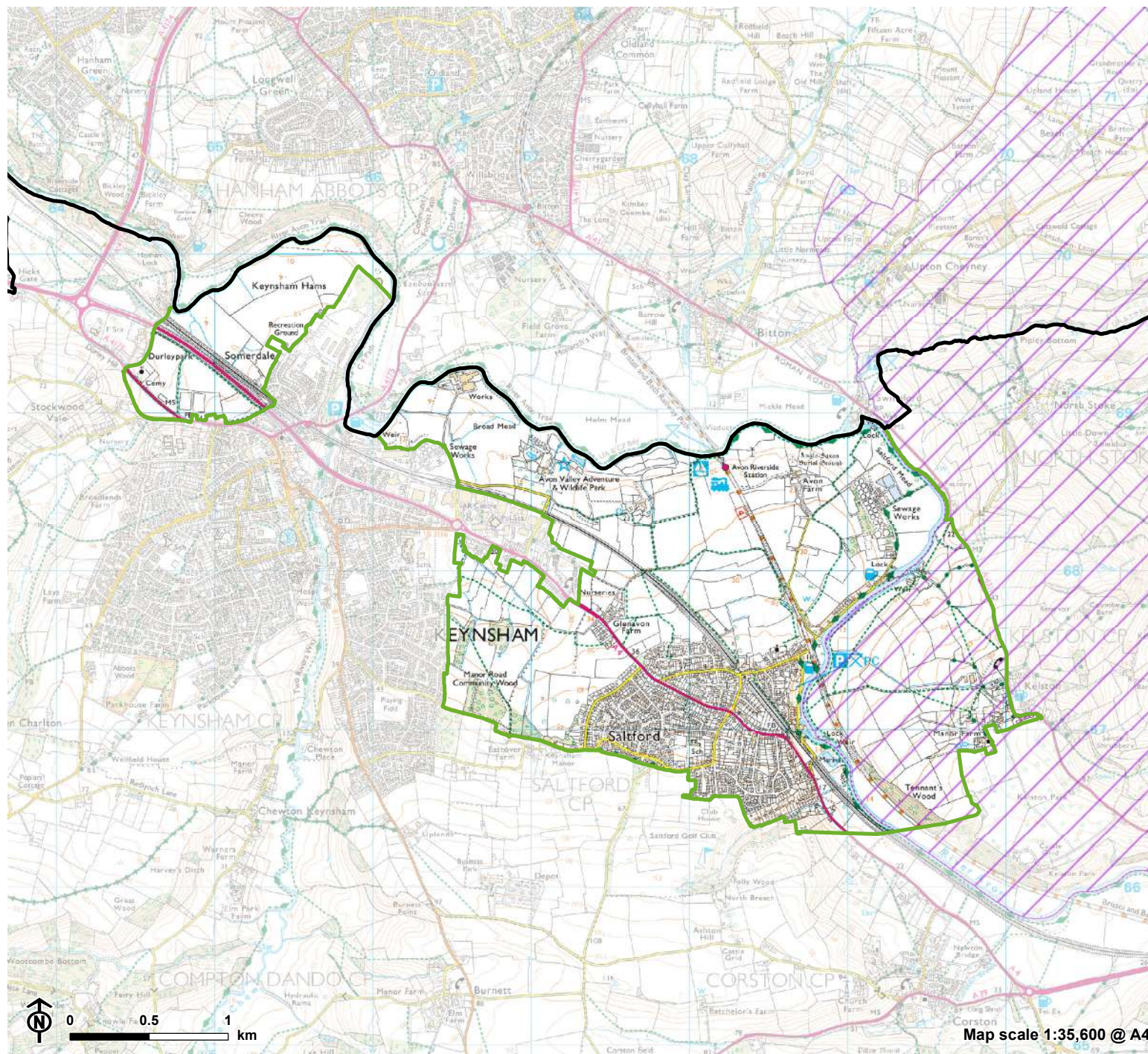
Location and summary






The Avon Valley LCA comprises the meandering River Avon, its broad valley floor and lower valley slopes, and is influenced by the presence of the mainline railway and the A4.

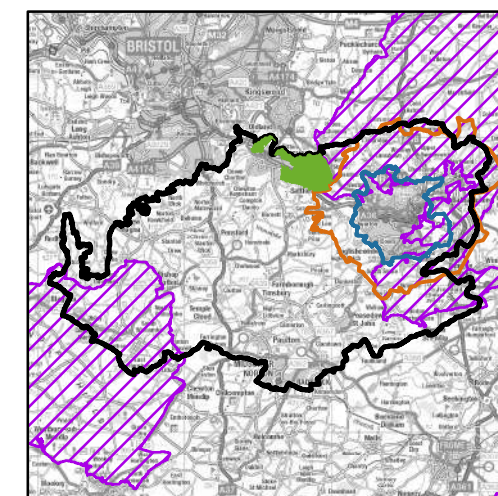
The LCA is located in the north east of the district, extending from Saltford to Keynsham, where the former Cadbury factory separates off a smaller area to the north-west. The area is distinguished by its lowland river valley character and its boundaries are marked by the change in topography where the valley abuts the Cotswolds escarpment to the north-east and east, and by the elevated limestone plateau to the south.

The Avon Valley extends east into the area covered by the *Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment* (River Avon Valley West and Kelston Park LCA) as part of the Settled Open River Valley character type. The eastern banks of the River Avon are within the Cotswolds AONB.

1a Avon Valley



-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Generally clayey soils with well-drained loamy soils on the river gravels
- Broad open valley with a generally flat valley floor
- Shallow to moderately sloping valley sides often with undulating lower slopes
- Meandering tree lined River Avon
- Several small woods
- A range of mostly riparian habitats
- Small to medium scale fields enclosed by fences and hedges
- Walls generally found nearer farms and settlements
- Patchwork of arable and pasture
- Land use for sports pitches, 'horsiculture', light industry and utilities within and bordering the area
- Prominent settlements within and adjoining the area
- Traditional building materials include Oolitic and Lias Limestone with clay tile roofs
- Prominent railway line and A4 Bristol to Bath road
- Line of disused railway line now the well-used tree-lined Bristol and Bath Railway Path
- Distinctive views to the elevated landform of the Cotswolds AONB.
- Landmarks include the former Cadbury factory at Keynsham
- Much of the area is disturbed by noise from road traffic and passing trains
- Seasonal flooding

Geology and soils

Drift deposits are an important component of the surface geology throughout the area with alluvium typically found through the floodplain as well as smaller outcrops of river gravel and head. Solid formations include Lias Limestone from Saltford to Kelston Park with visible outcrops at Mead Lane and Saltford, and Lias Clay to the north of the limestone from Keynsham to Kelston.



Long views east from a footpath east of Saltford to the elevated skyline of the Cotswolds including Kelston Round Hill (outside the LCA).

The Stidham Farm geological SSSI lies in the north of the area, designated for its Pleistocene terrace-gravels.

Soils are generally clayey in character ranging from well-drained in the limestone areas to slowly permeable or at risk of flooding beside the Avon. There are also some well-drained

fine loamy soils found over the river gravels, for example to the east of Keynsham.

Landform and drainage pattern

The wide valley of the meandering River Avon has a flat or gently sloping valley floor with an elevation of around 15m AOD. Seasonal flooding can have a pronounced effect on the character of the flood plain. The valley sides are generally gentle undulating slopes, but steeper where they abut the Cotswolds escarpment around Kelston.

The main line railway crosses the floodplain on steeply sloping raised embankments which isolate parts of the valley floor from the River Avon.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Priority Habitats within the LCA are limited, with areas of floodplain grazing marsh (Keynsham Hams and Broad Mead) and remnant traditional orchards associated with settlements. The course of the River Avon, some minor watercourses and the route of the Bristol and Bath Railway Path are identified as SNCIs.

The area has few trees, but the landscape is punctuated by a number of scattered small woods. Tennant's Wood is an ancient semi-natural woodland and Manor Road Community Woodland is a Local Nature Reserve in the west of the character area. Deciduous woodland (also a Priority Habitat) lines the River Avon, the Bristol and Bath Railway Path and the mainline railway. During the 1990's there was considerable woodland planting under the aegis of the

Community Forest to the east of Keynsham and development of this community resource is ongoing.

Agriculture and land use

Land-use is a varied patchwork of arable, pasture and grassland, with arable cultivation predominant to the north of Saltford. There is some horticultural land use north east of Keynsham and extensive sports pitches on the northern settlement edge. Localised areas of 'horsiculture' exist particularly around Saltford.

Light industrial or business use occurs within and bordering the area, including a substantial sewage works at Saltford Mead.

Fields and boundaries

Field boundaries are varied, with post and wire fences used extensively. Hedges are also characteristic but varied with both clipped and unclipped hedges, some with and some without trees. Local stone walls are infrequent and tend to be associated with settlements or farm buildings. In areas of intensive horse grazing, visually discordant white tape is used to divide fields.

Fields are generally small to medium in size, with occasional large fields on the floodplain and are typically angular in shape.

Historic environment

Historically, much of the area was enclosed during the later Middle Ages from earlier open fields. The National HLC identifies the majority of field patterns to be *piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields with floodplain and meadow* along the course of the river.

A Roman settlement at Keynsham Hams, in the west of the area, is a Scheduled Monument. The historic core of Saltford, along the River Avon, is protected by a conservation area and contains historic buildings including Saltford Manor House and a grade II* listed building of Norman origin. Kelston Conservation Area extends into the character area and includes several historic buildings including a grade II* listed dovecot. Part of the grade II listed Kelston Registered Park and Gardens lies within the area.

The Grade II* listed Old Brass Mill (and Scheduled Monument) at Saltford and Kelston Mills are survivors of an extensive group of C18th copper and brass mills on the banks of the Avon, these mills and locks along the river are testament to the industrial history of the Avon.



Properties within Saltford Conservation Area, showing a mix of building materials. The Cotswolds form a distinctive backdrop to the east.

Development and infrastructure

The area is bounded by Keynsham to the west, whilst the villages of Saltford and Kelston are located on slopes west and east of the Avon respectively. These settlements are visible across much of the character area. Ribbon development extends along the river between Saltford and Keynsham and along the route of the A4. Recent residential development on the eastern edge of Keynsham has further narrowed the rural gap between Keynsham and Saltford. Isolated farms and properties exist above the floodplain.

Traditional building materials include Oolitic and Lias Limestone often with red clay tiled roofs. More recently brick and rendered houses with brown concrete roofs have been built on the edges of Keynsham and Saltford.

The Avon Valley is an important transport corridor. The river was first made navigable between Bristol and Bath in 1727. The Bristol to London mainline railway and the A4 Bristol to Bath road, also run through the valley.

The area is locally valued for recreation with the Bristol and Bath Railway Path around Saltford being particularly scenic. Other recreational routes include the River Avon Trail, national cycle routes 410 and 4 and other public rights of way.

Views and perceptual qualities

The landscape has a generally open character with views across the wide valley floor to the valley sides and the hills and plateaux beyond. The Cotswolds Hills form a distinctive backdrop to the east and Kelston Round Hill and Lansdown Hill are prominent landmarks.

The flat open character of the landscape gives prominence to features that otherwise might be lost in a more enclosed landscape. Longer views are occasionally restricted by adjoining settlements, tall hedges, trees or the railway embankment. Large mature trees and groups of trees, often including willow and poplar, are important elements of many views.

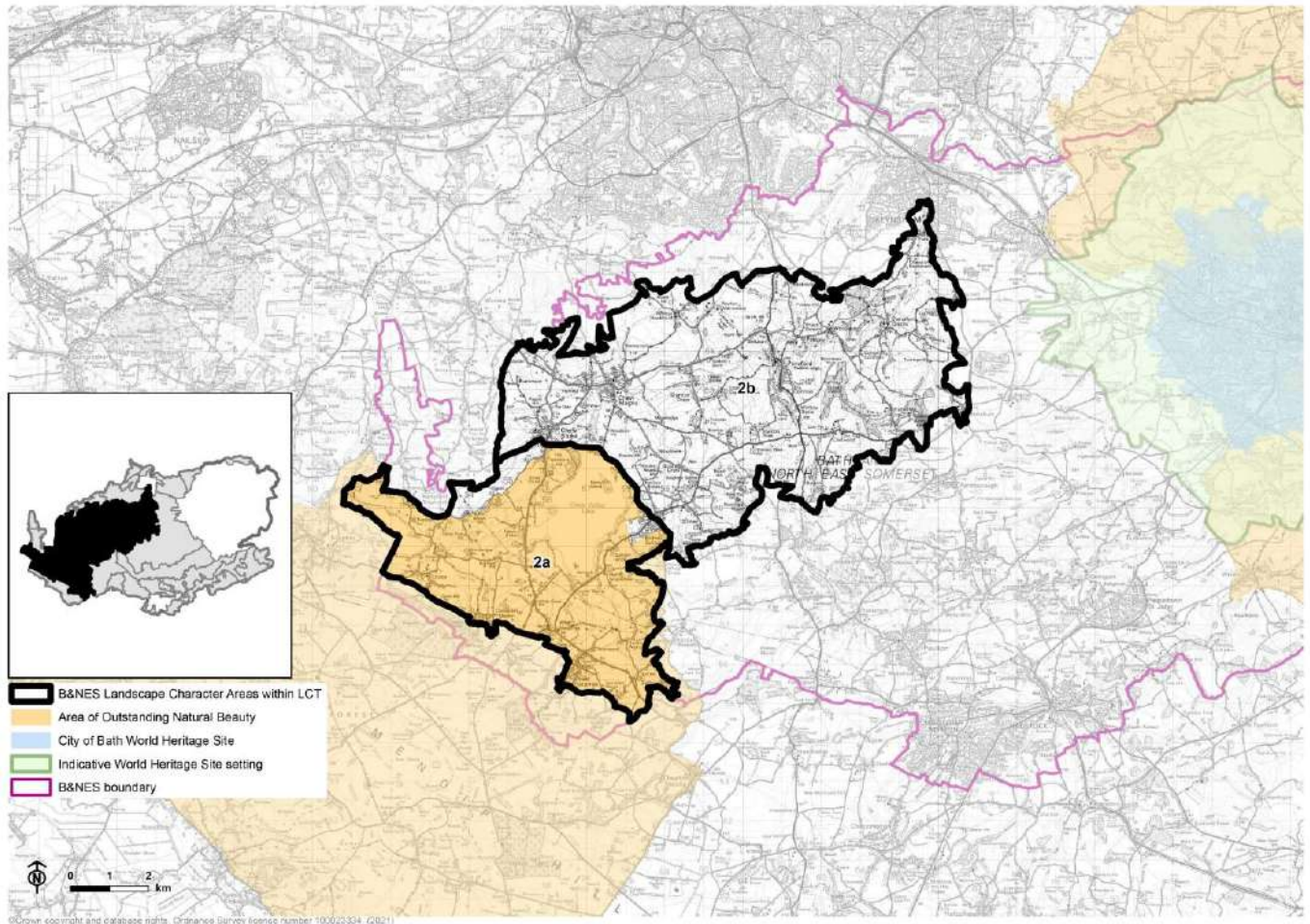
The proximity of Keynsham influences the character of the area and the prevalence of sports pitches and industrial development on the northern settlement edge and areas of horticulture contribute to the 'settled' character of the landscape, although mature hedgerow boundaries help to visually enclose these areas. The former Cadbury factory (now a multistorey retirement village) on the north-eastern settlement edge of Keynsham, with its prominent red brick construction is a landmark in many views.

A sense of rural tranquillity persists away from settlements and the major transport routes which cross the area, particularly east of the River Avon within the Cotswolds AONB. This area exhibits many of the special qualities of the AONB such as the strong rural character, long-distance views and historic parklands.

LCT 2 Rolling Valley Farmland



LCT 2: Rolling Valley Farmland



Landscape Character Areas:

The Rolling Valley Farmland LCT is subdivided into two LCAs:

- 2a: Upper Chew and Yeo Valleys and Chew Valley Lake
- 2b: Chew Valley

LCA 2a: Upper Chew and Yeo Valleys and Chew Valley Lake



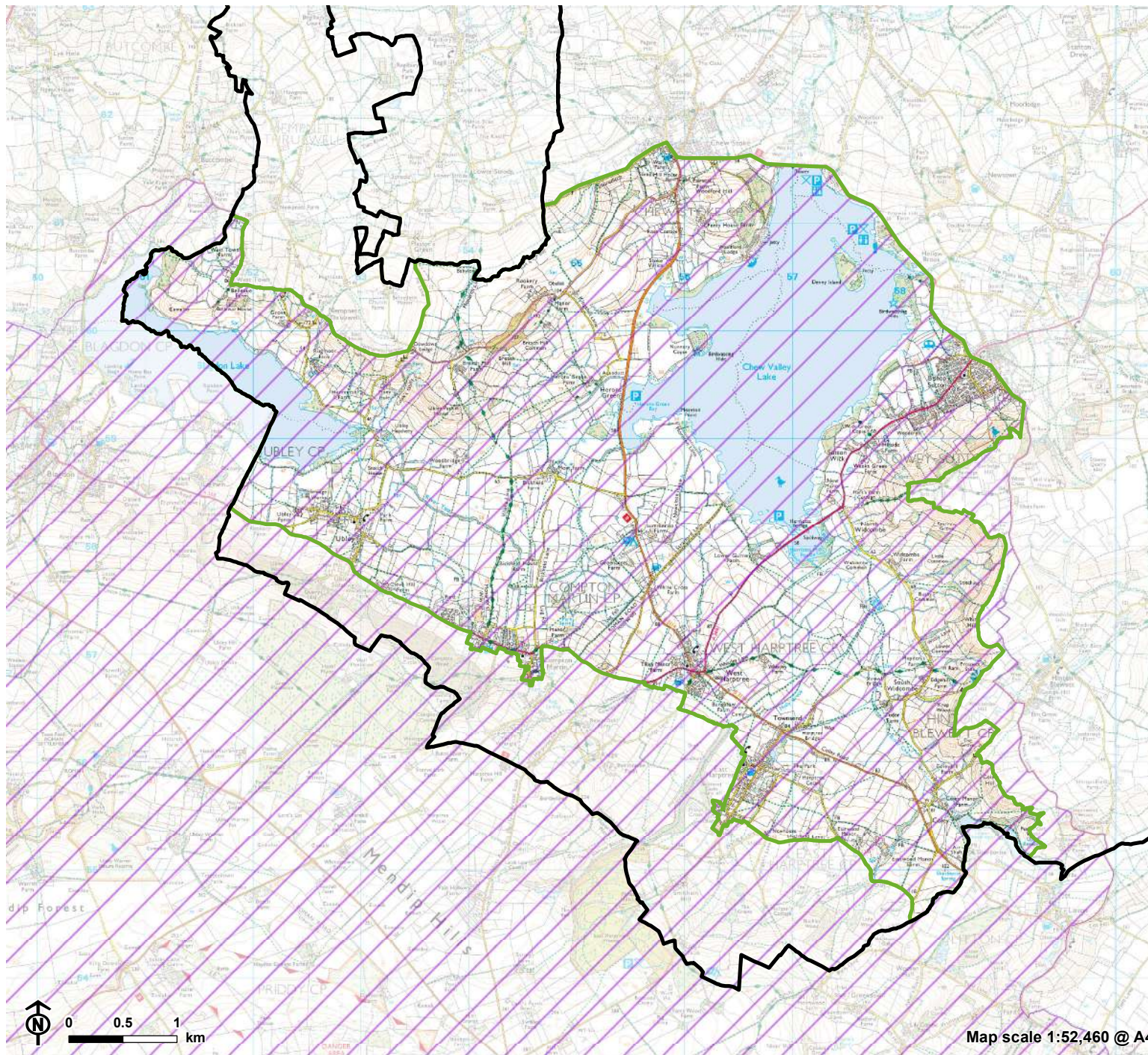
View north-west from the marked viewpoint at Prospect Stile, on the south-eastern boundary of the LCA. The view extends over the lower-lying pastoral landscape with regular field boundaries containing mature trees. Both Chew Valley Lake and Blagdon Lake are visible, as well as a pylon line.

Location and summary






The Upper Chew and Yeo Valleys and Chew Valley Lake LCA encompasses the upper reaches of the Chew and Yeo river valley. It is characterised by low-lying flat or gently sloping farmland around the large reservoirs at Chew Valley Lake and Blagdon Lake.

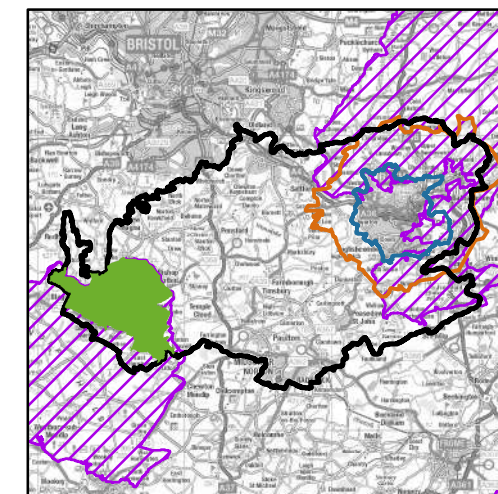
The LCA is located in the south-east of the district. Its boundaries are defined by the valley sides as they rise steeply to the Mendip Hills to the south and limestone plateau to the north and east. The western boundary is defined by the district boundary and the north-eastern boundary runs along the edge of Chew Valley Lake.

The LCA lies within the Mendip Hills AONB, except for a small area to the north-west of Breach Hill Common.



2a Upper Chew and Yeo Valleys and Chew Valley Lake

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Map scale 1:52,460 @ A4

Key Characteristics

- Low lying and undulating valley of the Rivers Chew and Yeo, gently sloping at its boundaries
- Large reservoirs at Chew Valley Lake and Blagdon Lake and their associated features
- Red soils associated with mudstone outcrops
- Pastoral land cover with mixed arable cropping
- Small regular fields surrounded by clipped hedges
- Frequent hedgerow trees and tree belts, such as those lining the River Yeo, give the impression of a well-wooded landscape
- A few small deciduous woodlands with plantations of conifer, willow and poplar marking the lake edges
- Historic spring line villages with a harmonious use of traditional building materials in older buildings
- Isolated historic farms, including a medieval moated farmhouse
- Long-distance views to surrounding hills
- Straight roads well enclosed by landform and/or hedges as well as a Roman road
- A rural and peaceful landscape away from the A368 corridor

Geology and soils

The predominant formation is the Mercia Mudstones of the Triassic period. Dolomitic Conglomerate of the same period is found above the mudstones on the higher parts of the area. There are also more recent drift deposits on the lower-lying areas adjacent to the Chew Valley Lake.

Outcrops of Lias Limestone from the Jurassic period occur to the west of Chew Valley Lake giving rise to shelves of higher ground around Breach Hill.



View north-west across Chew Lake from Herriotts Bridge to rising land along the boundary of the LCA.

The mudstones give rise to fertile silty clay soils that are a dull dusky red colour because of their high iron content. The clay content means that where unimproved they easily become waterlogged when wet, and hard with cracks and fissures during dry periods. The Dolomitic Conglomerate, which is a complex of limestone fragments, gives rise to thinner freely draining soils. These soils are stony and can be slightly acidic on the surface.

The soils over the drift deposits are similar to those derived from the mudstones but they have more silt and sand which makes them more freely draining. There are also more recent alluvial deposits beside the course of the River Chew.

Landform and drainage pattern

The broad valleys of the River Yeo and Chew have a gently undulating landform dissected by tributaries including Molly Brook and other minor streams. There are significant slopes along the boundaries of the LCA where it meets the more elevated surrounding plateaux and hills, except to the north east where the landscape extends into the lower Chew Valley.

The area includes the tributaries and upper reaches of both the River Yeo, which flows westwards from Compton Martin, and the River Chew, which flows northwards from Coley. Two large artificial lakes, Chew Valley Lake and the eastern extent of Blagdon Lake (with the rest of the lake lying outside of the district boundary) were created when the rivers were dammed to create reservoirs. Springs occur along the Dolomitic Conglomerate exposures.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The area appears well wooded due to the frequent hedgerow trees and native deciduous tree belts. There are a few small woods which are either semi-scrub oak and ash woodlands, or remnant plantations of conifer or willow and poplar, such as those surrounding the lakes. The tree belts are found between fields, along roads, around settlements and deciduous woodland lines the River Yeo. Traditional orchards are found on the edge of some villages, such as Ubley and East Harptree.

The two lakes are both SSSI designated. Chew Valley Lake is also identified as an Important Bird Area and SPA. The landscape around the lakes is particularly rich in semi-natural

habitats including Priority Habitats floodplain grazing marsh, lowland meadows, good quality semi-improved grasslands, reedbeds and deciduous woodland. The steep eastern slopes of the Chew Valley are also characterised by species-rich grasslands, hedgerows and deciduous woodland, and includes the SSSI at Burlledge Hill.

Agriculture and land use

Pasture is the predominant land-use, used for livestock or feed, although the area also supports a mixture of arable crops. Ley pasture characterises the better-drained and flatter areas with alluvial soils, with permanent pasture on the wetter, stonier soils of the slopes. These latter areas also traditionally supported orchards.

Fields and boundaries

Fields are typically small to medium-sized and predominantly rectangular, with irregularly shaped fields being less common.

Neatly trimmed hedges frequently edge the fields and are generally in reasonable condition, though some are 'gappy' or supplemented by post and wire fencing where stock proofing is required. Frequent hedgerow trees, consisting mainly of oak and ash, punctuate otherwise trimmed hedgerow boundaries.



View south from near Woodbridge Farm to the wooded slopes of the Mendips Slopes LCA (8b). Hedgerows are trimmed with frequent trees.

Historic environment

The National HLC identifies a mixture of field patterns including *piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields*, *assarts*, *planned fields* and localised areas of *re-organised field systems* near Ubley. Small fields are particularly characteristic of the Chew Valley and date back to the enclosure of open fields into single ownership units in the late medieval period. These small fields generally have the regular boundaries preserving the outlines of the earlier strip field system.

Early settlement of the area is evidenced by a Bronze Age bowl barrow (Scheduled Monument) north of Blagdon Lake. The route of a Roman road passes through the centre of the character area, part of its course passing under the Chew Valley Lake.

The historic origins of the spring line villages at the foot of the Mendip slopes, are recognised through their designation as conservation areas. These villages feature clusters of listed buildings including larger houses and churches (the churches in Ubley and Compton Martin are both grade I listed). Outside the villages, scattered historic farmhouses are characteristic, such as Eastwood Manor Farm Steading (grade I listed). Fortified medieval sites include the remains of Ubley Manor House (Scheduled Monument) and the moated farmhouse at Moat Farm to the west of Chew Valley Lake.

The construction of Blagdon Lake in 1904 and Chew Valley Lake in 1956 covered land that was once an integral part of the landscape and changed the character of the area, including the historic pattern of lanes and footpaths.

Development and infrastructure

The historic settlement pattern consists of medieval spring line villages at the foot of the Mendip slopes, including Ubley, Compton Martin, West and East Harptree. These settlements fit in well with the landscape due to their organic pattern and the muted traditional building materials.

There is a well-developed network of roads within the area ranging from busy 'A' roads to quiet lanes. Nearly all are enclosed by roadside hedges and some lanes are surrounded by woodland or sunken with flower-rich hedgebanks, particularly on steeper slopes. Roads are noticeably straight and at least one is Roman. The meandering road from New Manor Farm to South Widcombe follows the base of the indented scarp slope and has a wide grass verge that may have been common land or a drove road.

The landscape is criss-crossed with public rights of way linking the villages and farms, including the Monarch's Way and the Limestone Link paths, as well as National Cycle route 3.

Views and perceptual qualities

There are long-distance views to the surrounding hills, including views to the Mendip Hills. Neatly trimmed hedges allow views from lanes into the surrounding countryside, although the mature hedgerow trees and woodland belts that punctuate the landscape limit some near-distance views.

An obelisk at Breech Hill Lane features in long distance views and is visible on the skyline from the area around Chew Lake.

This is a peaceful, rural landscape, with few detractors except for the noise of occasional aircraft and traffic on the A368. This is further enhanced by very noticeable bird song and the rural sounds of tractors and other farm equipment. The lakes are popular for recreation with bird watching, sailing and fishing. The scenic character of this landscape is reflected in its designation as part of the Mendip Hills AONB, and landscape qualities associated with the AONB, such as the historic settlement pattern and distinctive hedgerow patterns with hedgerow trees are present throughout the LCA.

LCA 2b: Chew Valley

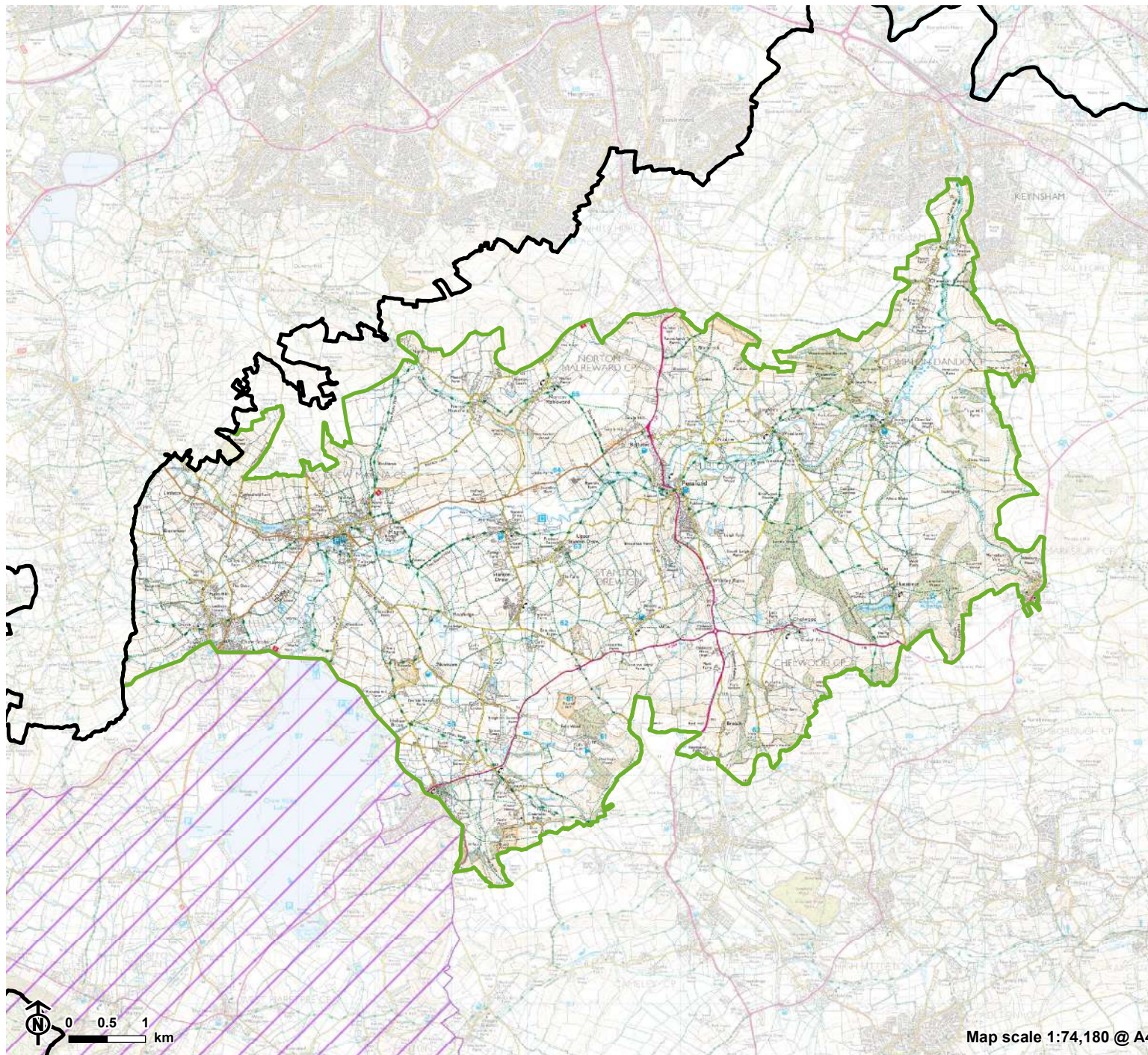


View from elevated land to the north-west of Chew Magna. Views include the village of Stanton Drew, with the distinctive tower of the grade II* listed church of St Mary and extend across the pastoral landscape to the distant wooded skylines of the southern edge of the LCA near Chelwood.






Location and summary

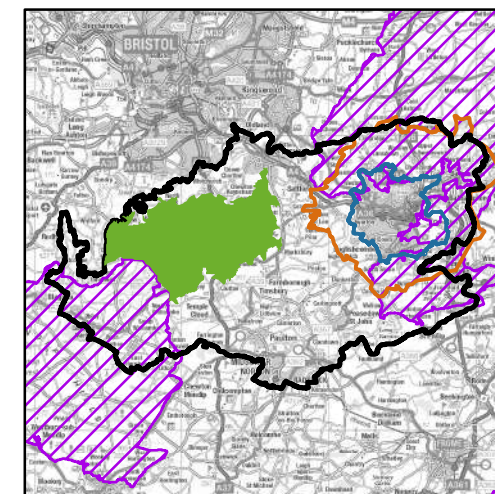
The Chew Valley LCA encompasses the broad valley of the River Chew and its tributaries and consists of low-lying and undulating pastoral farmland.

This large character area is located in the west of the district and extends from the district boundary near Chew Magna eastwards to Keynsham and Marksbury. The boundaries of this LCA are marked by the transition to the hills and ridges of Dundry Hill and Maes Knoll LCA to the north and the elevated plateau landscapes to the north, south and south east. The river valley character type extends to the south-west but the LCA boundary is defined by the edge of the Mendip Hills AONB.



2b Chew Valley

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Map scale 1:74,180 @ A4

Key Characteristics

- The valley becomes increasingly narrow and undulating to the north-east with steeper valley sides and a complex pattern of tributary valleys.
- High-quality agricultural land, particularly in the west, with slowly permeable soils
- Mainly grassland with some arable land-use
- Large woodlands particularly in the east, such as Lord's Wood, Hunstrete Plantation and Common Wood
- Patches of bracken in hedges and in areas of rough grazing
- Characteristic small regular fields of late medieval enclosure
- Less common irregular fields on slopes created by medieval enclosure of woodland
- Standing stones at Stanton Drew
- Strong industrial heritage linked to waterpower, with stone-built mills and bridges
- Reminders of the area's mining heritage around Pensford, including spoil heaps and the viaduct which carried the North Somerset Railway line over the valley
- Settlements on lower slopes or nestled into the valley sides and often amongst trees
- Locally distinctive church towers provide skyline features
- Rich variety of traditional building materials reflecting local availability
- Occasional small groups of more recent housing in elevated locations
- Network of sunken lanes
- Extensive views across Chew Valley, with views to the Chew Valley Lake
- Tributary valleys have a more intimate character enclosed by hedges, trees and side slopes

Geology and soils

The oldest geological formation is the Supra-Pennant Measures of the Carboniferous period, a complex formation containing coal seams and made up of clay and shales. These are a significant feature in the north-east, represented by the Pensford Syncline coal basin.



View west across the River Chew from the settlement edge of Keynsham, showing the pasture grazed valley, prone to flooding.

Mercia Mudstones are the main geological outcrop throughout the area although less widespread east of Pensford. The Mercia Mudstones consist of red siltstone and mudstone of the Triassic desert basins resulting in the underlying characteristic of the gently rolling valley landscape. There are more recent alluvial deposits beside the course of the River Chew.

Most areas in the west and around Stanton Drew have neutral to acid red loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils which mainly occur on the Mercia Mudstones. Soils in the eastern part of the area are slowly permeable clayey and fine silty soils. They are found on Carboniferous clay and shales typical of the Supra-Pennant Measures. They are frequently waterlogged where the topography dictates, tend towards being acid and are brown to grey brown in colour.

Landform and drainage pattern

The valley landform becomes increasingly narrow, steep-sided and intricate to the north-east of the LCA, with a higher frequency of tributary valleys. The River Chew flows east through the centre of the LCA passing through Chew Magna, before heading north towards Keynsham. Several tributary streams also characterise this landscape, including Salter's Brook and Bathford Brook, and springs and wells are also common.

The old coal spoil heap at Pensford has modified the local landform in a dramatic way.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Frequent plantations and small woodlands form an important component of the landscape giving the landscape a well-wooded appearance. This is particularly noticeable on steeper slopes in the east of the LCA, which supports large woodlands including Hunstrete Plantation, Common Wood, Lord's Wood and Wooscombe Wood. Many of these woodlands are

identified as SNCIs and Priority Habitat deciduous woodland and include large blocks of ancient woodland.

The route of the River Chew, and many of its tributaries are identified as SNCIs. Folly Wood in the south is a large Local Nature Reserve, containing a SSSI which comprises traditionally managed, unimproved neutral grassland and ancient woodland. Surrounding Chew Magna are notable areas of Priority Habitats, including good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadows and traditional orchards. Many of these habitats are also identified as SNCIs.

Mature oak and ash trees are characteristic of the area. Patches of bracken within hedges and in fields of rough grazing are present in the historic mining area around Pensford. There are mature trees from remnant historic orchards around Stowey.

Agriculture and land use

The land is mainly under grass, although in places is used for cereals particularly in the west of the area, where agricultural land is of the highest quality. Horticulture is rarer and is found at Byemills Farm near Belluton.

There are several historic parks including Stanton Drew, Hunstrete, Stowey House, Sutton Court and Norton Court, which has a number of giant redwood trees.

Fields and boundaries

The fields are generally bounded by species-rich hedges and occasionally by tree belts and woodland. The hedges are typically trimmed and contain mature trees.

Variations in field size and pattern occur, but small and medium size fields with regular outlines are characteristic of the Chew Valley, particularly in the west of the area.

Historic environment

The National HLC identifies most fields within this character area as *piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields* of late medieval to C19th origin. Areas identified as medieval or earlier *floodplain and meadow* follow the course of the River Chew. Fields to the west and south of Chelwood are often organic in form due to medieval woodland clearance. Localised areas of C18-C19 *planned fields* exist in the south of the LCA. In the north near Norton Malreward there are areas of larger post-medieval to modern fields adjusted from earlier enclosures.

The strong time depth of the landscape is reflected in the number of visible archaeological features including three stone circles and a stone cove at Stanton Drew, an oval enclosure, possibly Iron Age, south west of Stowey House, and a standing stone called Hautville's Quoit, all designated as Scheduled Monuments. Wansdyke linear earthwork is a Scheduled Monument of prehistoric which origin runs through the north of the area.

The valley landscape provides a setting to many historic riverside villages (with conservation areas at Woollard, Pensford, Stanton Drew, Chew Magna and Chew). Historic mills along the river, some dating back to middle ages, indicate their past importance to nearby settlements. Stone bridges, often reflecting the local geology, often date back to the late medieval period and some are designated as Scheduled Monuments.

Evidence of the area's mining heritage is evident, particularly around Pensford and includes disused quarries, limekilns and spoil heaps, as well as the line of the former North Somerset Railway which crosses the River Chew on a distinctive viaduct. The Blackmoor chimney to the west of Chew Magna, marks the remains of an engine house constructed in 1859 by Bristol Waterworks.



The Pensford Viaduct viewed from the north-west. The prevalence of white rendered properties in Pensford is also visible.

Development and infrastructure

Chew Stoke, Chew Magna and Pensford are the main settlements, with several smaller villages such as Stanton Drew and Chelwood.

Settlements and farm buildings are generally well integrated into the landscape, nestled into the valley sides and lower slopes, taking advantage of the tree cover and minor depressions in the landform.

The traditional building materials are varied and reflect local availability, with red sandstone buildings characteristic of the villages north of Chew Valley Lake and Pennant sandstone at Stanton Wick. Elsewhere, white Lias Limestone (sometimes incorporating red sandstone or conglomerate) with red clay tiled roofs are common. Many properties are painted or rendered in shades of white, grey and cream.

The area is well served by a network of winding minor roads, with frequent sunken lanes, some bounded by high hedgebanks. Major routes run north to south, including the A37 linking Bristol and Shepton Mallet via Pensford and west to east with the A368 linking Weston Super Mare and Bath.

Numerous public rights of way criss-cross the area including the north-south aligned Three Peaks Walk and the west-east

aligned Two Rivers Way, as well as National Cycle route 3 and 410. The Village of Compton Dando is situated at the convergence point of a large number of public rights of way and has consequently become a tourist 'honeypot' for walkers.

Views and perceptual qualities

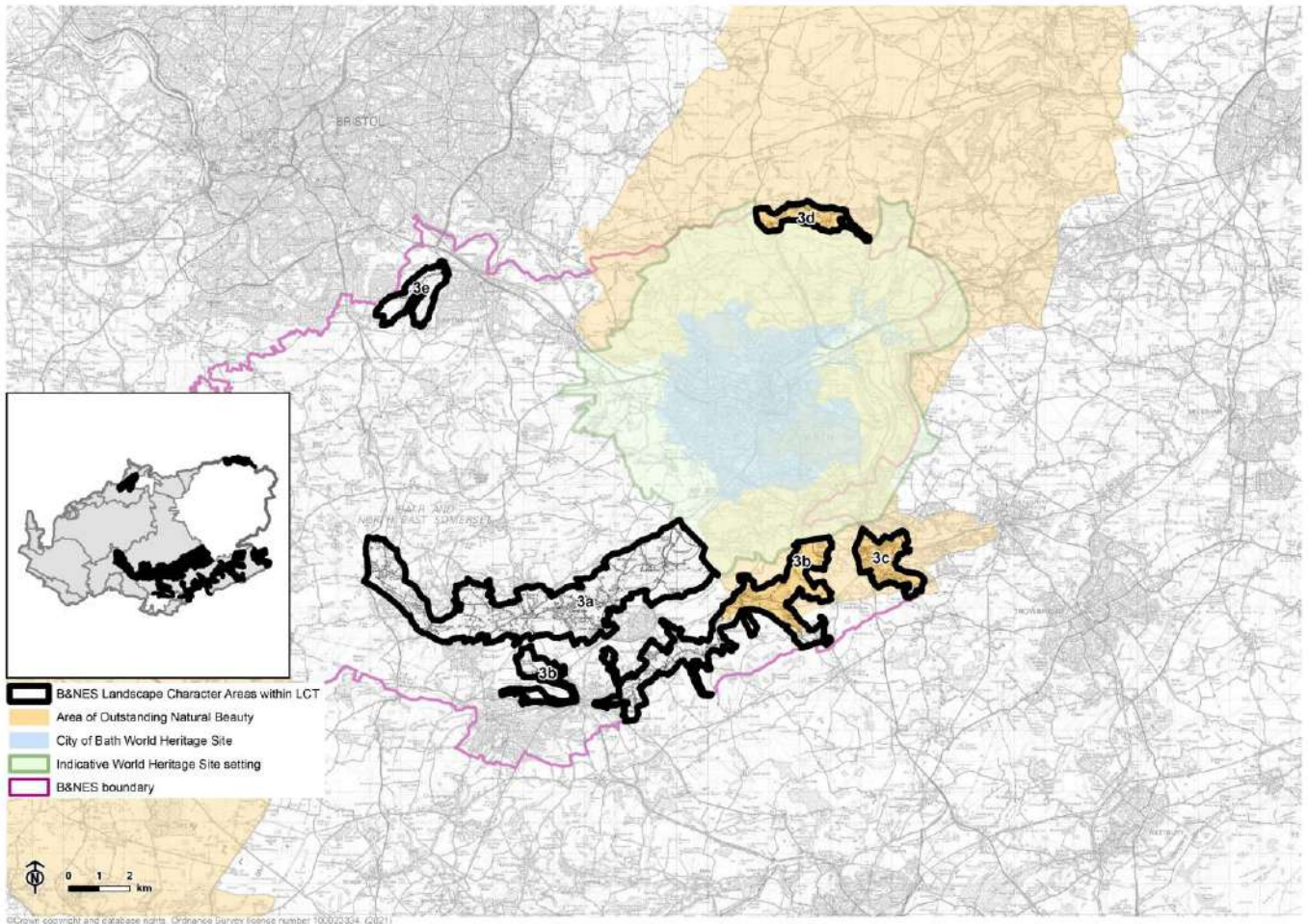
The undulating nature of the landscape gives rise to open views, extending across the Chew Valley, south to the Mendip Hills AONB, and north to the hills and ridges south of Bristol. The towers of several listed churches are visually distinctive on local skylines. Well-wooded slopes form prominent elements within these views. By contrast, the tributary valleys have a more intimate quality, enclosed by hedges, trees and the rising topography.

The valley retains a strong sense of tranquillity, with little intrusive noise except for farm vehicles and the occasional aircraft. However, main roads crossing the area reduce levels of tranquillity locally.

LCT 3 Enclosed Valleys



LCT 3: Enclosed Valleys



Landscape Character Areas:

The Enclosed Valleys LCT is subdivided into five LCAs:

- 3a: Cam Brook Valley
- 3b: Wellow Brook Valley
- 3c: Frome Valley (Freshford to Iford)
- 3d: St Catherine's Valley
- 3e: Stockwood Vale and Charlton Bottom

LCA: 3a Cam Brook Valley



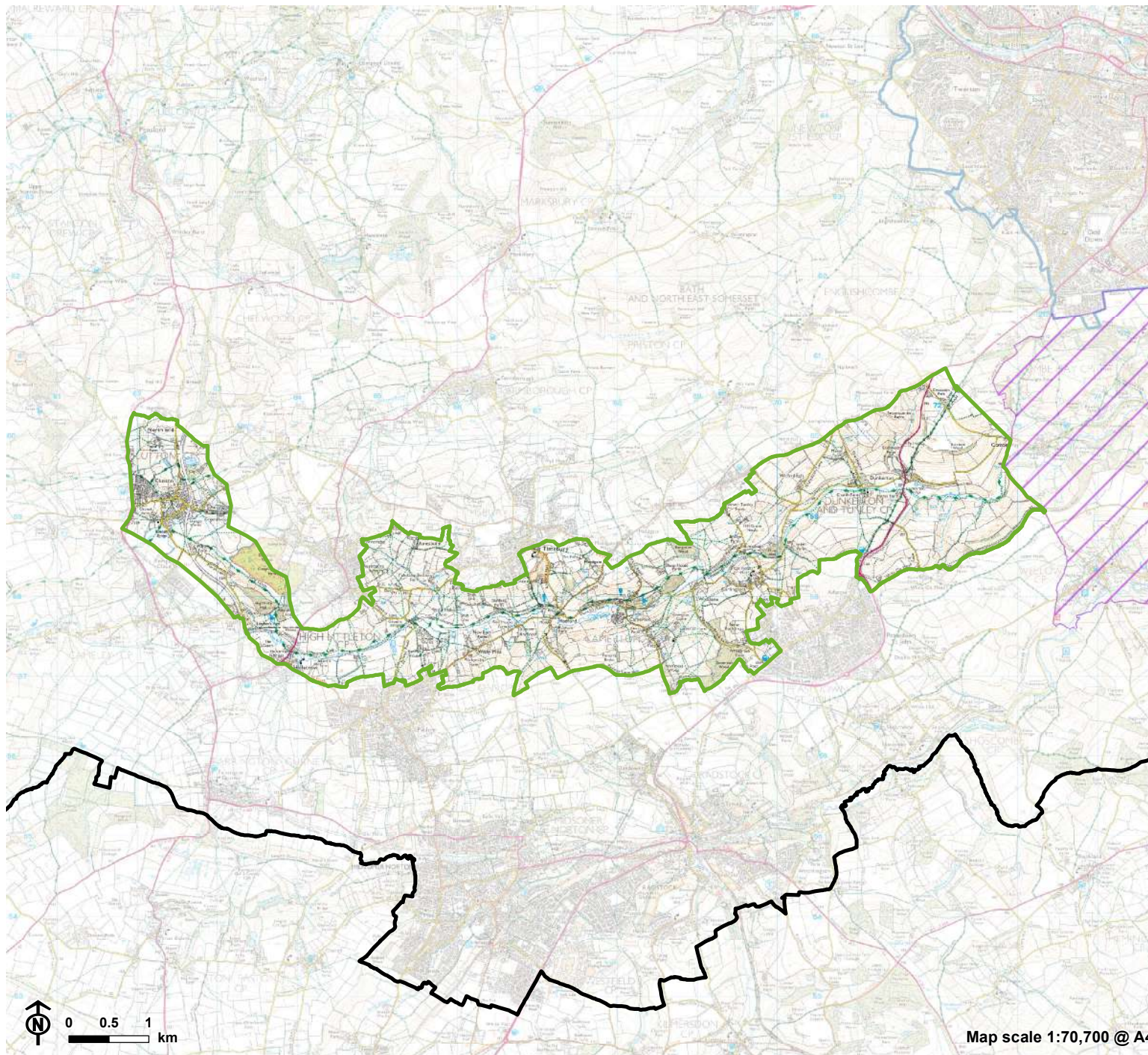
Views west across the valley from the edge of Peasdown St John showing the mixed land use in the well-wooded valley and the settlement of Timsbury on the opposite valley slopes (outside of the LCA). A pylon line is also visible along the valley floor.

Location and summary






The Cam Brook Valley LCA is characterised by the undulating limestone valley of the Cam Brook and its tributaries, providing a rural backdrop to the villages within the valley.

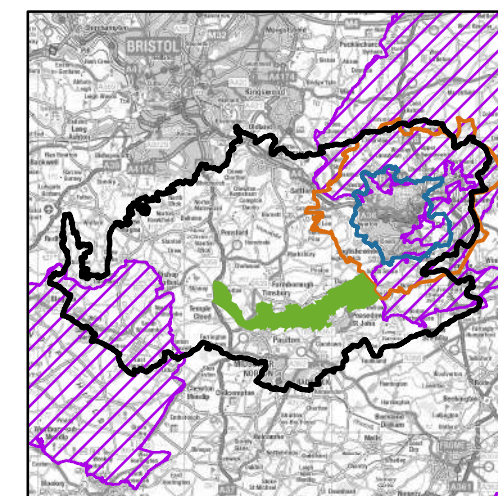
Located in the south of the district, the southern boundary of the LCA is marked by the limestone ridge that separates the Cam Brook valley from the Wellow Brook valley and the northern boundary is marked by a change in topography to the elevated limestone plateau around Farmborough.

To the east, the Cam valley continues into the Cam and Wellow Brook Valley LCA (ELV8) described in the *Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment*.



3a Cam Brook Valley

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Moderately wide and steep river valley, with undulating valley sides
- The small river freely meanders across the narrow valley floor
- Arable and pastoral land cover in roughly equal measure
- Small or medium size irregular fields, many of medieval origin
- Frequent small to medium woodlands, , especially at the top of slopes
- Valley floor has an intimate enclosed character provided by topography, hedgerow trees and tree belts along brook and field boundaries
- Several villages (including the large village of Clutton) located on the valley floor, with scattered farmsteads on valley slopes
- Roads follow the valley floor and rise up valley sides connecting to farms and settlements
- A well-preserved section of the Fosse Way Roman Road
- Disused railway on the line of the Somersetshire Coal Canal and batches provide evidence of the coal mining heritage of the area
- Quiet rural landscape away from major road corridors

Geology and soils

The underlying geology is principally from the Jurassic period. Oolitic and Lias Limestone occurs at the top of the valley slopes with Lias Clay and Limestone and clay and shales of the Penarth Group found on the lower valley sides.



View to the church of St Augustine, Clutton from the south-east near the former railway line, with the western banks of the valley as a backdrop.

Soils above the Upper Lias and Inferior Oolitic Limestones are thin brashy calcareous clays. They support short term or permanent pasture, though on the gentler slopes some arable is found. In the base of the valleys the soils are slowly permeable silts and loams. These can be waterlogged and support mainly permanent pasture.

Landform and drainage pattern

The valley is moderately steep and wide. The Oolitic Limestone has generally given rise to steeper upper slopes and the Lias Clays to more gentle slopes.

The valley sides are rounded and undulating due to erosion and occasional slippage of the softer clays. Springs are

common in the valley sides with the resultant streams draining into the brook. The junction of the valley sides with the base is usually gentle and rounded and the valley floor is narrow but flat with the brook meandering freely across the flood plain.

The Cam runs west to east between Clutton and Midford, where it joins the Wellow Brook. It is quite deep in places and frequently has steep sides.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The valley supports a rich and diverse range of habitats, including areas of Priority Habitat deciduous woodland, as well as good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland. Many of these habitats and the course of the Cam Brook and its tributaries are designated as a SNCI (including grasslands at Highbury Hill, Severcombe Fields and White Ox Mead).

Scattered small woodlands are an important feature of the landscape, particularly on the steeper slopes, and Underdown, Camerton Wood, Brake and Rowley Woods, are registered as ancient semi-natural woodland. Frequent hedgerow trees, belts of trees and thick lines of trees follow the brook for much of its length. This tree pattern produces an enclosing effect within much of the valley.

There are two Local Nature Reserves at Camerton Batch Heritage Site and Stephens Vale.

Agriculture and land use

Land-use is an equal mixture of arable and short term or permanent pasture. The arable land tends to be in localised blocks on the gentler slopes where soil conditions are better. Conversely the pasture is on the steeper slopes and poorer

soils. Areas of horse pasture surrounding settlements on the valley floor.

Fields and boundaries

Fields are of small and medium size and irregularly shaped. There are some larger fields located on higher, less steep slopes which are more regular in form.

Hedges are the dominant field boundary, and these may be low and clipped or tall and quite mature. Hedgerow trees are frequent.

Historic environment

The field pattern reflects the medieval settlement of the valley, with the lower fields along the brook having early or pre-medieval characteristics and those on the upper slopes being post medieval. Good examples of medieval fields can be seen around Radford.

Dunkerton is an example of a shrunken medieval village which has survived within later enclosed land as evidenced by the earthworks around All Saint's Church (which is also grade II* listed). A well-preserved section of the Fosse Way Roman Road passes through Dunkerton parish.

Remnants of the coal mining industry from the 18th-20th centuries have left their mark on the landscape, particularly around Clutton, and Camerton. This includes mine shafts, batches and the remains of the Somerset Coal Canal, and the coal railway and tram lines that replaced it, which connected the mines to the Avon Valley.

Development and infrastructure

Villages are generally located on the valley floor, including Camerton, Carlingcott and Dunkerton and the larger nucleated village of Clutton. These villages often have a core of stone-built buildings. There are also frequent smaller hamlets and isolated farms and houses on the higher slopes. Larger villages located at the top of the slopes frame the valley. Most are located outside the LCA, but the settlement fringes of Paulton, typified by sports pitches, extends into the LCA resulting in a more suburban character in this locality.

Small industrial areas exist on the valley floor including a sewage treatment works near Paulton, a factory at Cloud Hill and a large scrapyard near Carlingcott, often sited on former mining sites.

The LCA is crossed by several trunk roads, including the A39 to the west and the A27 along the western boundary. The A367 Bath to Radstock road intersects the valley to the east of Dunkerton. Smaller roads run along the valley floor and are connected to farmsteads and settlements higher up the valley sides (e.g. Peasedown St John, Timsbury). These connecting roads usually run straight up the valley sides in deep-set cuttings resulting in characteristic sunken lanes and old hedge banks.

The valley is characterised by a good network of PRoW, including the Limestone Link, a long-distance path that runs along the entire length of the Cam Valley to Midford following the route of the former railway line.



Horse grazing near Radford, showing sub-division of fields and the wooded skylines of the southern valley slopes.

Views and perceptual qualities

Views are generally contained by the valley landform, taller hedges, trees lining the brook and the undulating landform. However, the upper slopes are quite open, allowing an appreciation of the strong valley landform and characteristic wooded skyline.

The intimate character of the landscape and the many features of interest make this area a popular area for walking, riding and cycling. However, settlements on the valley tops overlooking the valley, localised areas of industry, and a pylon line crossing the landscape stand in contrast to the generally rural character of the area.



View north across the valley, featuring houses within the hamlet of Carlingcott. The photo shows the mixture of arable and pastoral land use.

LCA 3b: Wellow Brook Valley



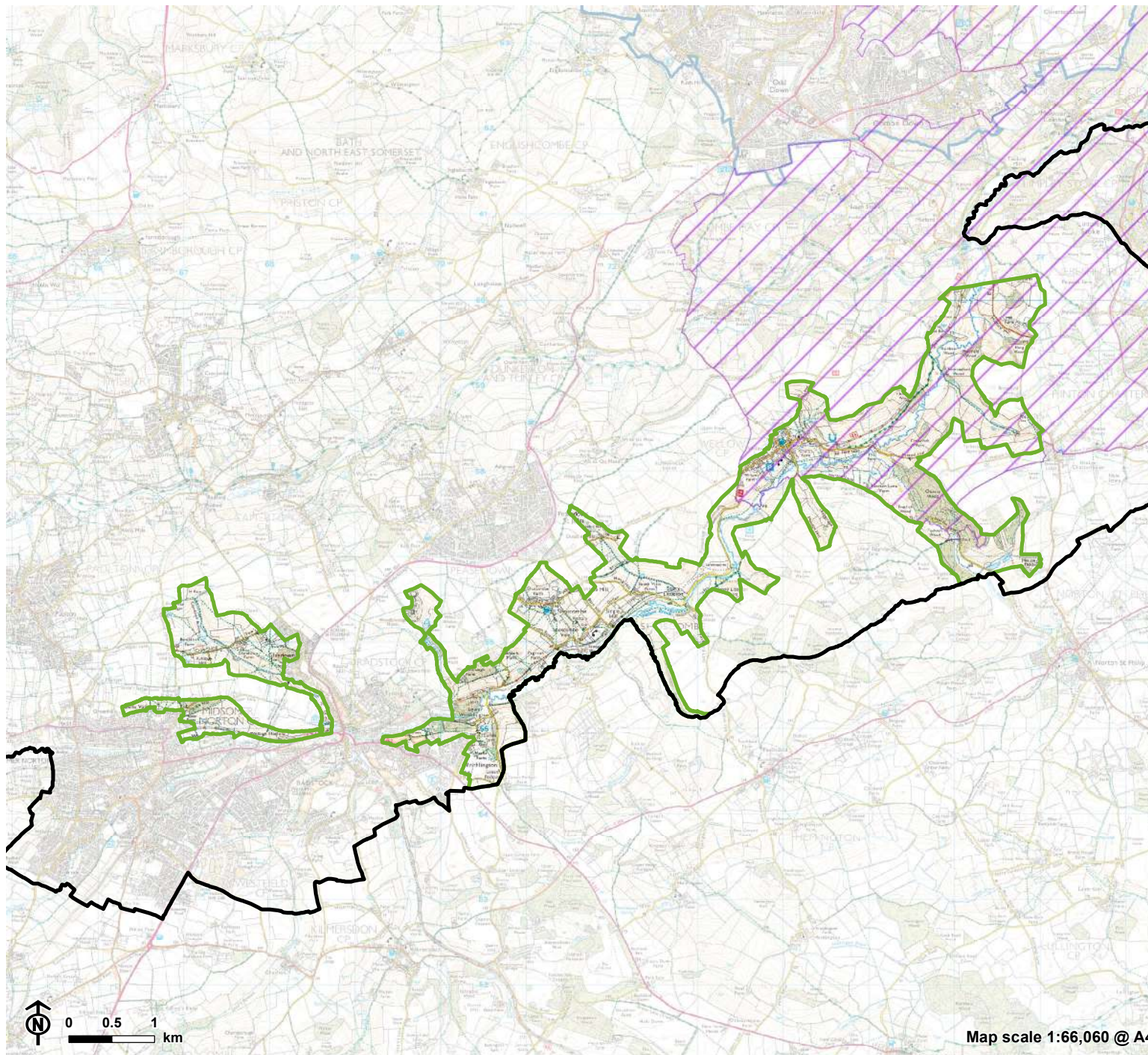
View south-west over Shoscombe Vale, showing the well-treed and incised minor tributary valley to the Wellow Brook.

Location and summary

The Wellow Brook Valley LCA is narrow and undulating limestone valley located in the south of the district, encompassing the Wellow Brook and its tributaries. The valley is sparsely settled and retains a strong rural character, but has a strong relationship with the adjoining urban areas of Midsomer Norton and Radstock in the west.

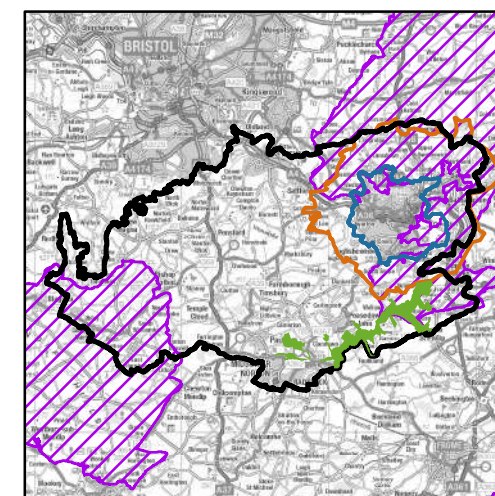
The northern boundary of the LCA is marked by the limestone ridge that separates the Wellow Brook valley from the Cam Brook valley and the southern boundary by the elevated limestone plateau running along the district boundary.

The Cotswold AONB covers the eastern end of the LCA, extending to the village of Wellow.



3b Wellow Brook Valley

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Map scale 1:66,060 @ A4

Key Characteristics

- A steep and narrow river valley with undulating valley sides
- Freely meandering brook lined by trees
- Arable and pastoral land cover in roughly equal measure
- Small or medium size irregular fields
- Hedges, both clipped and unclipped, are common with frequent hedgerow trees
- Frequent small woodlands particularly on higher slopes, many of which are ancient in origin
- Disused railway line provides evidence of the past importance of the area for coal mining
- Pillboxes and tank traps near Shoscombe Vale and Stony Littleton provide evidence of Second World War defences
- Sparse settlement pattern of historic riverside villages with scattered farms and isolated houses on the valley slopes
- Building materials are traditionally Oolitic Limestone to the east and Lias Limestone towards the west with mainly red clay or slate tiles
- Quiet rural landscape located away from major road corridors

Geology and soils

The underlying geology is principally from the Jurassic period. Oolitic and Lias Limestone occurs at the top of the valley sides. Lias Clay and Limestone and clay and shales of the Penarth Group are found generally on the valley sides. Fuller's Earth occurs locally between the Inferior and Great Oolite and was mined commercially at Wellow. Older outcrops of the Triassic period particularly Mercia Mudstones are found along the upper reaches of the brook and there is a narrow band of more recent alluvium alongside it.



Pasture fields in a minor tributary valley of the Wellow Brook near Clandown, with areas of woodland on the upper slopes.

The soils above the Upper Lias and Inferior Oolitic Limestones are thin brashy calcareous clays. They support short term or permanent pasture, though on gentler slopes some arable is found. In the base of the valley the soils are slowly permeable silts and loams which can be waterlogged and support mainly permanent pasture.

Landform and drainage pattern

The Oolitic Limestone has generally given rise to steeper upper slopes and the Lias Clays to more gentle slopes. The sides of the valleys are rounded and undulating through both erosion and occasional slippage due to the softer clays.

The Wellow Brook meanders along the valley floor, from west to east between Midsomer Norton, through the town of Radstock to Midford, where the Wellow and Cam Brook merge. A relatively small river, it is set deeply with high, tree-lined banks. A small number of incised minor stream valleys dissect the valley slopes including the Norton Brook.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

There is significant small woodland coverage, especially on the steeper slopes including Cleaves, Hankley and Hang Wood, which are registered as ancient semi-natural woodlands. Cleaves Wood is also designated as a SSSI. The woodlands are either deciduous or mixed plantations and they vary considerably in size. Much of the woodland is designated as SNCIs.

Wellow Brook is designated as a SNCI and its high banks are lined with alder and willow, with some oak and ash also present. There are a range of Priority Habitats including semi-improved grassland on the northern slopes of Hinton Hill and around Shoscombe Vale and lowland calcareous grassland on the valley floor and lower slopes.

Agriculture and land use

Land-use is a mixture of arable and short term and permanent pasture. There is generally an equal proportion of arable to pasture. The arable tends to be in localised blocks on the gentler slopes where soil conditions are better. Conversely the pasture is on the steeper slopes

Fields and boundaries

Hedges are the dominant field boundary with a mix of those that are clipped and tall mature hedgerows. A tree pattern that includes frequent hedgerow trees, belts of trees and, most significantly thick lines of trees that follow the brook for much of its length, produces an enclosing effect within much of the valley.

Fields on lower slopes are small to medium in size and irregularly shaped. On higher ground, larger, more regular-shaped fields are more common.



View south through a dismantled railway bridge in Wellow, with views extending up the opposite (southern) wooded valley slopes.

Historic environment

The HLC indicates that the majority of the LCA is early *piecemeal enclosure*, with areas of *floodplain and meadow* on the valley floor. The area around Clandown in the west of the LCA also has a mix of *piecemeal enclosure* and later *planned fields*.

The area has a history of coal mining and the valley accommodated the associated works, tramways and railway which serviced the coal mining industry in the 18th and 19th centuries. A former railway line, which replaced the Radstock arm of the Somersetshire Coal Canal and railway bridges (or their remains) at Wellow are a reminder of this mining heritage. The linear village of Wellow, which benefited briefly from the coal rush of the late 18th century retains many of its fine old buildings, recognised through its designation as a conservation area. The conservation area for Midsomer Norton and Welton also extends into the LCA and include late 19th century terrace housing which forms part of the town's mining heritage.

The line of the Wellow Brook was part of the GHQ Stop Line Green; an anti-tank defence line set up to protect Bristol during the Second World War. The remains of pillboxes and tank traps near Shoscombe Vale and Stony Littleton were constructed as part of this defence.

Development and infrastructure

The sparse settlement pattern consists of the villages of Stony Littleton and Wellow located on the valley floor and scattered farmhouses on the valley slopes. The west of the LCA has a strong relationship with the adjoining urban areas of Midsomer Norton and Radstock, situated on higher ground.

Traditional buildings are of local Oolitic or white Lias Limestone, these buildings are particularly prevalent within the Cotswolds AONB. Roofs are predominantly red clay tiles with some slate, with concrete tiles on more modern buildings. Limestone boundary walls within and at the edge of settlements are characteristic.

There are no major roads within the LCA, although the A362 skirts the south-western edge of the area. Minor roads connect the valley to surrounding higher villages and these usually run straight up the valley sides in deep set cuttings resulting in characteristic sunken lanes, such as the road from Wellow to Hinton Charterhouse. Old hedge banks with tall hedges means that these minor roads are enclosed and concealed.



Traditional limestone properties along High Street in the Wellow Conservation Area.

Views and perceptual qualities

Views are mostly contained within the valley by the undulating landform, and tall hedges, trees lining the brook and its tributaries and extensive woodland. The wooded skyline is an important characteristic. The church tower at Wellow is a distinctive landmark.

The valley generally has a peaceful, tranquil quality, although some disturbance is experienced at the western end of the LCA near the urban fringes of Radstock and Midsomer Norton. The small lanes and public rights of way that cross the area make it popular with walkers, cyclists and horse riders. National Cycle route 24, which partly follows the route of the disused railway, passes through the LCA.

LCA 3c: Frome Valley (Freshford to Iford)



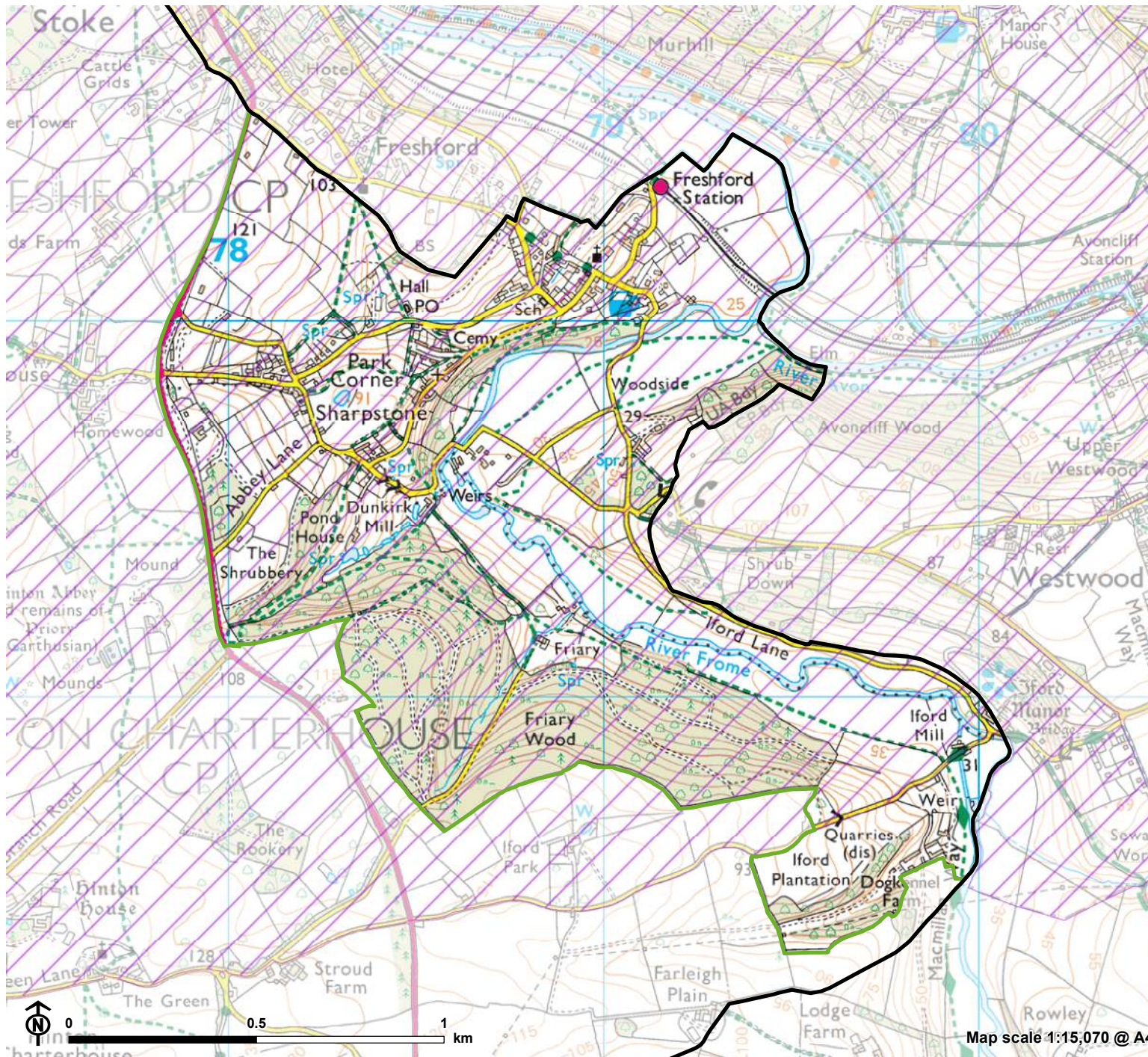
View north-east across the Freshford Conservation Area with its distinctive buildings including the grade II* listed Church of St Peter and the grade II listed Old Brewery. Woodland on the northern valley slopes of the River Avon (outside the LCA) form a backdrop to views.

Location and summary

The LCA is located in the south-east corner of the district and consists of the valley floor and the steep and often well wooded slopes of the River Frome and River Avon. It is bounded by the district boundary, except to the west, where the edge of the LCA is marked by a change in topography to the higher elevated limestone plateau around Hinton Charterhouse.

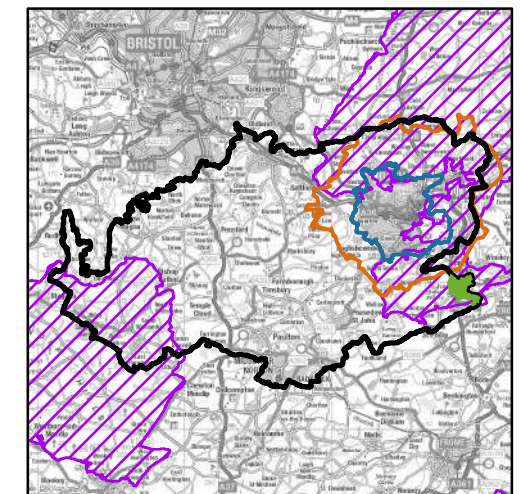
The whole LCA lies within the Cotswold AONB. The area extends into the Bathampton & Limpley Stoke Valley LCA (ELV6) described in the *Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment*.

The Frome Valley (Freshford to Iford) LCA is characterised by the narrow, well-wooded valley of the River Frome.



3c Frome Valley (Freshford to Iford)

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Narrow valley of the River Frome with steep and often well-wooded valley sides
- Field boundaries are generally hedged, with a mix of clipped and unclipped
- Densely wooded valley slopes
- Settlement concentrated on valley sides
- A landscape of traditional settlement including farmhouses of characteristic golden Oolitic Limestone
- Mill buildings and associated features such as mill races
- A visually contained valley landscape with limited association with surrounding character areas
- Extensive view across and along the valley
- A scenic and rural agricultural landscape located within the Cotswolds AONB

Geology and soils

The valley floor contains drift geology of alluvium, whilst the valley sides consist of Lias Clays which are overlain with Oolitic Limestone on high ground.

The main soils are calcareous clayey soils typically used for grazing and occasionally for arable use. Fine, well-drained calcareous loamy soils occur over the limestone towards the boundaries of the area and typically support a more diverse range of agricultural uses.

Landform and drainage pattern

The River Frome occupies a narrow, steep sided valley, flowing from the south to north-east of the LCA, where it meets it the River Avon. The valley floor is generally flat or gently sloping, gradually increasing in steepness higher up the valley sides.



View south from The Tyning showing the sinuous route of the River Frome lined by trees and some new residential development on the valley floor.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The valley sides are typically well-wooded. Much of the woodland is Priority Habitat deciduous woodland and the larger areas of woodland are mostly of ancient origin, with Friary Wood and Avoncliff Wood also SNCI. The River Frome is designated SNCI, its course marked by riparian trees

including willow and alder, and good quality semi-improved grassland (Priority Habitat) within the floodplain. The water meadows and pasture at Iford Manor are designated as a SSSI.

Agriculture and land use

Pastoral land predominates, interspersed with small areas of arable land. The mixed woodland at Friary Wood covers a significant proportion of the LCA.

Fields and boundaries

The medium sized fields are generally enclosed by hedgerows; some are well-trimmed, and others are tall and unclipped. The hedges often contain mature trees including oaks. Stone boundary walls are generally associated with properties.

Historic environment

The field pattern reflects the modern alteration of earlier enclosures, although areas of late medieval enclosure remain alongside the Frome classified in the HLC as *'piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields'* with some *'floodplain meadow'*.

The secluded linked villages of Freshford and Sharpstone (designated as a single conservation area) occupy steeply sloping ground south of the Avon and are confined to the south and east by the Frome. The steep narrow streets and high rubble stone walls contrast with open views to the surrounding wooded slopes and hills. The importance of the cloth trade in the development of the village is reflected in the numerous weavers' cottages and the site of Freshford Mill. The grade II listed Iford Mill and Dunkirk Mill also reflect this industrial heritage. Iford Bridge is a Scheduled Monument linked to Iford Manor (situated just outside of the LCA boundary).



Distinctive golden Oolitic limestone properties on the narrow street of The Tynning, including the grade II listed Methodist Chapel.

Development and infrastructure

Settlement is confined to the village of Freshford, which extends linearly along minor lanes to the south-west of the main village, as well as farms and isolated properties on the valley slopes. The use of local characteristic golden Oolitic limestone and traditional Cotswold stone or clay tiles, gives the area a distinct sense of place. More modern developments are often constructed from reconstituted stone with concrete tile roofs.

The A36 is the only major road and follows the western boundary of the LCA, otherwise a network of minor roads run through the area following the course of the river along the valley floor. Minor roads rising up the valley sides are often narrow and enclosed by hedges. A railway line passes through the north east of the LCA with a station at Freshford.

A network of public rights of way cross the LCA following the valley floor and rising up the valley sides.



Features of cultural heritage significance at Iford including the Iford Bridge Scheduled Monument and listed buildings associated with the mill.

Views and perceptual qualities

From elevated locations there are views both along and across the valley, although they are often contained or framed by the valley slopes and the dense woodland they support.

The extensive woodland coverage, pastoral land use and absence of major modern development results in a strong rural character.

Much of the area is designated as part of the Cotswolds AONB and this is reflected in the strong scenic character of the landscape. The area experiences dark night skies, and has a tranquil character, in contrast to the nearby Avon Valley.

Detractors within the landscape are limited, with localised disruption from include traffic on the A36.



View south-east across the valley to The Hill, a grade II listed manor house, surrounded by pastoral fields with frequent hedgerow trees.

LCA 3d: St Catherine's Valley

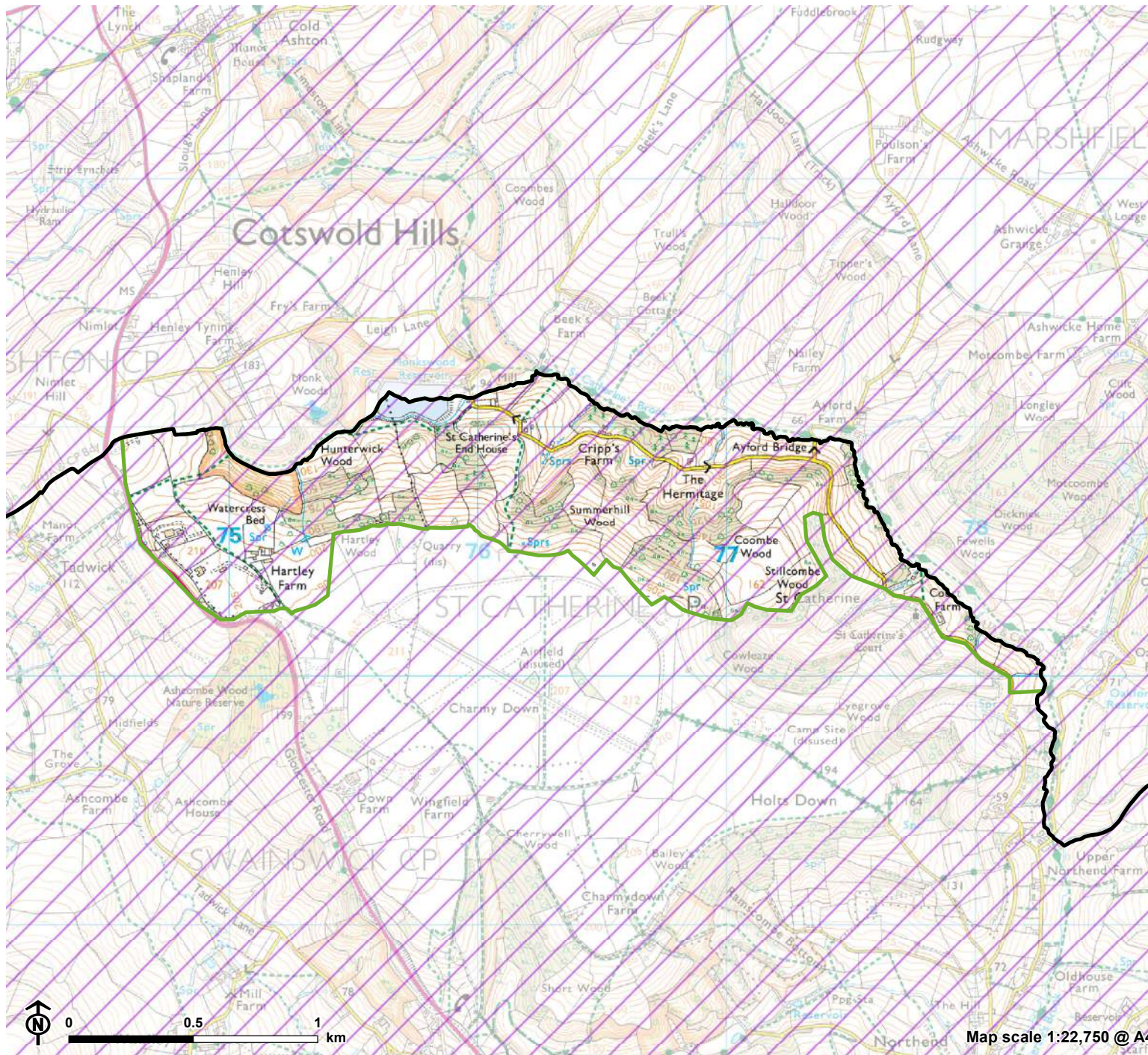


Views west from St Catherine's Lane, near St Catherine's Court, showing the steep valley slopes overlain with pasture, woodland areas, hedgerow boundaries and the localised use of fencing.






Location and summary

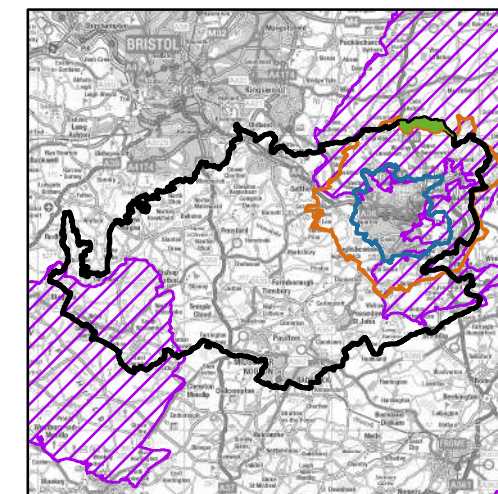
The St Catherine's Valley LCA is distinguished by its narrow, incised valley landform. It is situated along the north-eastern boundary of the district to the north of Bath, extending from Hartley Farm in the west to Court Farm in the East. The southern boundary of the LCA is defined by the change in topography to an elevated plateau. The northern boundary is marked by the district boundary and largely follows the course of St Catherine's Brook. The whole of the area is within the Cotswolds AONB.

This LCA extends into the Northend & St. Catherine's Valley LCA (ELV3), described in the *Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment*.



3d St Catherine's Valley

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Narrow steeply sided valley that cuts into the plateau
- Slowly permeable clayey soils on lower valley sides and floor
- Small irregular pasture fields
- Fields on the valley sides are enclosed by untrimmed hedges with trees
- Small woodlands on valley side
- Isolated farms are linked by a narrow sunken lane, which winds along the lower valley side
- Warm coloured Oolitic Limestone buildings
- Enclosed and intimate landscape
- A scenic and rural landscape located within the Cotswolds AONB

Geology and soils

The highest points of the valley side are distinguished by Fullers Earth, below which lies a variable width of harder Inferior Oolite Limestone and an equally variable width of Midford Sands. Lias Clay and then Alluvium characterise the lower valley sides, with Midford Sands and Lias Clay at the base of the scarp and the valley bottom.

In the base of the valley on the Lias Clays, the soils are slowly permeable silty and loam soils which can be waterlogged in places.



View north towards St Catherine's Brook, marked by a sinuous line of riparian trees and to the opposite valley slopes in South Gloucestershire.

Landform and drainage pattern

The Catherine's Brook valley steeply dissects the plateau as it flows to the Avon. The valley is marked by steeply sided minor tributary valleys resulting in a complicated indented valley landform. Historic landslides and cambering of capping limestone have resulted in the valley having a complex landform with undulations down the valley sides.

There are frequent springs along the valley sides and scarp face at the junction of the porous limestone with the Fuller's Earth and Lias Clays below. Part of the Monkwood Reservoir lies in the north of the area.



View south from Leigh Lane across Monkwood Reservoir, to the steep surrounding slopes overlain with a mixture of pasture and woodland.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The valley supports a rich and diverse range of habitats including extensive areas of the Priority Habitat deciduous woodland, as well as good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland calcareous grassland and lowland meadows. Many of these habitats, as well as the course of St Catherine's Brook are identified as a SNCI. Monkwood Valley SSSI which extends into the north-east of the LCA is designated for its woodland and grassland habitats.

Woodlands are an important feature of this landscape and are most common on the steeper upper slopes. These woodlands are irregular in shape and range in size, from small clumps to large woodlands, and many are ancient in origin. They are mainly broadleaf, and beech is common. Fields are often bound by thick grown-out hedgerows which further accentuate the well-wooded character of the area. Individual trees such as hazel and ash are common in the hedge lines. The Sunken lanes have a particularly rich hedge bank flora in spring.

Agriculture and land use

Land use is predominantly pastoral, separated by dense hedgerows and areas of woodland. At St Catherine's Court in the east there is an area of parkland, which lies partially within the character area.

An area of open access common land lies in the north-east.

Fields and boundaries

Fields are small to medium in scale and quite irregular on the steeper valley sides and scarp slopes. These irregular fields are typical of the piecemeal clearance of wooded landscapes that occurred from the Bronze Age through to Saxon times.

The fields on the steeper slopes are usually enclosed by hedges which are often untrimmed and 'gappy'. Field boundaries in lower parts of the valley include post and wire fencing to reinforce hedgerow boundaries.

Historic environment

The HLC identifies the majority of field patterns to be *piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields*.

The valley slopes were enclosed in the late medieval times and are characterised by smaller more regular outlines with frequent 'dog leg' angles where adjoining strips meet. The steeper slopes were also enclosed in the later medieval period but here they have a more distinctive form due to the 'strip lynchets' and other methods used to reclaim productive land on such gradients.

Catherine's Court lies just outside of the character area and is described within the *Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment*. It is an 18th century historic park and estate and designated as a grade II* Registered Park and Garden.

There are a small number of listed buildings including the grade II* The Grey House.

Development and infrastructure

The LCA has a sparse settlement pattern of isolated farms and cottages mostly along St Catherine's Lane. The traditional building style and use of local Olitic Limestone is a unifying element. Steep-sided roofs using limestone tiles and the detailing around windows and doors designed to shed water away from the stonework are typical of the 'Cotswold style'.

The small winding St Catherine's Lane and part of Ayford Lane are the only public roads through the character area. The narrow course of these sunken lanes is often enclosed by high hedgebanks. These developed with the clearance of woodland and so could date back to prehistoric times.

There are a very limited number of PRoW crossing the LCA itself, which run from the brook up the valley sides. but much of the valley is clearly visible from the popular Limestone Link path (situated just outside of the district boundary).



The winding St Catherine's Lane is lined by steep woodland banks and hedgerows.

Views and perceptual qualities

Views are contained by the steep-sided narrow valley slopes and restricted by its complex landform and heavily wooded character. This enclosed character means there is very little visual association with surrounding areas. Some views are available across the pasture landscape, channelled along the valley or across the valley from the higher valley slopes.

This enclosed valley is particularly rural, remote and tranquil, and can feel quite cut off from surrounding areas. The overall character is unified by the common occurrence of the broadleaf woodlands and the traditional building style and materials. The scenic character of the valley is reflected in its designation as part of the Cotswolds AONB, and many of the special qualities associated with the AONB including tranquillity and an association with historic parkland are present in this LCA.

LCA 3e: Stockwood Vale and Charlton Bottom

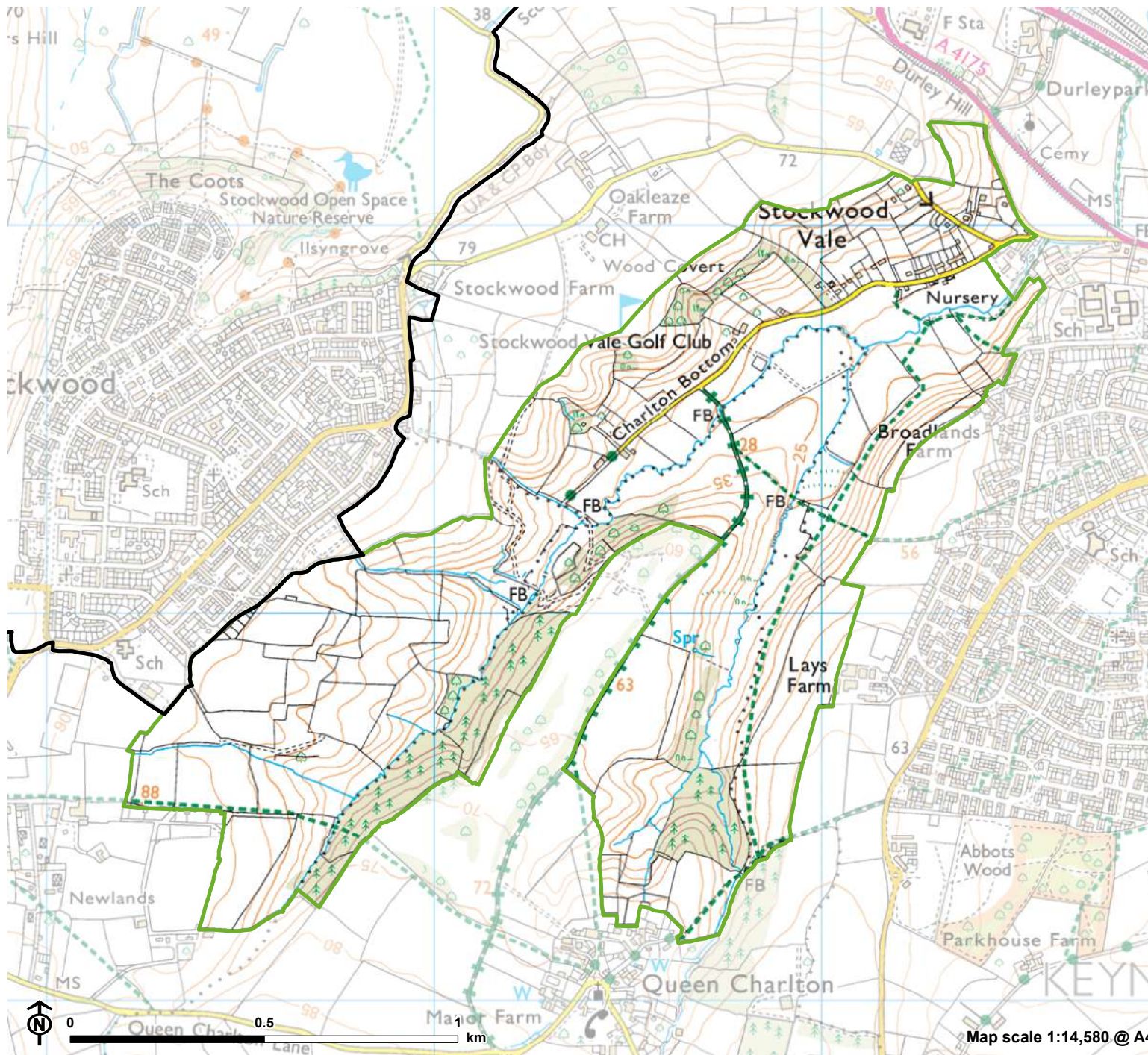


View south-east from Charlton Bottom, with woodland on the steep south-eastern valley slopes and mature trees within field boundaries. Some properties on the western settlement edge of Keynsham are also visible between trees.

Location and summary

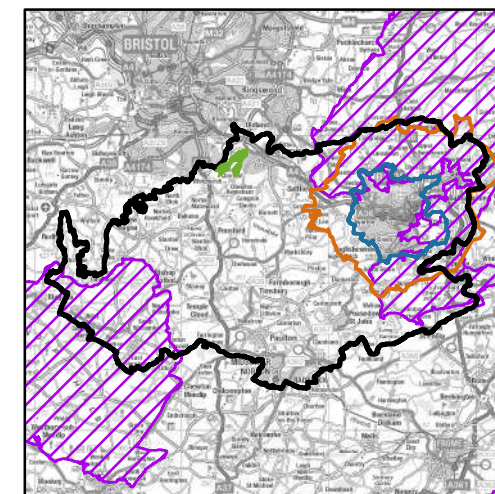
Stockwood Vale and Charlton Bottom LCA is a small character area located in the north of the district and consists of two tributary valleys of the River Avon bounded by development at Stockwood to the west and Keynsham to the east.

The LCA boundary is generally defined by the top of the valley slopes where they merge into adjoining limestone plateaux except for a short section to the north which borders the Avon Valley.



3e Stockwood Vale and Charlton Bottom

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Two relatively narrow and steeply sloping valleys
- Oolitic Limestone of adjoining higher ground gives way to clay and shales on the valley sides and mudstones on the valley floor
- Generally clayey soils with shallow better drained soils on upper slopes
- Tributaries of the River Avon flow in a north-easterly direction
- Land use is mainly grassland with some 'horsiculture' and horticulture as well as a golf course cutting across the valley
- Small to medium fields with generally unclipped hedges except beside roads
- Trees within hedges and bordering the streams
- Small woods with some scrub on upper slopes
- Generally tranquil valley floors with limited development
- Longer views enclosed by the valley landform except for views east to the Cotswold hills

Geology and soils

The main formation is the Mercia Mudstones, which occupy most of the valley floor and sides. These originated in the Triassic desert basins. Lias Limestone of the Jurassic period is found on the higher ground, a continuation of the Lias Limestone of the neighbouring Hicks Gate and Norton Farmlands. The other main formation within the area is the Penarth Group which consists of a band of clays and shale between the Lias Limestone and the Mercia Mudstones. The valley is prone to landslips where it is overlain by limestone. Alluvium is found along the valley floor within a narrow band beside the tributaries that flow through the valleys.



View south-west from Charlton Bottom, showing the rising land between the tributaries. Large scale fields with boundaries in poor condition.

The soils across the area are clayey. Within the valleys over Mercia Mudstones they are reddish in colour and slowly permeable, favouring grassland. On the upper slopes over

limestones they are shallow and better drained and are suitable for cereals as well as grassland.

Landform and drainage pattern

The valleys are relatively narrow and steeply sloping but rounding off at the base and top of slopes. The valley floors are more gently sloping and become wider towards the northern end. The land rises from 15m AOD at the northern end of the valley to 88m AOD in the south-west. Both valleys are occupied by tributaries of the River Avon, which flow in a north-easterly direction, joining the Avon north of Keynsham.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Trees border the streams and a number of small woods characterise the valleys, such as Wood Covert at Stockwood Vale, with scrubland on upper slopes.

There are no designated natural heritage features within this area, although the course of both tributaries are identified as SNCIs. Areas of Priority Habitats include lowland calcareous grasslands, traditional orchards and deciduous woodlands many of which are also SNCIs.

Agriculture and land use

The land is primarily used for pasture and for hay or silage production, with some fields used as horse paddocks reflecting the proximity of the area to nearby settlements at Keynsham and Stockwood. Stockwood Vale Golf Course cuts through the valley linking its two main playing areas on the higher ground of LCA 9d. In some parts scrub is characteristic of the grassland.

Fields and boundaries

Fields are predominantly small, or medium sized enclosed by unclipped hedges of hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and field maple with many hedgerow trees. However, roadside hedges are generally trimmed. In some places, hedgerow boundaries

have been removed or replaced with post and wire fencing. There is also a prevalence of pony tape sub-dividing fields for equine use. The fields are typically angular and irregular in shape.

Historic environment

Enclosure appears to have taken place in a variety of ways and at different times. The HLC identifies field patterns to be a mixture of *piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields, floodplain and meadow* and some *planned fields* in the west. Fields in the west were enclosed from open heathland in the medieval period or later. The valley sides were enclosed for cultivation during the latter Middle Ages, whilst the valley floors were enclosed in the Middle Ages or earlier for pasture to provide grass early in the year.

Known features of heritage interest within this landscape are limited. There is one grade II listed building, Durley Hill House and The Annexe. The landscape provides part of the setting to the Queen Charlton Conservation Area, which adjoins the LCA to the south.

Development and infrastructure

The two valleys have an isolated character with limited development, except for houses located along Stockwood Vale, although they are bounded by the settlement edge of Stockwood, Queen Charlton and Keynsham. Housing is generally suburban in character with diverse and individual styles of front garden enclosures and gateways. Farms are typically located on the upper slopes outside this area.

There is just one minor road, which runs along the valley floor at Charlton Bottom which links to Stockwood, Keynsham and the A4 to the north. There is a network of public rights of way, which both cross and follow the valleys linking surrounding settlements.



Extensive views north-east from Charlton Bottom to the skylines of the Cotswolds AONB. The former Chocolate Factory is visible in the distance.

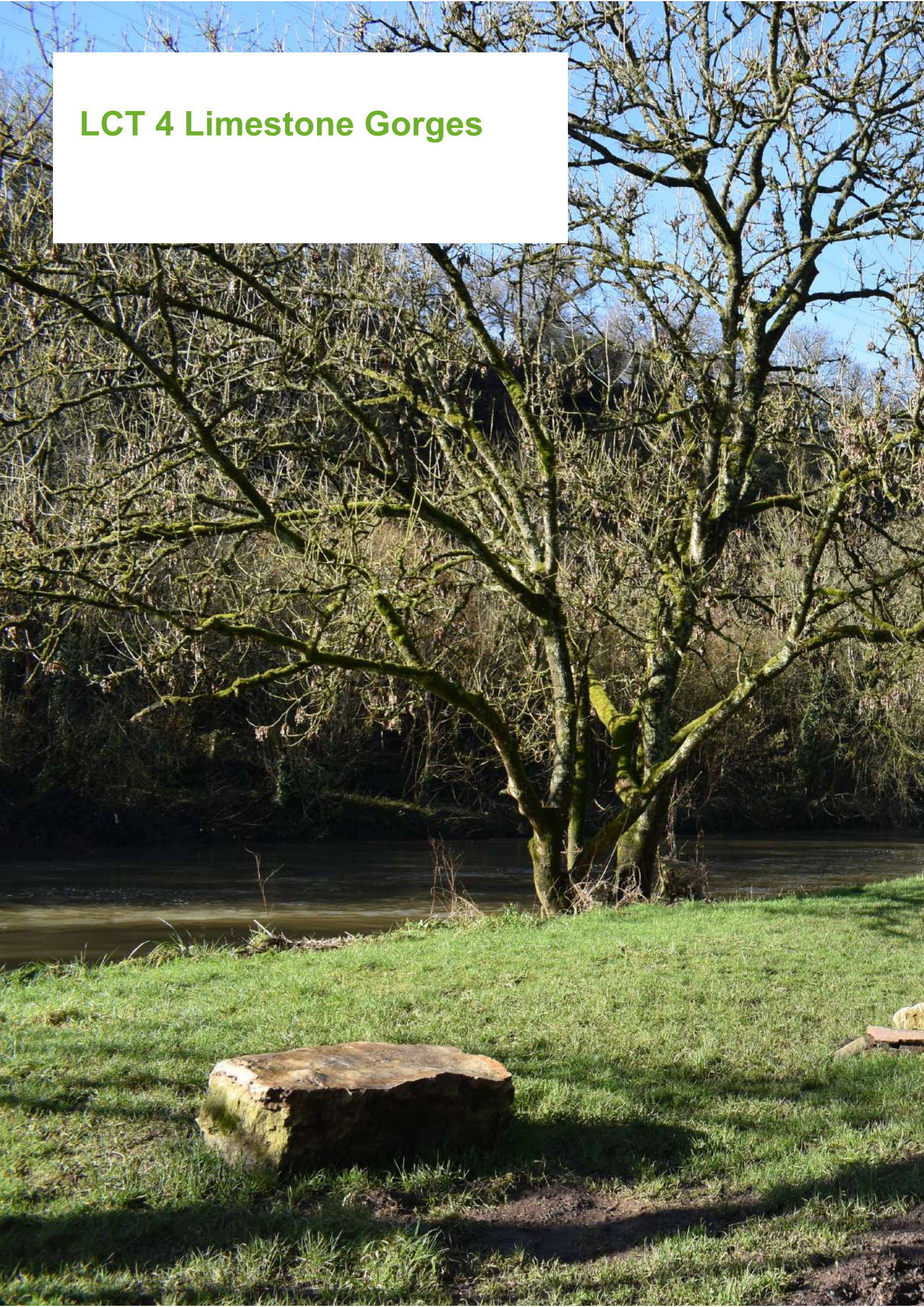
fields. Longer views are contained by the valley landform, except for more extensive views eastwards towards the Cotswolds. The distinctive form of the former Chocolate factory building (within LCA 1a) provides a landmark feature. The upper valley slopes are marked by tall hedges but in places there are glimpsed views to the urban edge of Keynsham and Stockwood.

The more intimate valley bottoms are relatively tranquil though noise from activities occurring around the urban fringes occasionally intrude into the area. The influence of horsiculture within the landscape and the use of pony tape can degrade the rural character of the valley.

Views and perceptual qualities

The landscape generally has an open character with views across the valleys, although locally the character can be quite enclosed for example within the lanes, byways and smaller

LCT 4 Limestone Gorges



LCT 4: Limestone Gorges



Landscape Character Areas:

The Limestone Gorges LCT has one LCAs:

- 4a: Bickley Wood Gorge

LCA 4a: Bickley Wood Gorge

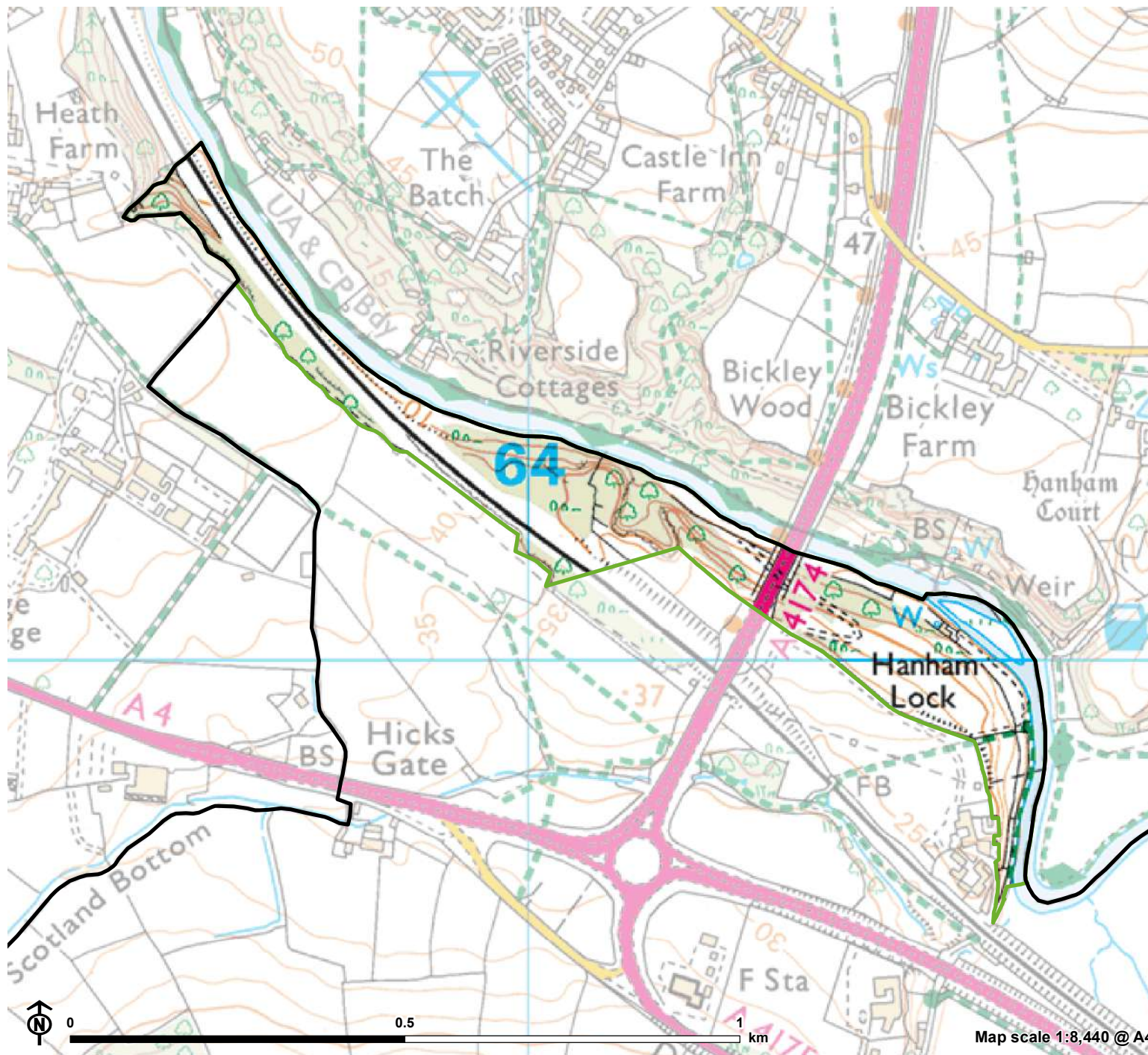


Characteristic canal boats on the River Avon, with long views north-east across the floodplain to development on the settlement edge of Keynsham with the Cotswold hills behind

Location and summary

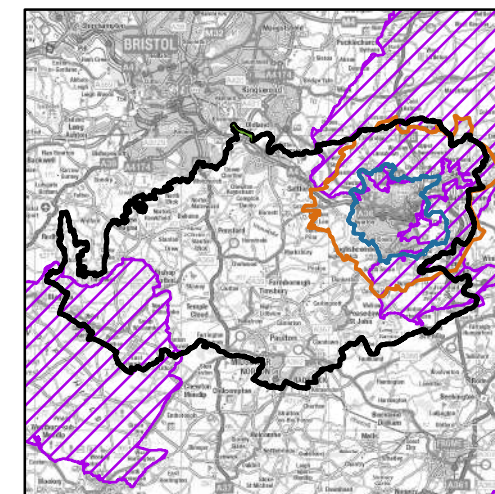
Bickley Wood Gorge is a small LCA located in the north of the district, on the edge of Bristol. It comprises the north-east facing slope of the narrow Avon river valley where it cuts into the surrounding sandstone plateau, part of the wooded gorge which extends into Bristol.

The south western boundary is defined by the top of the steep wooded slope where it meets the undulating plateau of the Hicks Gate character area. The north eastern boundary is defined by the district boundary which runs along the river, although the character of this area continues into South Gloucestershire.



4a Bickley Wood Gorge

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Sheer gorge-like rock face and steeper valley sides becoming broader and shallower to the east
- Visible outcrops of Pennant Sandstone along the valley sides
- Flat river margins along the central section
- Woodland on steep slopes and pasture with few hedges on lower gentle slopes
- Sandstone retaining walls along part of the riverbank
- Railway on a multi-arched red brick support crosses the river
- The A4174 road bridge crosses the valley introducing noise into an otherwise tranquil landscape
- Pylons dominate the skyline from some viewpoints

Geology and soils

The characteristic geological formation is Pennant Sandstone through which the River Avon passes in a gorge. The course of the Avon developed on younger rocks that have subsequently been eroded which explains why the river now takes this apparently unlikely course through hard sandstone. More recent alluvium occupies the narrow floodplain.



Sloping valley side of the River Avon used for horse grazing, with the A4174 road bridge in the background

Landform and drainage pattern

This area comprises the north-east facing slope of a narrow valley containing the River Avon which varies in profile along its length. The valley is gorge-like at the north-western end, featuring a sheer rock face and steeper valley side but becomes broader and shallower where it meets the River Avon floodplain to the south-east.

The shallow to moderate slopes are undulating and indented by small dry valleys. The indented landform of the hillside also results from historic quarrying. The flat margin at the river edge is very narrow and contained by the valley side, except where it broadens out midway along the character area.

The railway cuts diagonally through the area at the point where the landform drops from the dramatic cliff face to

moderate slopes. The shelved appearance of the lower landform here has been created to accommodate the railway line at the required grade.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Deciduous woodland characterises the steeper valley slopes, much of which is notified as a Priority Habitat. Its character varies, with steeper areas containing a mix of young and semi-mature trees while gentler slopes are characterised by scrub and small trees with occasional large mature trees. The predominant species is ash with oak and beech. Fox's Wood is registered as ancient semi-natural woodland. East Wood and Keynsham Humpy Tumps SNCI covers the whole area and is valued for its floristically rich acidic grassland habitat.

Agriculture and land use

Fields on the gentler slopes down to the river edge are used for grazing. The wider margin at the river edge is owned by British Waterways Board who occupy a building adjacent to the lock and part of this neglected pasture is used for ad hoc storage of materials.

Fields and boundaries

There has been significant hedgerow loss and scrub is colonising the pasture and the sloping grassed areas west of the road bridge. Some significant lengths of a dry sandstone wall are evident at the base of some of the valley slopes and along parts of the river edge.

Historic environment

The remaining small and irregularly shaped fields originate from the 17th century enclosure of medieval deer parks.

The valley has had periods of intense quarrying activity in the past, providing a source of Pennant sandstone that was used in building and was conveniently located for transportation along the river.

Development and infrastructure

The A4174 spans the valley and allows glimpses of the dramatic gorge and the more open landscape of the River Avon to the east. The simple design of the bridge means it is not overly dominant and an open view is maintained along the valley beneath the bridge. The main railway line from London to Bristol follows the alignment of the river, running between the sheer rock face and river, supported by a multi-arched red brick bridge.

There is no vehicular access into the area except for a track owned by the British Waterways Board who are responsible for the lock, farm access and access to private moorings. Public rights of way are limited to a footpath extending along the riverside and another rising up the hillside.

The old lock-keepers cottage at Hanham Lock (now a private residential property) is the only property. There is a mooring pontoon at Hanham Lock and canal boats moored on the river's edge are a distinctive feature of this landscape.



Wooded slopes of the gorge with pylons marking the skyline

Views and perceptual qualities

The dramatic hanging woods of the gorge, the rocky outcrops and riverside features including canal boats and Hanham Lock and Weir create a very strong sense of place to this character area. The brick arched railway support at the river edge is also an interesting feature within the wooded valley landscape.

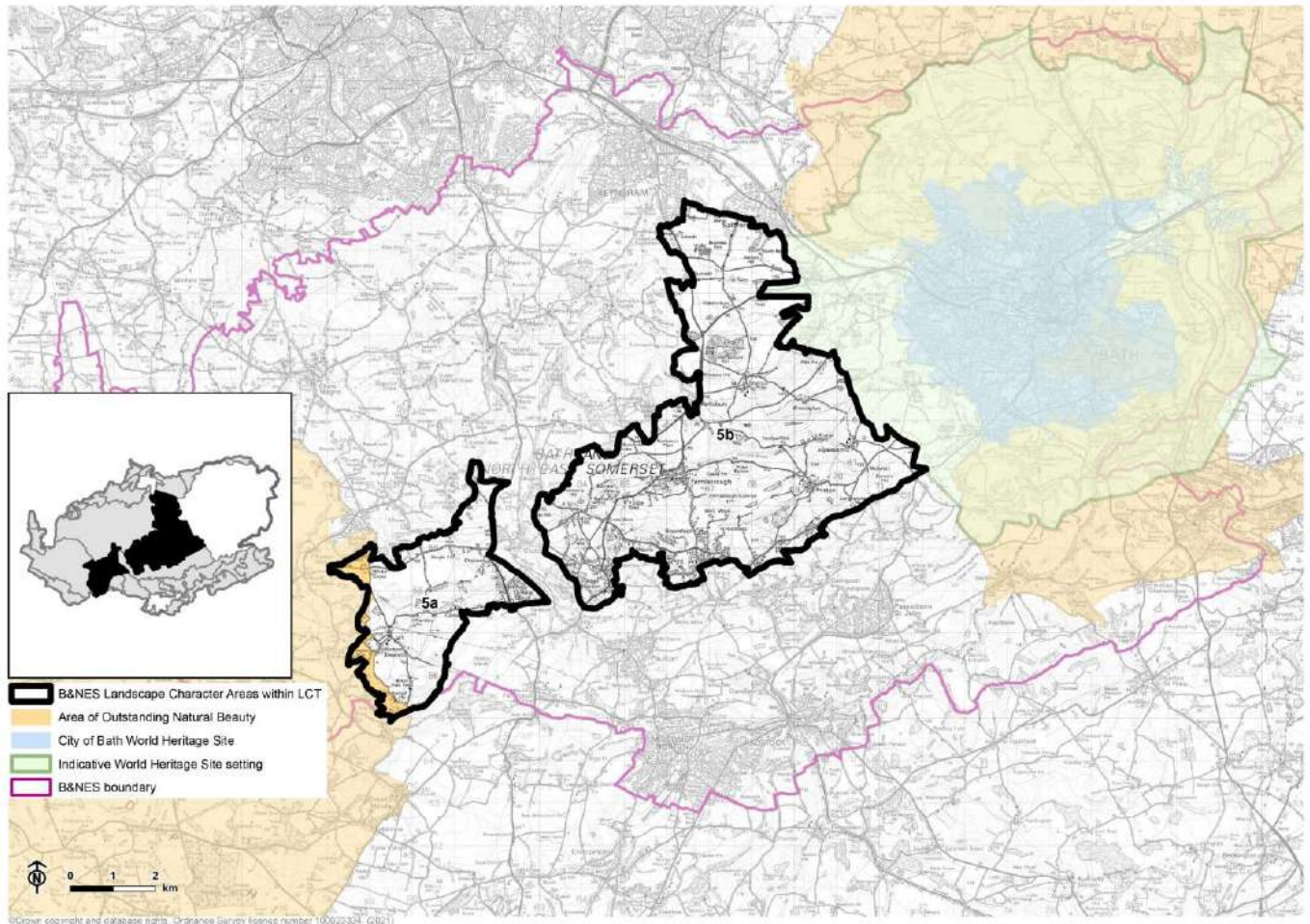
The landform combined with meanders in the river and wooded valley sides creates a strong sense of enclosure across much of the character area. As the valley broadens, the views become more extensive across the floodplain to the Cotswold hills in the distance. Public rights of way at varying heights within the woodland afford characteristic views of the River Avon and its dramatic woodland setting. Large pylons on the edge of the undulating plateau to the south of the valley are discordant elements on the skyline when seen from the higher-level paths but are less so from viewpoints lower within the valley where trees partly screen these structures.

Traffic noise from the A4174 Bristol Ring Road detracts from the tranquil experience enjoyed from public footpaths at the river's edge and within the woodland. Overgrown scrubby areas and 'cluttered' storage of materials associated with moorings at Hanham Lock pontoon create a slightly degraded character. There is recent informal clearing of woodland on the steep slopes occurring in places for food growing and evidence of informal dwellings.

LCT 5 Limestone Plateaux and Brook Valleys



LCT 5: Limestone Plateaux and Brook Valleys



Landscape Character Areas:

The Limestone Plateaux and Brook Valleys LCT is subdivided into two LCAs:

- 5a: Hinton Blewett Plateau and Brook Valleys
- 5b: Farmborough Plateau and Brook Valleys

LCA 5a: Hinton Blewett Plateau and Brook Valleys

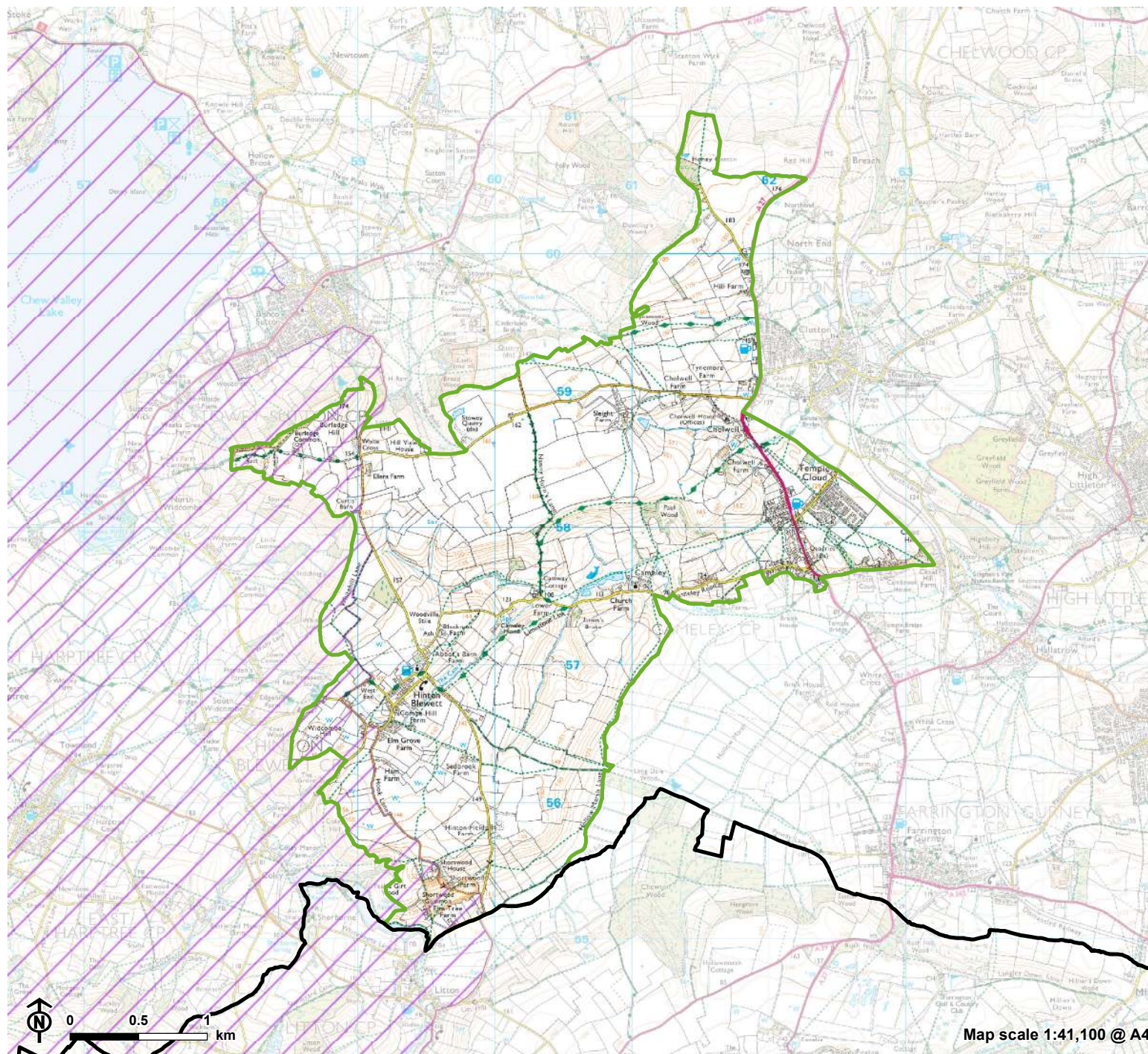


The elevated plateau landform affords long views to surrounding landscapes, including south-west to the Mendip Hills






Location and summary

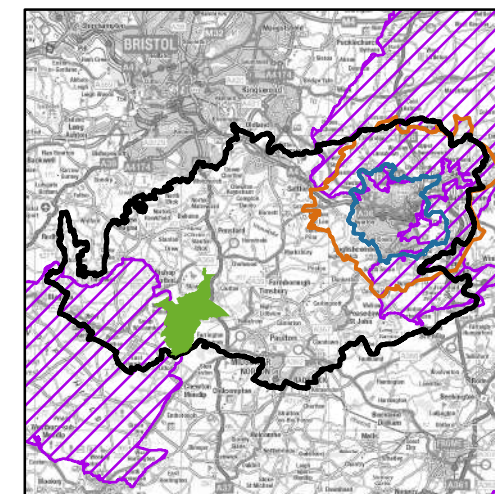
The Hinton Blewett Plateau and Brook Valleys LCA comprises an undulating and heavily eroded Oolitic and Lias Limestone plateau incised by the valley of the Cam Brook and its tributaries.

It is situated in the south of the district, extending from Hinton Blewett to Temple Cloud. The boundaries of the character area are defined by the edge of the plateau before it falls away to the surrounding lower-lying areas, which are often characterised by stream and river valleys, including the Yeo Valley to the west and the Chew Valley to the north. The southern boundary of the character area is marked by the district boundary. The western edge of the LCA lies within the Mendip Hills AONB.



5a Hinton Blewett

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Undulating limestone plateau incised by a brook valley
- Tree-lined Cam Brook
- A mixture of pasture and arable farmland with well-maintained trimmed hedges
- Narrow winding enclosed lanes/green lanes
- Settlements located on valley slopes and along the A37
- Traditional buildings constructed of Oolitic or Lias Limestone and many houses rendered or painted

Geology and soils

The most characteristic geological formation is Lias Limestone which extends from Hinton Blewett to Red Hill. Mercia Mudstones occur in the south of the LCA.



Expansive views north from the elevated plateau towards Dundry Plateau.

The principal soils associated with the Lias Limestone are shallow well-drained calcareous clays and clay loams. Reddish fine loamy or clayey soils are found over the Mercia Mudstones.

Landform and drainage pattern

This area comprises a gently undulating, mainly limestone plateau. The plateau generally rises quite sharply from the surrounding lower-lying valleys and marshland, reaching 185m AOD in the north of the area.

The Cam Brook rises near Hinton Blewett, passing through the Mercia mudstones before continuing its easterly course to Hollow Marsh. There is a notably high concentration of wells and springs, particularly surrounding Hinton Blewett.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Small woodland areas, tree belts and copses are scattered throughout the area, but do not dominate the farmed landscape which has a generally open character. These woodlands include those identified as Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands, whilst Paul Wood is ancient in origin. Trees line the Cam Brook but in-field trees are an occasional rather than frequent feature.

Areas of Priority Habitat are often found on steeper slopes. These include areas of good quality semi-improved grassland, some of which are designated as part of the Burledge Sidelands and Meadows SSSI (noted for its species-rich unimproved neutral grassland communities). There are also pockets of Priority Habitat lowland meadows and lowland calcareous grassland. Several areas within the landscape are identified as SNCI, including the course of the Cam Brook and several grassland areas.

Agriculture and land use

The landscape is dominated by pasture grazing, including intensive, improved grassland fields, bound by hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees. In flatter areas of the plateau in the north, arable land use is more common. Pony paddocks are more common around Temple Cloud.

Fields and boundaries

Field hedges are mostly regularly trimmed, except in some of the steeper valley areas. Many are 'well-treed' except for the more exposed plateau tops such as around Hinton Blewett. There is some evidence of hedgerow loss and replacement by fencing, particularly around settlements.

Most fields are irregular in shape and pattern with a variety of field sizes, with medium-sized fields predominating. Larger fields are found on the plateau or gentler slopes and smaller fields on steeper slopes and around the villages.

Historic environment

The irregular shape and pattern of the fields are associated with late medieval enclosure of the open field system (identified in the National HLC as *late medieval piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields* whilst along the route of the Cam there are areas of medieval enclosure of *floodplain and meadows*). In more recent times the amalgamation of smaller fields has formed larger, more easily worked units. Ridge and furrow is evident in some fields around Hinton Blewett.

In the north-west of the LCA lies a large univallate hillfort with outworks, designated as a Scheduled Monument. The historic core of the village Hinton Blewett features a number of listed buildings, reflected in its designation as a conservation area. Of note are the grade I listed churches at Hinton Blewett and in

the hamlet of Cameley. Clusters of listed stone buildings also mark the route of the original turnpike road to Bristol (now the A37) at Temple Cloud

Development and infrastructure

There is a good network of minor roads, which are often narrow and hedge lined, connecting villages, hamlets and isolated farms. Narrow hedge lined 'green lanes' are also a particular feature of the area and are sometimes sunken.

Settlements are generally located on the slopes of the Cam valley or its tributaries and along the A37. The principal villages include the linear settlements Hinton Blewett and Temple Cloud.



Remnant ridge and furrow reflects the time depth and historic land use of the area.

The villages and hamlets generally fit sensitively into their setting, typically with old Lias or Oolitic Limestone buildings and more rarely red sandstone and often roofed with clay tiles. There are also many rendered houses often white and occasionally cream in colour. Post-war and more recent small housing estates at Temple Cloud have extended both sides of the A37. Modern barns, often of pre-formed steel fit less harmoniously where positioned in exposed areas.

Public rights of way connect areas of settlement and include part of the Limestone Link and the Three Peaks walk.

Views and perceptual qualities

The open undulating nature of the landscape allows expansive views across the area. There are also long distance views south to the Mendip Hills and north as far as the Dundry Plateau over adjacent low-lying areas, including the Chew Valley. Views are often framed through field openings. The flat and elevated plateaux landform also provides a visually distinctive feature from surrounding areas. The towers of the grade I listed churches at Hinton Blewett and Cameley are distinctive local skyline features.

Post-war development has had a significant impact on views, most notably at Temple Cloud. Edge of settlement housing development lacks the organic and well-integrated

characteristics of the historic settlements. Traffic on the A37 is also a significant detractor and disrupts the quiet and tranquil qualities experienced across much of the LCA. Away from Temple Cloud, the LCA has a strong rural character resulting from the patchwork of hedgerow-bound pasture fields and small settlements built in local stone.

LCA 5b: Farnborough Plateau and Brook Valleys

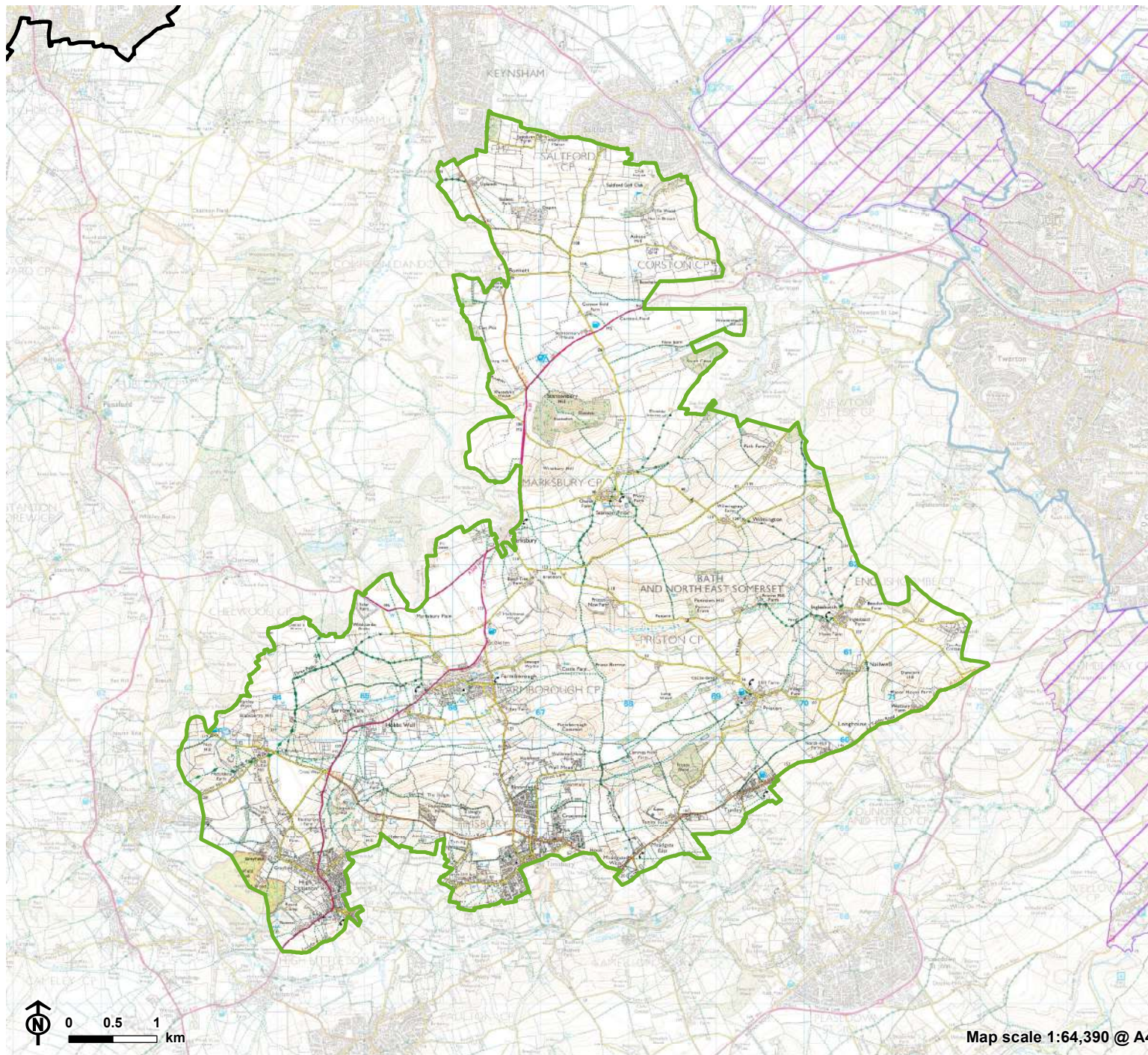


Undulating plateau farmland with the locally distinctive conical hills of Priest Barrow and Farnborough Common

Location and summary.

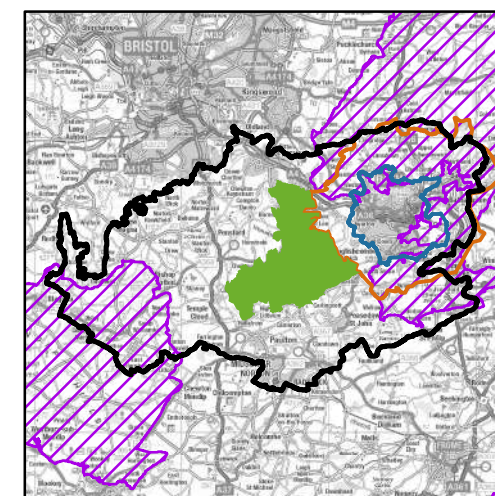
The Farnborough Plateau and Brook Valleys LCA is an extensive and strongly rural area, defined by the limestone plateau landscape which is incised by small river valleys.

The LCA extends across the centre of the district from High Littleton in the west to Saltford in the north east. The plateau extends east outside the study area to the edge of Bath and is described in the “Eroded Plateau and Valleys” character area (EPV1) of the *Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment*. The boundaries of the LCA are defined by the edge of the plateau before it falls away to the Chew Valley in the north-west, the Avon Valley to the north, and the Cam Brook Valley to the south.



5b Farmborough

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Map scale 1:64,390 @ A4

Key Characteristics

- Undulating limestone plateau landscape incised by brook valleys
- Characteristic rounded hills protrude from the plateau as at Farmborough Common, Priest Barrow, Nap Hill, The Sleight and Mearns Hill
- Tree lined brooks including the Newton, Conygre and Corston Brooks
- Narrow enclosed lanes or green lanes with well-trimmed hedges
- Patchwork of arable and pasture farmland
- Villages generally located within valleys
- Traditional buildings constructed of Oolitic or Lias Limestone with many houses rendered or painted
- Sites and features of high archaeological significance including the early medieval Wansdyke earthworks and Stantonbury Camp Iron-age hillfort.
- The water mill at Priston dates to 1720, reflecting the industrial heritage of the area

Geology and soils

The most characteristic geological formation is Lias Limestone which occupies the area north of Barrow Vale and Farmborough to Stanton Prior. It also occurs as bands from Timsbury to Priston. Lias Clay occupies much of the remaining area where it abuts the Lias Limestone.

Oolitic Limestone outcrops occur towards the east of the area near Wilmington. There are also a number of more isolated outcrops of Oolitic Limestone forming distinctive rounded hills.



Undulating pastoral fields with long views north over the Chew Valley towards Bristol

There are notable areas of Fuller's Earth, a clay found between the top of the Inferior Oolite and the base of the Great Oolite or Forest Marble.

In the south and south east of the area there are coal measures which are sufficiently near the surface for coal mining to have taken place at High Littleton and Tunley.

The principal soils associated with the Lias and Oolitic Limestone and Lias Clay are shallow well-drained calcareous clays and clay loams. They typically support both cereals and

grassland. Silty soils are found along a band following the Conygre and Newton Brooks.

Landform and drainage pattern

This area comprises an undulating mainly Lias and in part Oolitic Limestone plateau. The northern edge of the plateau rises gently out of the River Avon Valley, and extends outside the study area towards the edge of Bath (described in the *Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment*), where it is almost level with the southern end of the Cotswold plateau.

Although a plateau in terms of overall landform, the landform has been very heavily eroded to form a complex undulating plateau and valley landscape with some very notable conical or rounded hills protruding out of the plateau, as at Farmborough Common, Priest Barrow, The Sleight and Mearns Hill.

The Conygre and Corston Brooks and their tributaries originate to the west of the area and follow a generally north-easterly course to join the River Avon west of Bath. The incised valleys of the Conygre and Corston Brooks give rise to two particularly distinctive wide ridge lines in the east of this LCA.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The landscape has a generally open character and is not particularly well-wooded except in valleys. There are some smaller woodlands (some of ancient origin) tree belts and copses scattered throughout the area but they do not predominate in the landscape. Only the woodlands around Stantonbury Hill, Priston and High Littleton and are of a notable size. Some villages, such as Timsbury are particularly 'well-treed' with large specimens, but in-field specimen trees are an occasional rather than frequent feature. Areas of species-rich calcareous grassland and semi-improved grassland are found on steeper slopes around Farmborough.

Agriculture and land use

The large areas of arable land within this character area form a patchwork within smaller areas of grassland. Generally, the arable land is on the flatter or gently sloping plateau land, particularly concentrated in the north, whilst the grassland is on the more undulating, steeply sloping land. Villages typically have areas of horse grazing paddocks around them.

There are several areas of parkland and estate farms, which have given rise to distinct landscapes.

Fields and boundaries

The area features a variety of field sizes, medium predominating, with larger fields on plateaux or gentler slopes and smaller fields on steeper slopes and around some villages. Most fields are irregular in shape and pattern.

Field hedges are mostly trimmed, except on some of the steeper valley slopes. The condition of hedges and hedgerow trees is variable with particularly poor hedges around arable fields and some stag headed trees. Fencing is uncommon except around settlements. Walls are typically found around the edges of and within villages and hamlets, for example at Stanton Prior and Marksbury.

Historic environment

Historically much of the area was enclosed in the late medieval period, identified in the National HLC as '*piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields*' and '*planned fields*' with some areas of '*floodplain meadow*' around watercourses, such as near Barrow Vale. A walled field boundary, (the only one in Priston Parish), marking the Manorial boundary between Wilmington and Priston is unusual in that it contains megaliths suggesting it was a boundary in pre-historic times.

There are a number of historical features of archaeological interest including Stantonbury Hillfort, a Scheduled Monument which is a dominant landmark in the north east of the area and the Wansdyke, which crosses from Stantonbury Hill to Odd Down. This nationally important and enigmatic linear earthwork is clearly visible in sections, such as at Stantonbury Hill. There is a well-preserved water mill at Priston. This 18th century mill was built on Saxon foundations, indicating the historic importance of the river to the nearby villages.

Development and infrastructure

Settlement is characterised by scattered historic villages which are generally located within valleys and dips, although Timsbury and Marksbury are located on the plateau. The principal villages include High Littleton, Timsbury, Farmborough, Marksbury, Priston. Most of the settlements have a core of old stone-built buildings surrounded by more modern development and small housing estates. The historic buildings at Timsbury are recognised through its designation as a conservation area.

The villages and hamlets fit sensitively into their setting, typically with old Lias or Oolitic Limestone buildings and more rarely sandstone, often roofed with clay tiles. There are also many rendered houses often white and occasionally cream in colour. Modern barns, often of pre-formed steel, are visible from many viewpoints and fit less harmoniously where positioned in exposed areas.

The A39 passes north/south through the area connecting Bristol and Bath to Wells. There is a good network of minor roads, which are often narrow and hedge lined, connecting villages, hamlets and isolated farms. Narrow hedge lined 'green lanes' are also a particular feature of the area and are often sunken.



Long views south-west from Clutton Hill towards the Mendip hills

Views and perceptual qualities

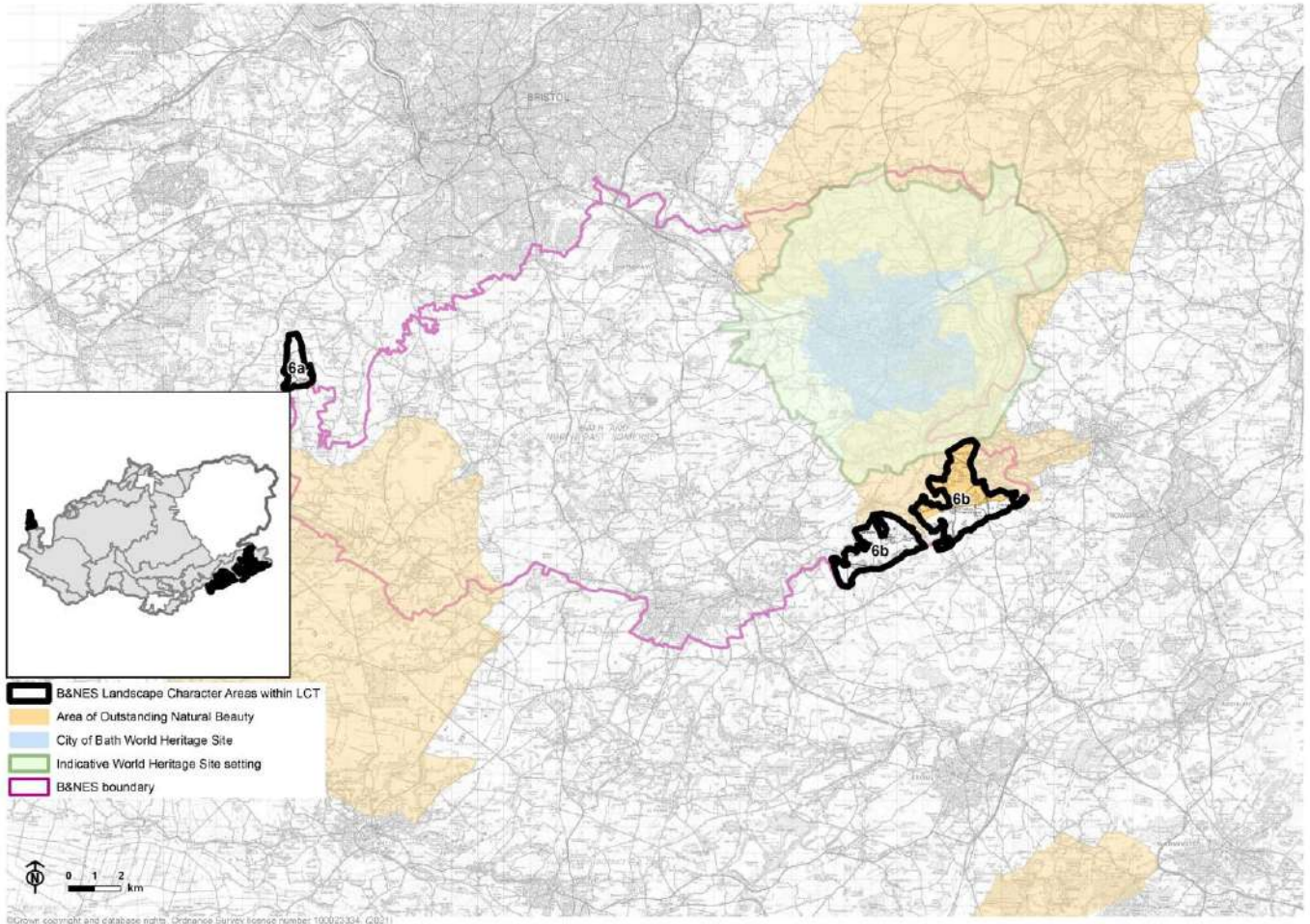
The open and undulating character of the landscape gives rise to many extensive views often framed through field openings. From some elevated areas there are long views to the Cotswold Hills, and to Bristol over the Chew Valley. The characteristic small rounded hills are important landmarks within the area and also provide local vantage points, such as the view from Blackberry Hill over Clutton and beyond. Views within the brook valleys are limited by landform and vegetation. The varied topography gives rise to interesting light and shading effects emphasising the characteristic landform.

Despite its proximity to Bath, the area retains a largely rural character (due to the relative lack of modern development and small settlements) and experiences relatively dark night skies. Away from settlements there is a strong sense of tranquillity, although this is disturbed by traffic on A-roads. The area is popular for recreation due to its rural character and scenic views. An extensive network of public rights of way cross the LCA, including the Avon Three Peaks Circular Walk.

LCT 6 Limestone Plateaux



LCT 6: Limestone Plateaux



Landscape Character Areas:

The Limestone Plateaux LCT is subdivided into two LCAs:

- 6a: Thrubwell Farm Plateau
- 6b: Hinton Charterhouse and Baggridge Plateau

LCA 6a: Thrubwell Farm Plateau

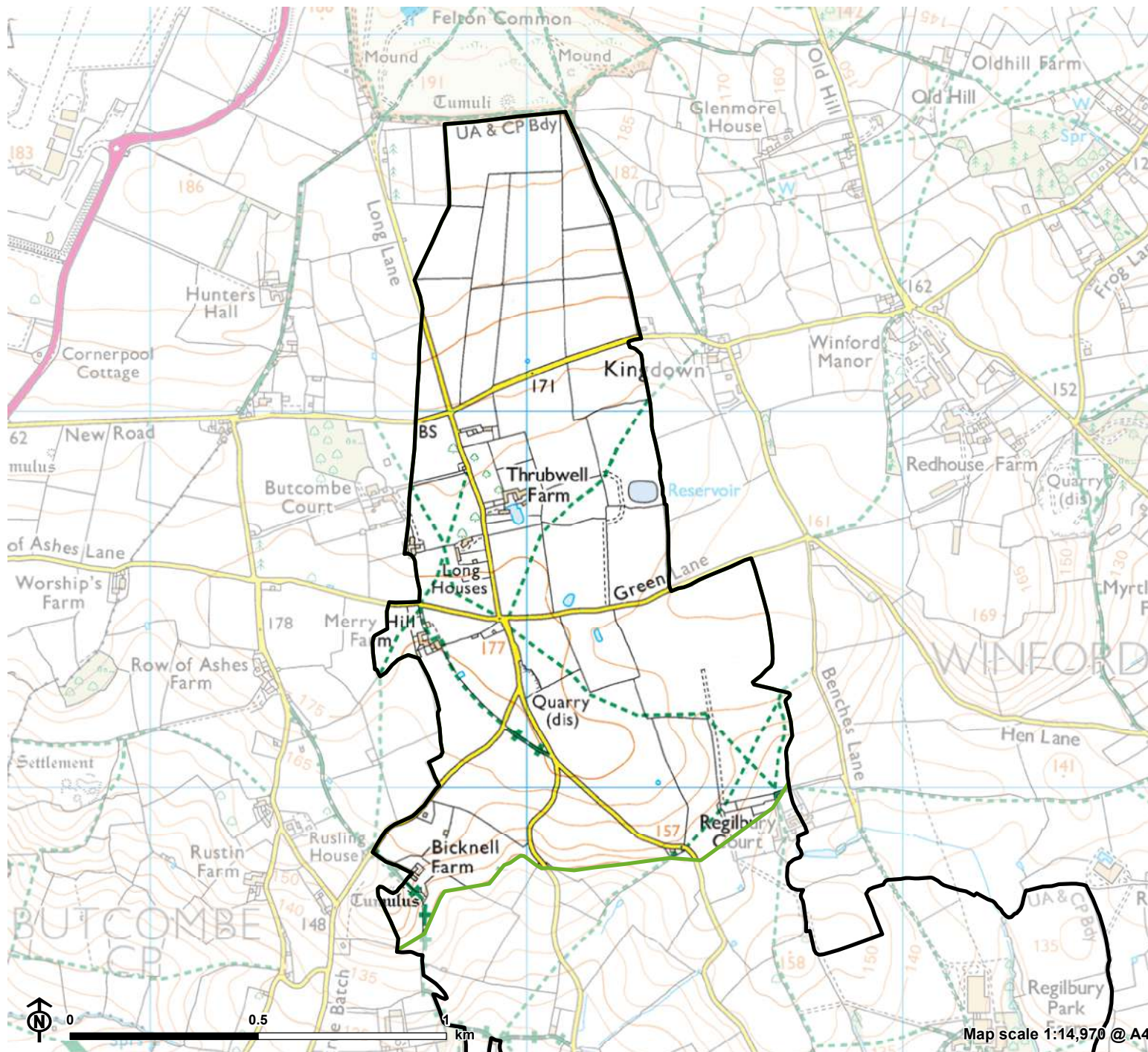


Land use on the plateau top is defined by rectilinear fields bound by clipped hedges

Location and summary

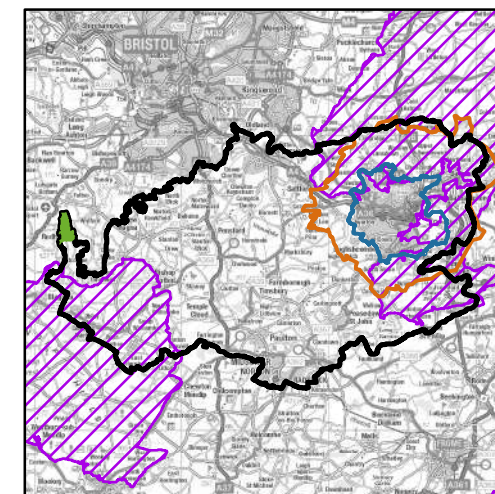
A small LCA in the far west of the district which forms part of a wider high plateau extending beyond the district boundary, northwards towards Bristol Airport. The Thrubwell Farm Plateau LCA is characterised by its complex geology overlain by the gently undulating plateau, with rectilinear fields and sparse settlement.

The boundaries of the LCA are defined by the district boundary with North Somerset, except to the south which is marked by edge of the plateau where it adjoins the narrow ridge of the Nempnett Thrubwell Hills and Ridges LCA.



6a Thrubwell Farm Plateau

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Flat or very gently undulating plateau above 150m AOD which extends beyond the district boundary
- Geologically complex
- Pastoral land use on well drained soils
- Late 18th and early 19th century rectilinear field pattern
- Clipped hedges which are often 'gappy' and supplemented by sheep netting
- Occasional groups of mature trees as well as roadside and hedgerow trees
- Parkland at Butcombe Court abutting the western boundary
- Minor roads set out in a grid pattern
- Sparse settlement of isolated farmsteads and individual properties
- The elevated plateau landform affords long views south to the Mendip hills

Geology and soils

Geologically the area is complex though on the ground this is not immediately apparent. The north of the area consists of the Harptree Beds which incorporate silicified clay, shale and Lias Limestone. Clifton Down Limestone, which includes Calcite and Dolomitic Mudstones of the Carboniferous period, is found in the adjoining central band and Dolomitic Conglomerate of the Triassic period occupies a band across the southern part of the area.



The elevated plateau landform affords long views south to the Mendip hills.

There are two main soil types, both generally well-drained. The north of the LCA has silty soils that are typical of the Mendips and broadly coincide with the Harptree Beds while the south has a loamy soil.

Landform and drainage pattern

The landscape consists of a relatively flat or very gently undulating plateau above 150m AOD. The flat topography extends beyond the district boundary forming a wide plateau south of Bristol, and which includes Bristol Airport. Occasional ponds are marked by small groups of willow trees and there is a small reservoir to the east of Thrubwell Farm.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Semi-natural habitats are limited to localised groups of trees, particularly around Thrubwell Farm as well as the hedgerow and roadside trees that line the lanes.

Agriculture and land use

The land is mainly under pasture and is also used for silage making. There is some arable land towards the north of the area. Part of Butcombe Court parkland falls within the area, to the west of Thrubwell Lane.

Fields and boundaries

Fields are enclosed by hedges that are generally trimmed and contain few trees. Tall untrimmed hedges are less common. Hedges are typically of low species diversity and are often 'gappy', supplemented with sheep netting where fields are used for grazing. Some hedges are more diverse, such as along the north side of Green Lane.

Fields are mainly rectangular in shape. The predominant field size is medium with some smaller fields around Thrubwell Farm.

Historic environment

The area to the north has a rectilinear field pattern that is typical of late 18th and early 19th century parliamentary enclosure. The south is characterised by fields of late medieval, post-medieval or modern origin. Thrubwell Farmhouse and its outbuildings are grade II listed.

Development and infrastructure

There are only minor roads within the immediate area, which are set out in a grid pattern. Settlement is sparse within the area and consists of isolated farms including Bicknell Farm, Merry Hill Farm and Thrubwell Farm, as well as a few individual houses. Domestic buildings are generally of local

Lias Limestone or render with clay-tiled roofs whilst agricultural barns are of modern industrial materials.



Vegetation including trees, hedgerows and a poplar shelterbelt limit views to the north

Views and perceptual qualities

This elevated landscape is open in appearance with long distance views to the Mendip scarp to the south. Views north are limited by vegetation, notably around Thrubwell Farm and Butcombe Court (which sits outside of the LCA). Clipped hedges and occasional hedgerow trees contain near views. There are intermittent glimpses of airport infrastructure in places where gaps in vegetation exist.

This rural and tranquil landscape has few detractors, and these are restricted to minor elements such as telegraph poles, overhead cables and a small disused quarry. There is some distant noise from traffic on the A38, and intermittent disturbance from the nearby Bristol Airport.

LCA 6b: Hinton Charterhouse and Baggridge Plateau



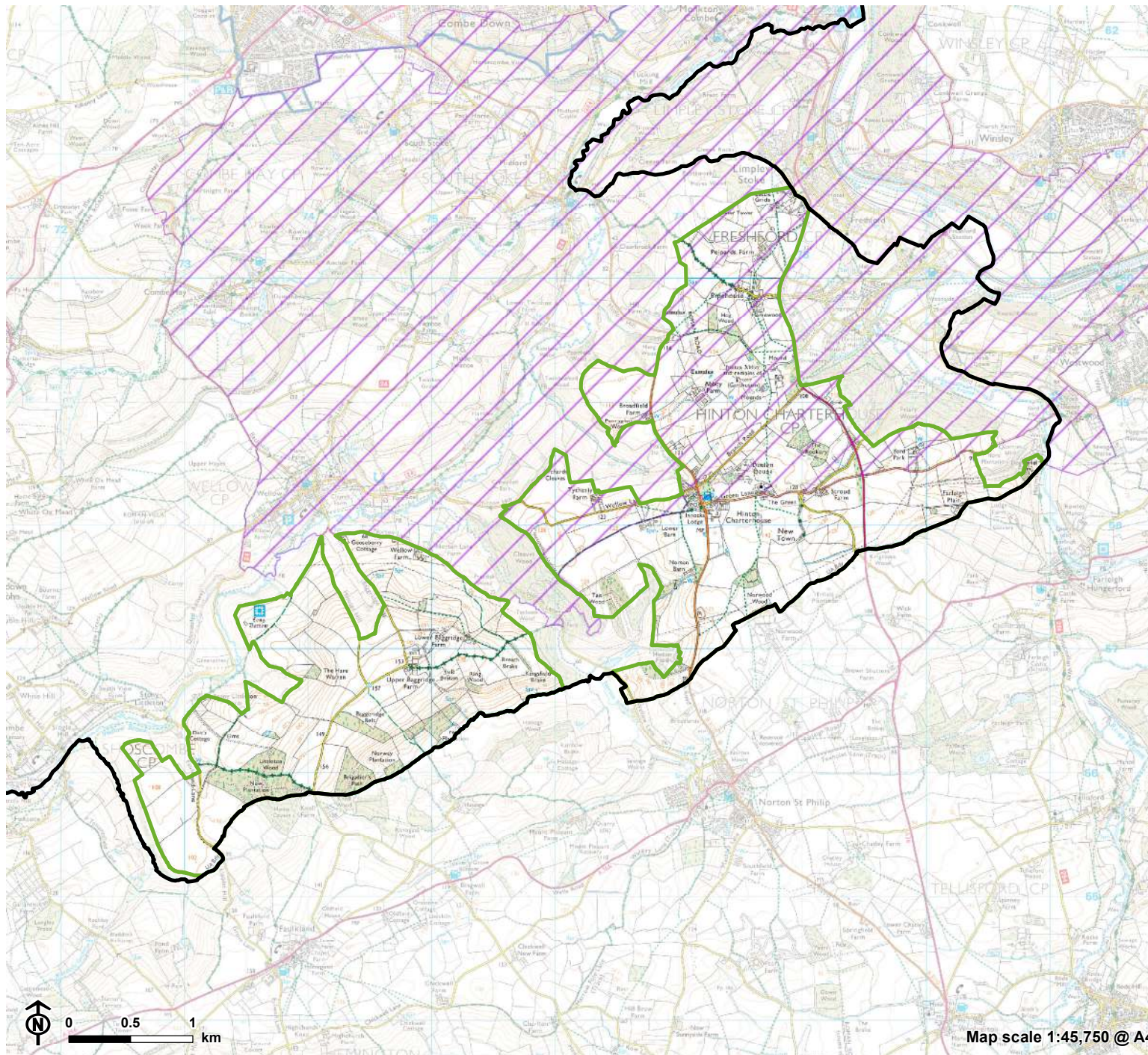
Trimmed hedges enclosing large-scale arable fields high on the plateau top south of Wellow

Location and summary

The Hinton Charterhouse and Baggridge Plateau LCA comprises an elevated limestone plateau of open and gently undulating mixed farmland.

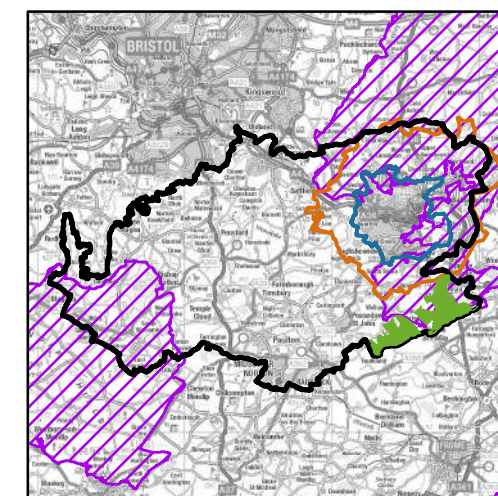
It is located in the south-eastern corner of the district. The boundaries follow the edge of the plateau where it meets the steep slopes of the surrounding river valleys, the Wellow to the north and west and the Frome to the east. The southern boundary follows the district boundary. The far northern boundary adjoins a small extension of the area northwards which is area LLP1 of the Bathscape LCA. The valley of the Norton Brook (Wellow Brook Valley LCA) divides the area into two parts.

The north east of the LCA, north of Hinton Charterhouse village, is within the Cotswolds AONB.



6b Hinton Charterhouse and Baggridge Plateau

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Undulating Oolitic Limestone plateau mostly above 100m AOD
- Generally clayey soils with thinner stony light coloured free-draining soils on the limestone
- Mixture of pasture and arable land uses
- Medium or large fields that are regular and angular in shape
- Fields surrounded by hedges or occasionally walls
- Small woodlands, some of ancient origin
- Tree belts and frequent hedgerow trees
- Fairly straight roads
- Small village of Hinton Charterhouse and hamlet of Pipehouse that harmonise well with landscape
- 19th century farms often with prominent modern buildings
- Historic features include a water tower at Pipehouse and 2nd World War defences at Hog Wood
- 18th century parkland with specimen trees at Hinton House
- Open landscape with wide views to surrounding areas
- Strongly rural landscape

Geology and soils

The geology of the character area consists of the upper portions of the Great Oolite series. The highest points consist of Cornbrash, a loose, brown limestone rock that contains many shell fossils. Below this and covering the majority of the area is a layer of Forest Marble. This is a brown clay with conspicuous cream coloured limestone that consists of large amounts of shell detritus. Below the Forest Marble is the Great Oolite, which forms the fringes of the plateau.



The elevated Baggridge plateau affords long and open views across the Wellow Valley and beyond

The soils are typically light or mid-brown thin clay with considerable brashy limestone debris. Drainage can be impeded in places where the clay is thicker. Over the Oolitic Limestone the soils are very thin and stony with a matrix of fine or coarse loam. The quantity of stone makes them appear light in colour. These soils are freely draining.

Landform and drainage pattern

The LCA comprises a gently undulating limestone plateau ranging in height from 70m to 150m AOD with much of the area above 100m. There are no significant natural drainage

features because of the generally flat nature of the landform and the porous geology.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

A few hedges have been allowed to develop into belts of trees and these along with frequent mature hedgerow and in-field trees can give a misleading impression of there being more woodland than there really is. These are mostly oaks with a smaller number of ash, sycamore and occasionally beech.

There are a few small woodlands generally between 2 and 5 ha in size, although Littleton Wood is an exception at approximately 20 ha, much of which is recorded as priority habitat deciduous woodland. The woodlands are regular in shape and generally reflect the field shapes with a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees. Some woodlands include areas of ancient woodland (Hayes Wood, High Wood and Littleton Wood) and several are designated as SNCIs. There are two small SSSIs; Hinton Charterhouse Field which is designated for its nationally rare population of Field Eryngo, and a geological designation at Hinton Charterhouse Pit.

Agriculture and land use

The land cover consists of arable and pastoral fields, in roughly equal measure. The soils on higher elevations, derived from the Cornbrash, are ideal for growing cereal crops as the name implies. Pig farming, which is conspicuous in the landscape, and pheasant rearing around Hassage Wood is also evident. 18th century parkland at Hinton House and Priory and the specimen trees in the parkland are notable features. There is also a small limestone quarry north of Pipehouse.

Fields and boundaries

The fields are of medium and occasionally large size and these are generally regular or angular in shape. Hedges usually enclose fields, although occasionally there are dry limestone walls, especially around settlements or along roads. Hedges are very varied; in places they are tall and unclipped and in others they are low and clipped or, very rarely, laid. There are several types of fencing including post and rail and post and wire, with the latter frequently used to divide larger fields for different uses or crops.

Historic environment

There are several significant archaeological remains that testify to the long history of settlement in of this area, including the Stony Littleton Neolithic long barrow, various Bronze Age round barrows on Midford Hill and a scheduled length of Roman Road to the south of Pipehouse. Both Baggridge and Peipards Farms are associated with deserted medieval settlements.

The village of Hinton Charterhouse is protected by a conservation area and contains numerous listed buildings, including St John the Baptist church (grade II* listed). The Scheduled Monument of Hinton Priory, including its grade I listed chapter house, are the rare remains of a Carthusian priory. Other notable listed buildings include Hinton House and Upper and Lower Baggridge Farms (grade II listed).

The HLC indicates that most of the LCA is of late medieval '*piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields*' origin.

More recent history is evident in the landscape at Hog Wood near Pipehouse where there are a number of pill boxes, anti-tank and infantry trenches dating from 1940 which were built as part of the outer defence line for Bristol against the threat of invasion.

Development and infrastructure

The settlement pattern is sparse except for the village of Hinton Charterhouse, and the hamlet of Pipehouse. Both are typical rural settlements associated with agriculture, set high on the plateau at the centre of farmland. There are also individual farms spread across the plateau.

Buildings are generally constructed of Oolitic Limestone and roofs are usually red clay or brown concrete tiles. Domestic buildings are small and non-uniform in shape clustered tightly together, with limestone walls usually marking their boundaries. Within settlements mature trees are common and this strengthens their harmony with the landscape. Large modern barns are usually constructed from concrete block and sheet steel cladding and are very prominent.

The area is characterised by a number of secondary and minor roads as well as a network of byways and footpaths. Roads are often straight and run across the plateau linking

villages and properties. Roads that rise up onto the plateau usually follow gentler slopes but occasionally the roads are steep for example at Hassage Hill, Baggridge Hill and Hinton Hill. The only trunk road is the A36 Bath to Warminster, towards the east of the area.



Traditional limestone walls and cottages in Pipehouse

Views and perceptual qualities

The landscape is expansive and generally very open, enhanced by the absence of built development and gently undulating topography, with little to interrupt the view. There are some long views to surrounding hills including the Westbury White Horse on the Wiltshire Downs and more locally into the Cam and Wellow Valleys. Taller hedges and hedgerow trees provide an element of enclosure in places, especially around Pipehouse which has a much more enclosed feel than the rest of the plateau. To the west of the LCA, there is a sense of exposure as a result of the low-cut hedgerows and large sloping fields.

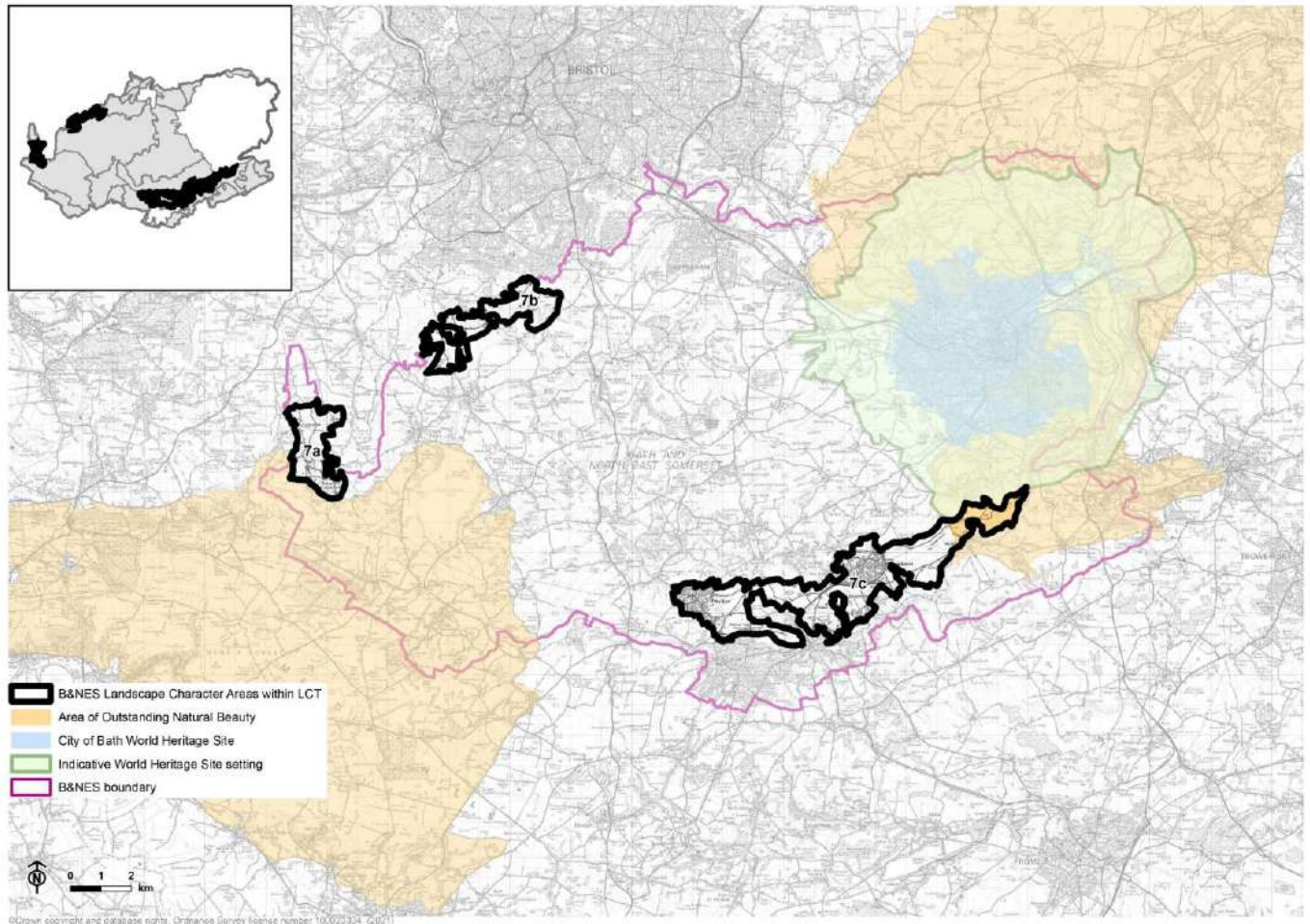
The main landmarks are the villages and farms scattered throughout the area and the water tower at Pipehouse.

This is a strongly rural landscape which experiences dark night skies and a strong sense of tranquillity owing to the absence of modern development. Some disturbance is experienced around the busy A36.

LCT 7 Hills and Ridges



LCT 7: Hills and Ridges



Landscape Character Areas:

The Hills and Ridges LCT is subdivided into three LCAs:

- 7a: Newpnett Thrubwell Hills and Ridges
- 7b: Dundry Hill and Maes Knoll
- 7c: Peasedown St John Ridge

LCA 7a: Nempnett Thrubwell Hills & Ridges

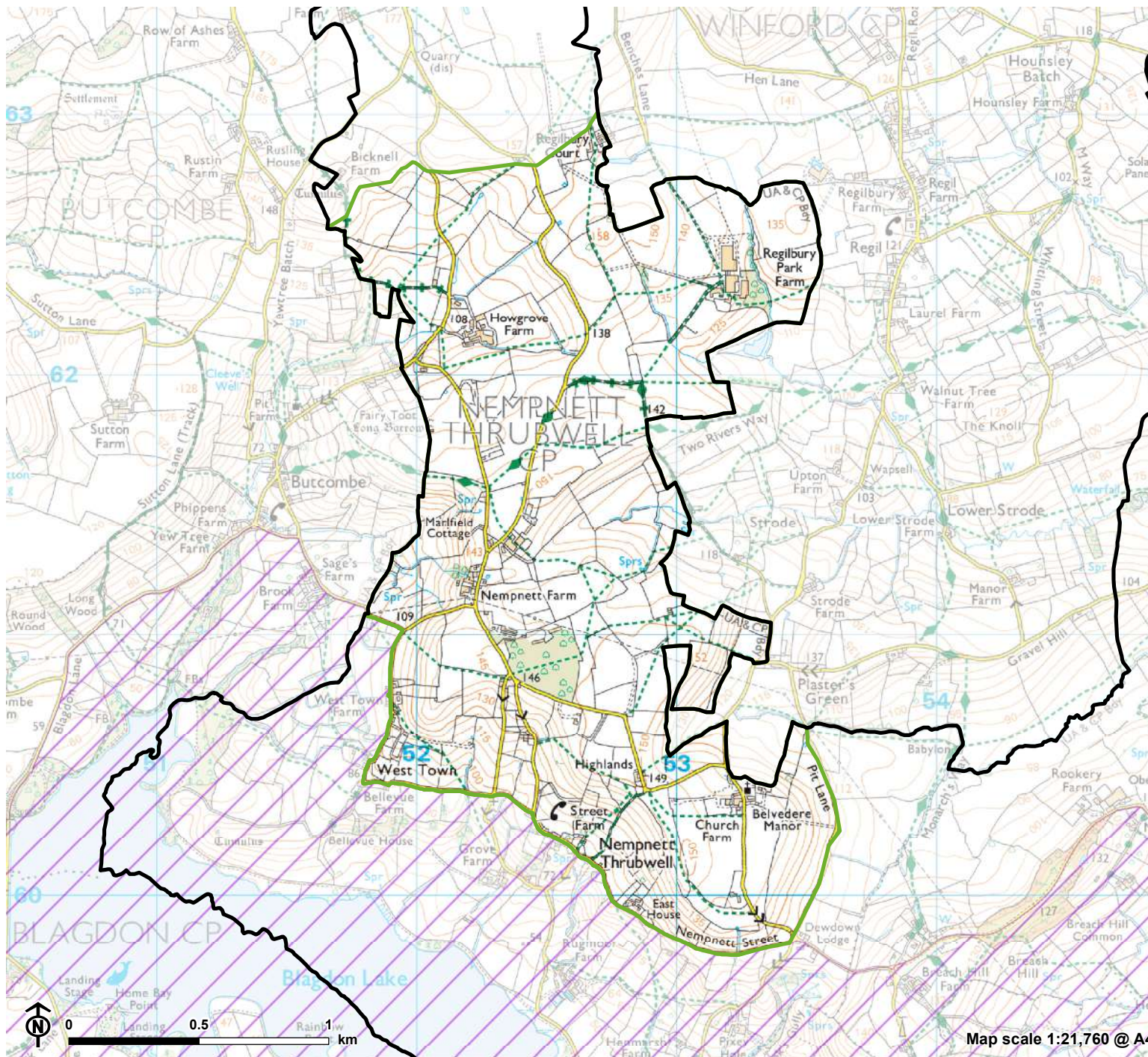


View west along the edge of the ridge from near Marfield Cottage, showing the steeply sloping landform and views across the surrounding landscape including to Blagdon Lake.






Location and summary

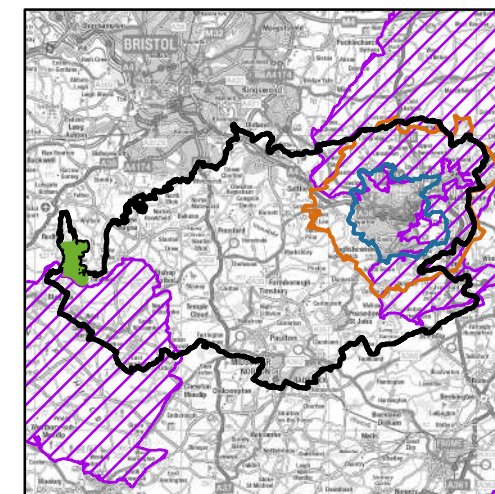
The Nempnett Thrubwell Hills & Ridges LCA is characterised by its elevated topography of undulating hills and ridges. The LCA lies in the north-west of the district, extending north from Nempnett Thrubwell. The boundaries of the character area are defined by a change in landform to the plateau landscape to the north and the low-lying farmland of the Chew valley to the south. The eastern and western edges are defined by the district boundary.

The Mendip Hills AONB lies directly to the south west of the character area, with a small section extending into the area near Nempnett Farm.



7a Nempnett Thrubwell Hills & Ridges

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Map scale 1:21,760 @ A4

Key Characteristics

- An undulating elevated landform with sandstone ridges
- Land use is dominated by pasture
- Small and medium fields enclosed by species-rich hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees
- Infrequent small blocks of deciduous woodland
- Small patches of grassland habitats
- A network of minor lanes and public rights of way
- Rural landscape with settlement limited to isolated farms
- An open and windswept landscape with extensive views across the surrounding landscape

Geology and soils

Outcrops of limestone and mudstone from the Triassic and Jurassic period (Langport Member and Blue Lias Formation) give rise to the shelves of higher ground in this area which rise from the surrounding Mercia Mudstones.



View south from Highlands showing the edge of the open ridge and extensive views over the surrounding lower-lying landscape.

Slightly acid loamy soils and clayey soils with impeded drainage occur on the slopes with shallow lime rich soils over limestone in the most elevated areas.

Landform and drainage pattern

The landscape is elevated and undulating, sloping up from the surrounding character areas reaching 158m AOD in the north. Some minor streams run in gently incised valleys down the sloping sides of the area.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The character area contains limited woodland cover, except for small blocks of deciduous woodland at Regilbury Park Farm and near Nempnett Farm.

Plaster's Green Meadows is a SSSI and there are also small patches of Priority Habitat lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grasslands.

Agriculture and land use

Land use is mainly pasture grazing, especially in steeper sloping fields, with cereals on flatter land. Some fields have been sub-divided by pony tape for equine use around farms and other properties.

Fields and boundaries

The medium and small fields are generally bounded by hedges and occasionally by tree belts. The hedges are typically trimmed and most contain mature trees, with oak and ash trees being characteristic of the area. Hedgerows are generally species diverse.

Historic environment

Variations in field size and pattern occur. The majority of fields are identified by the HLC to be *piecemeal enclosure of larger strip fields*. There is evidence of medieval clearance of woodland on the slopes around Nempnett Thrubwell, whilst some fields in the west are identified by the HLC to be of *ancient origin*.

The Fairy Toot, a Long Barrow likely to be of Neolithic origin, is designated as a Scheduled Monument. The area contains several listed buildings, including the grade II* listed Church of St Mary.

Development and infrastructure

The area is well served by a network of narrow minor lanes. Public Rights of Way criss-cross the area including part of the west-east aligned Two Rivers Way.

Settlement in the character area is limited to a number of isolated farms and detached dwellings and the hamlet Nempnett Thrubwell which lies on the southern edge of the area. Farm buildings are often nestled into the valley sides taking advantage of minor depressions in the landscape, although some properties are located in more elevated locations.

The traditional and predominant building material is white Lias Limestone, sometimes incorporating red sandstone or conglomerate, with red clay tiled roofs. Other properties

include painted or rendered buildings in shades of white, grey and cream.



The grade II* listed church of St Mary surrounded by some mature trees and pasture fields, with distant views to Dundry Hill (LCA 7b)

Views and perceptual qualities

An open windswept landscape, where the elevated landform gives rise to extensive views south across the Chew and Yeo Valleys towards the Mendips Hills AONB, and east to the distinctive skylines of the Dundry Hills and the plateau around Hinton Blewett.

Skylines within the character area are marked by mature hedgerow trees and small woodland blocks with a pylon line crossing the centre of the area (from east to west). The tower of the church of St Mary is a locally distinctive skyline feature.

The landscape is generally very tranquil with the silence broken only by occasional tractors, other vehicles, aircraft and farm animals. A small part of the LCA (in the south-west) lies within the Mendip Hills AONB, and the special qualities of this protected landscape are reflected in the area including the sparse settlement pattern and long views.



Views across pasture fields, sub-divided with pony tape and crossed by a public right of way.

LCA 7b: Dundry Hill and Maes Knoll

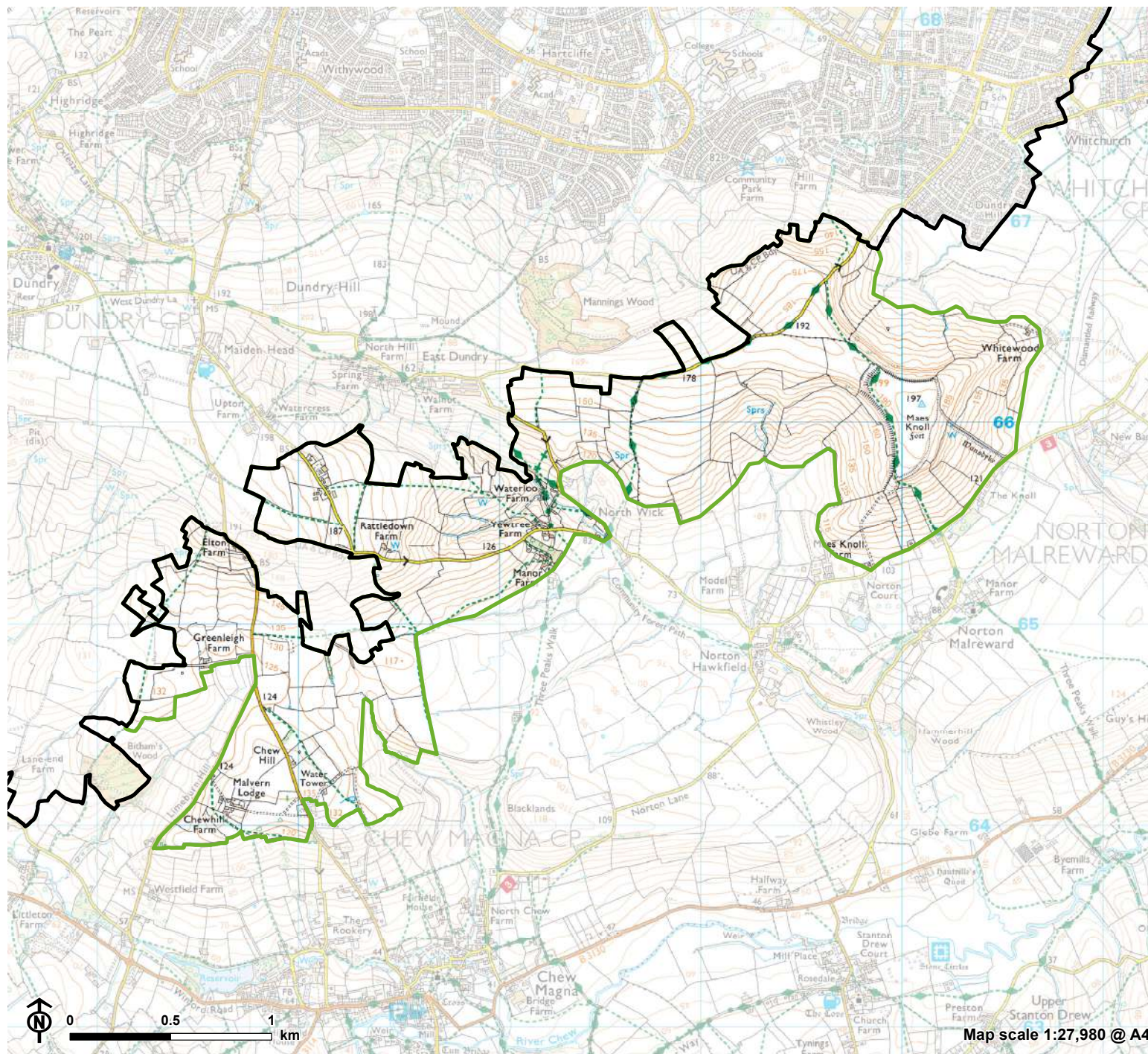


View to the distinctive skyline of Maes Knoll from Norton Lane to the south of the LCA, showing the mixture of arable and pasture use. The tree line following Wansdyke can be seen ascending the slope on the skyline

Location and summary

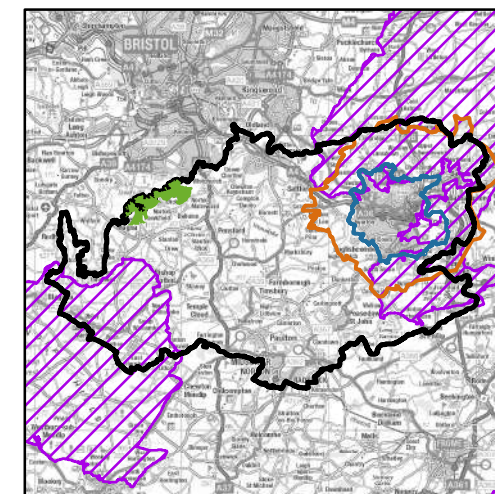
The Dundry Hill and Maes Knoll LCA is an open windswept landscape distinguished by its elevated topography and associated steep scarp slopes.

Situated along the northern boundary of the district, to the south of Bristol, this landscape extends north across the district boundary into North Somerset. The area extends from Chew Hill in the west to Maes Knoll in the east. The boundaries of the area are marked by the transition in topography from the elevated ridges of the character area to the low-lying rolling Chew Valley to the south and farmland around Whitchurch to the east.



7b Dundry Hill and Maes Knoll

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Elevated ridges and hills underlain by Oolitic Limestone with steep scarp slopes
- Landslips at junction of the limestone and clay
- Land use is a mixture of pasture and arable cereal production
- Strip lynchets indicating late medieval enclosure of steep-sided slopes
- Medium sized fields enclosed by clipped hedges with a high species diversity
- Occasional trees generally limited to field boundaries
- Sparse settlement of isolated cottages or farmsteads – typically of Lias Limestone often rendered or painted
- Network of narrow lanes, often sunken
- Landmarks include Maes Knoll hillfort and Wansdyke linear earthwork
- An open windswept landscape with extensive views across the district and to Bristol

Geology and soils

The most significant geological formation is the Inferior Oolite of the Jurassic period found on the higher ground including Maes Knoll. This overlays the Lower Lias Clay found on the adjoining slopes. The clays make a poor foundation and landslips are characteristic on the slopes. This area was once connected to the Cotswolds, but the intervening land has subsequently been eroded leaving this outlier with many of the characteristics of the Cotswold Plateau.



View north from a minor lane near Yewtree Farm, showing pasture grazing and the incised landform of a minor stream valley.

On the hills the lime-rich soils over limestone are generally well drained. By contrast, the loamy and clayey soils of the slopes are prone to seasonal waterlogging.

Landform and drainage pattern

The area rises to a number of significant hills including Maes Knoll at 197m AOD in the east and Chew Hill at 135m AOD in the west. Landform here is strongly associated with Dundry Hill to the north of the LCA, beyond the district boundary.

The area has a distinctive elevated topography, with steep scarp slopes. To the south, the landform drops down to the Chew Valley and to the east to the lower shelf in the

neighbouring Whitchurch Farmlands LCA. The lowest areas are found at the foot of the scarp slopes on the southern boundary of the LCA, where elevation occasionally drops to below 100m AOD. Some minor stream valleys incise the slopes, most notably surrounding North Wick.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The area has limited semi-natural habitats. Trees are occasional and generally limited to field boundaries or surrounding settlements, such as the hamlet of North Wick. There are few in-field trees. Strips of Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands are located on Maes Knoll in the east, part of which is identified as a SNCI. There is also a SNCI in the west of the LCA, at Greenleigh Farm.

Agriculture and land use

The land use is a mixture of pasture and arable cereal production, with most pasture grazing located in the north-west and north-east of the LCA as well as surrounding North Wick. Unimproved rough ground is found on the slopes of Maes Knoll and there are localised areas of horse paddocks, including at Rackledown Farm and Chew Hill.

Fields and boundaries

Fields are mainly enclosed by well-trimmed hedges with high species diversity; some appear quite wide and are trimmed to an A-shape. Trees within hedgerows are occasional but significant. Fields are predominantly medium in size, with larger fields concentrated in the western part of the area.

Historic environment

The national HLC identifies the majority of field enclosures within the character area to be *piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields*, usually dating to the 13th-18th century. Localised areas of *ancient fields* of medieval or earlier origin occur near North Wick and in the far west of the LCA as well as medieval *assarts* in the east.

Notable historical features include the prehistoric hill fort at Maes Knoll, a deserted medieval settlement and the Wansdyke earthwork, all designated as Scheduled Monuments. The fort at Maes Knoll is triangular in shape taking advantage of the natural topography of the hill. The scarp slopes of Maes Knoll were steepened and a large rampart and ditch were built on the north-west side. There are also remnants of medieval strip lynchets on the slopes. Wansdyke is a prehistoric linear earthwork which starts at the hill fort and runs to Horsecombe Vale to the south-west of Bath. There is no clear evidence about the origin or purpose of the Wansdyke however it forms a significant landscape feature consisting of a substantial bank and ditch on its northern side.



View west along East Dundry Road, a narrow lane enclosed by wide trimmed hedges. The distinctive form of Chew Hill dominates the skyline.

Development and infrastructure

Narrow minor roads follow higher ground avoiding the steepest slopes. Where routes ascend the slopes, most have become eroded over time resulting in distinctive sunken lanes.

Settlement generally takes the form of isolated farms or cottages, which tend to avoid the highest ground. However, East Dundry, just outside the district is an exception to this rule, located on the higher ground of Dundry Hill.

Local buildings are traditionally constructed of Lias Limestone, with some having a painted or rendered finish, with slate or clay tiled roofs.

There is good access to the area, which is crossed by several public rights of way including sections of the Three Peaks Way.

Views and perceptual qualities

The landscape is open and windswept. The elevated character of the area gives extensive views taking in the settlements of Bristol, Keynsham, Saltford and Bath as well as the Chew Valley and across to the Mendip Hills AONB. Conversely the hills of the LCA are visible over a wide area forming a backdrop to many views. The outline of isolated

trees, and more rarely small woods or tree belts, on the skyline are typical of the area. Modern farm buildings on higher ground including pig and poultry units at East Dundry (beyond the district boundary to the north) are distinctive in some views.

A remote feeling landscape despite some areas having a strong visual connection with Bristol.



Long views from Elton Farm in the north-west of the LCA, across sloping pasture fields enclosed by hedgerows and trees to Chew Valley Lake.

LCA 7c: Peasedown St John Ridge

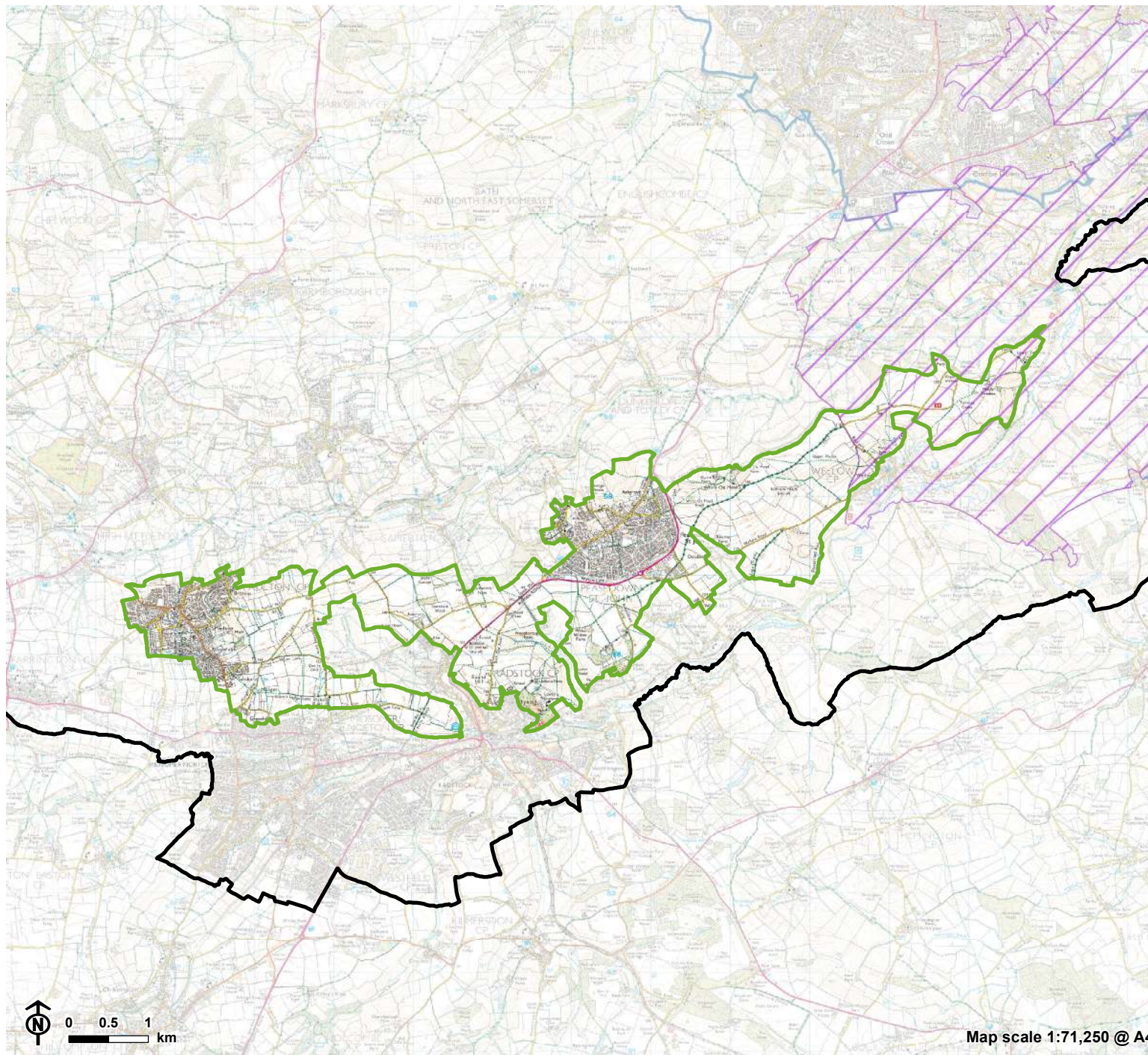


View north-west from near Upper Twinhoe, within the Cotswolds AONB, showing the open arable landscape with clipped hedges and open views across the surrounding landscape.

Location and summary

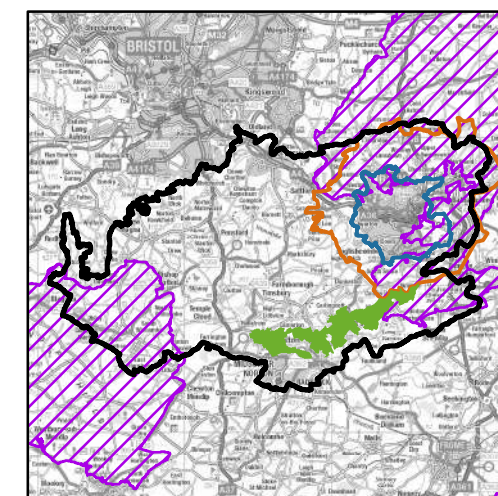
The Peasedown St John Ridge LCA comprises a narrow, relatively flat limestone plateau which separates the Cam and Wellow Brook Valleys and includes the large villages of Peasedown St John and Paulton. It is dominated by arable farmland and has wide views over the surrounding landscape

The LCA is located in the south east of the district and extends from Paulton in the west, to the hamlet of Twinhoe in the east. The northern and southern boundaries are defined by the top of the adjoining valley sides. The steep sided ridge up to the settlement edge of Paulton defines the western boundary and the eastern boundary is defined by the edge of the study area where it adjoins the City of Bath World Heritage Site setting. The eastern tip of the LCA (from Bath Hill eastwards) is within the Cotswolds AONB.



7c Peasedown St John Ridge

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- A narrow limestone plateau with shallow undulations
- Shallow well-drained clay soils on higher ground
- Most farmland is arable with more grassland in the west
- Large fields that are regular in shape
- Fields usually enclosed by low clipped hedges with unclipped hedges more common in the west
- Infrequent small woodlands that tend to be regularly shaped, including 'batches' (on former spoil tips) which often contain conifers
- Small roads run along the ridge or across it
- The Fosse Way runs diagonally across the ridge
- 19th century farms often with prominent modern buildings
- Large prominent villages of Peasedown St John and Paulton with a mining heritage
- Open windswept landscape with wide views over lower-lying surrounding areas

Geology and soils

Geologically the area can be divided into two. To the east of Peasedown St John greater Oolitic Limestone forms the capping layer giving way to bands of limestone and Fuller's Earth on the lower slopes. Below the Fuller's Earth there is a band of inferior Oolitic Limestone which comes to the surface on the edge of the ridge. To the west of Peasedown St John the capping geology consists of inferior Oolitic Limestone which is above upper Lias Clay followed by Lias Limestones and clays and shales of the Penarth Group.



Pylons crossing pasture grazed fields the west of the LCA near Paulton.

The soils are generally shallow, well-drained, calcareous brashy clays. Where the Fuller's Earth and Lias Clays are found they are more slowly draining and thicker though still calcareous in nature with patches of brashy material.

Landform and drainage pattern

This is a simple landscape that consists of a relatively flat plateau with shallow undulations. It ranges in height from about 100m AOD to high points of 164m AOD at Camerton Farm and 168m AOD at White Ox Mead Knoll. The area is above the spring line of the ridge and so open water is absent.

However, there are springs along the edges of the area and most farms have a well.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The area has limited semi-natural habitats, with small areas of Priority Habitat good quality semi-natural grassland and infrequent woodlands.

The woodlands are usually less than one hectare in size, regular in shape and fit easily with the grain and texture of this landscape. They are mostly broadleaf consisting mainly of oak and ash with a proportion of sycamore (most notified as Priority Habitat deciduous woodland and two as SNCIs). Many woods some coniferous stands, but the batches at Braysdown and Tynning have a high proportion of conifers, in common with other naturally regenerated spoil tips in the area. There is an area of remnant parkland trees and a treed avenue associated with the historic parkland of Woodborough House (LCA 3b) to the south-west of Peasedown St John.

Bowlditch Quarry, south west of Bowlditch Farm is designated as a SSSI for its geological significance.

Agriculture and land use

The land is mainly used for arable crops but in the west up to half of the area is grassland. Cereal crops and permanent or short-term pasture is common.

Fields and boundaries

Hedges are the most common boundary though in places fences have replaced them. The hedges are usually low and well clipped, although species diverse. In the western half there are also characteristically unclipped and taller hedges. Where stock is farmed the hedges are generally supplemented with post and wire fences. Trees in the hedgerows are common but not abundant and are mostly oak or ash.

The fields are medium and regular in shape reflecting late medieval enclosure of open strip fields, with occasional larger fields resulting from modern amalgamation.

Historic environment

There is considerable archaeological evidence to show that this plateau has been settled for thousands of years, including Neolithic flint finds that date from the 5th century BC and Bronze-age burial mounds near Camerton. Roman occupation of the area is evident from the significant remains of a Roman settlement near Clandown and of a Roman villa at Upper Hayes as well as the Fosse Way, a major Roman route way leading south from Bath which crosses the area between Glandown and Peasedown St John.

Paulton and Peasedown St John are former mining settlements which developed after the discovery of coal in the area in the 18th century. Radstock, on the western edge of the LCA, remained the centre of the Somerset coal mining industry into the 20th century, and an isolated section of its conservation area encircles the pit complex and well planted batch at the former Braysdon Colliery within the LCA. Paulton contains several listed buildings reflected in its designation as a conservation area, including the grade II* listed Church of The Holy Trinity.

Outside the villages, settlement is limited to isolated farmhouses often with prominent modern farm buildings, including grade II listed farmhouses at Twinhoe and White Ox Mead.

Development and infrastructure

The settlements in and adjacent to the LCA, including Peasedown St John, Paulton and Clandown (on the edge of Radstock) occupy prominent locations and are visible from much of the surrounding areas. This is particularly marked on the southern settlement edge of Peasedown St John, where a lack of tree cover and the regular size, form and colour of 20th century housing development stands out from the rest of the village and makes it prominent in views from the surrounding countryside.

Scattered individual farmsteads are located across the area. These tend to be of typical 19th century design using mostly local materials and so harmonise well with the landscape. However, many have large modern out buildings and barns that have a high impact due to their size, material and functional design.

The roads are few and narrow. They generally run either along the line of the ridge or straight across it. They are often sunken into the ground or enclosed by hedges on either side giving a 'closed in' feeling to them. The exception to this is the A367 Radstock to Bath road, which cuts diagonally across the plateau.



View across a large open arable field to the north of the A367, where the area is disturbed by traffic noise and road lighting.

Views and perceptual qualities

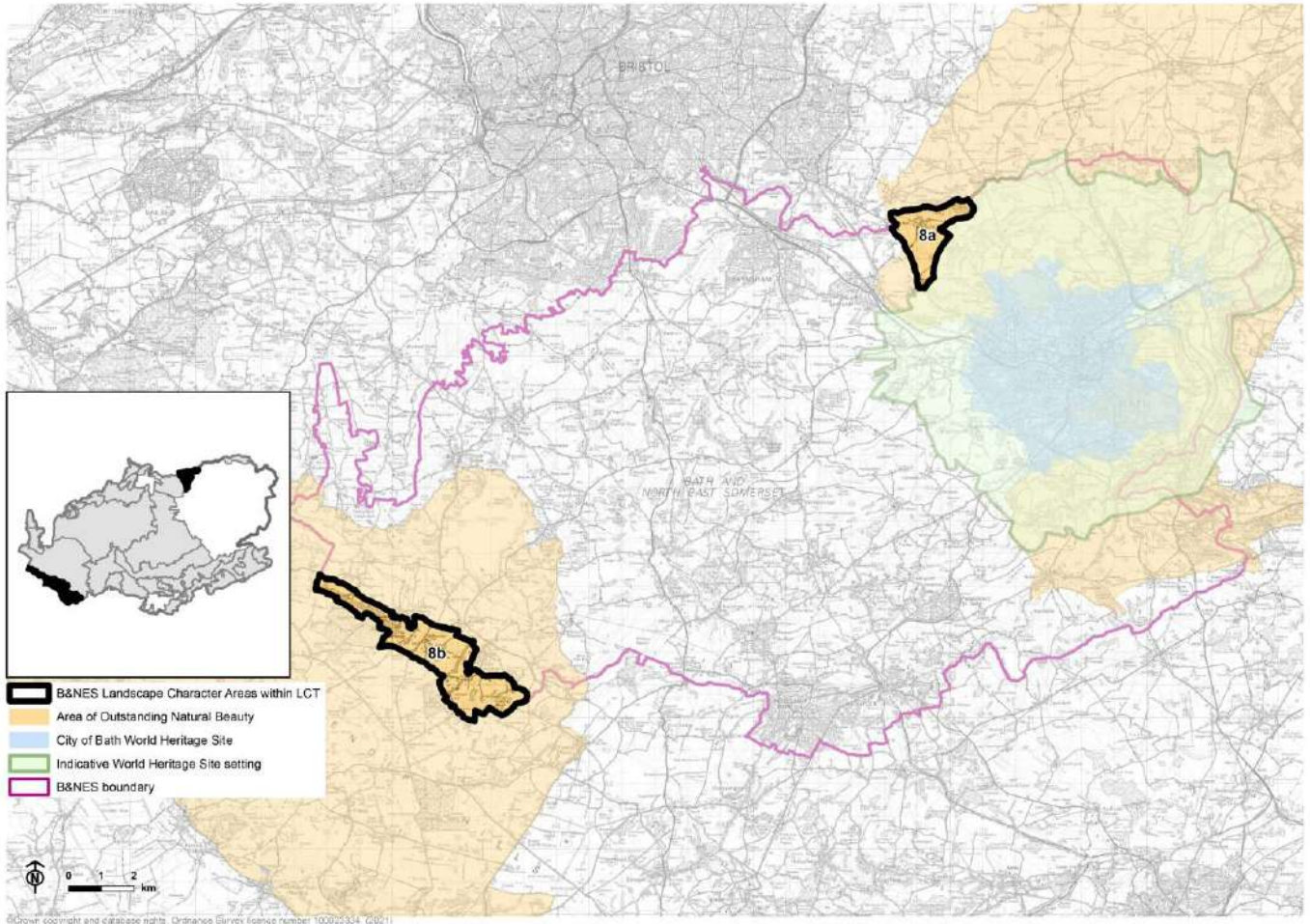
This is an open arable landscape with a windswept character, where woodlands are uncommon, and the hedges are mostly low and well clipped. Long views over the valleys on either side and to the surrounding hills are characteristic, with views extending across the Cotswolds AONB from the east of the LCA. The sky is an important feature of the views and the few tall elements such as pylons, telecommunication towers and floodlights are consequently highly visible.

Detractors include a covered reservoir north of Clandown, a landfill site beside Bath Old Road north of Tynning and large modern barns and associated earthworks. The A367 is a major feature adding movement and noise to this landscape. However, away from this busy road the landscape is tranquil, typified by the spring and summer sounds of skylarks. Away from the larger settlements there is a strong experience of dark night skies. The east of the LCA lies within the Cotswolds AONB, and the special landscape qualities of this protected landscape, including 'big skies' and rural tranquillity, are reflected in the landscape.

LCT 8 Escarpments & Slopes



LCT 8: Escarpments and Slopes



Landscape Character Areas:

The Escarpments and Slopes LCT is subdivided into two LCAs:

- 8a: North Stoke Scarp
- 8b: Mendip Slopes

LCA 8a: North Stoke Scarp

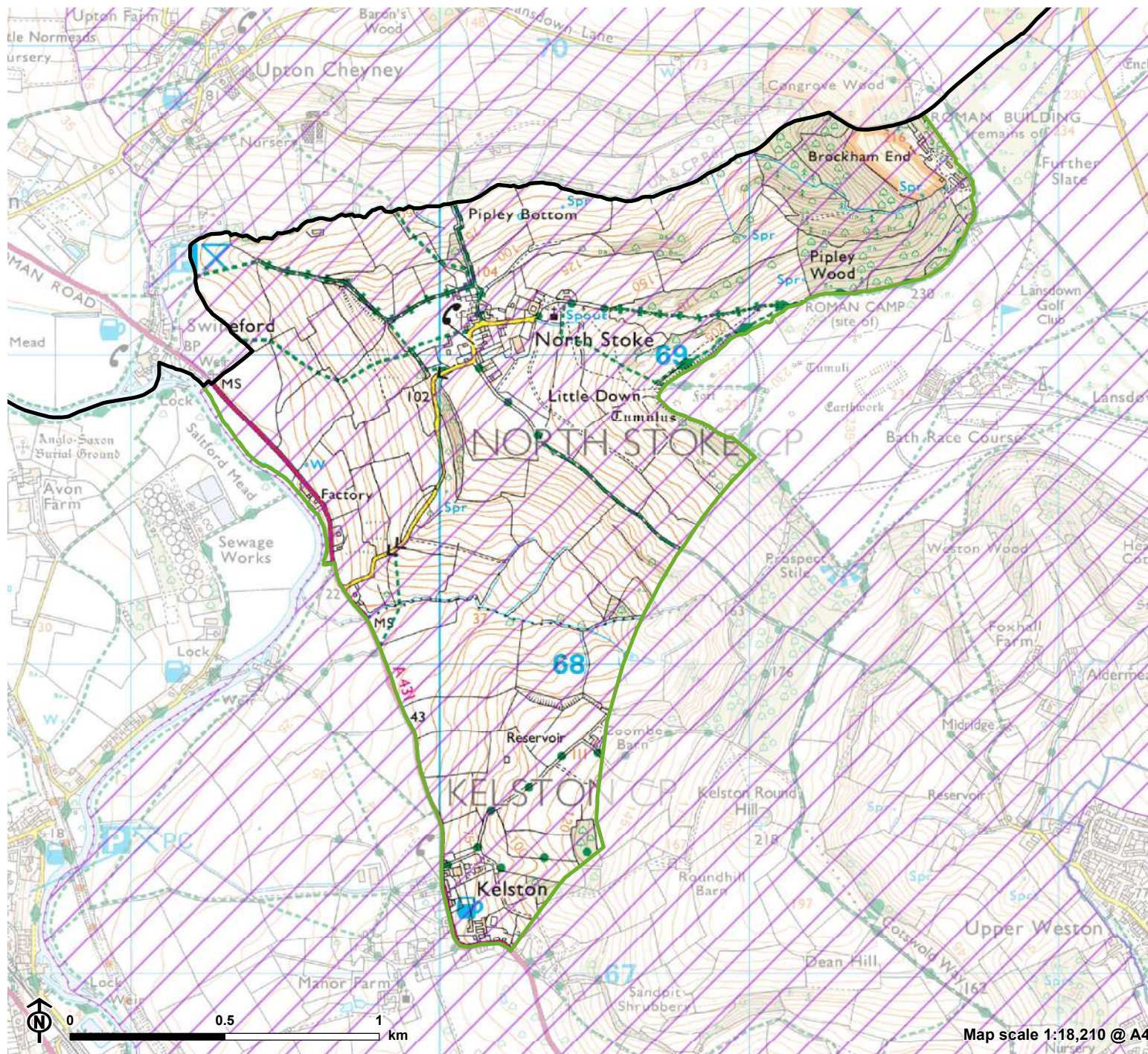


Long views south from the scarp towards Kelston Round Hill and over the Avon Valley beyond






Location and summary

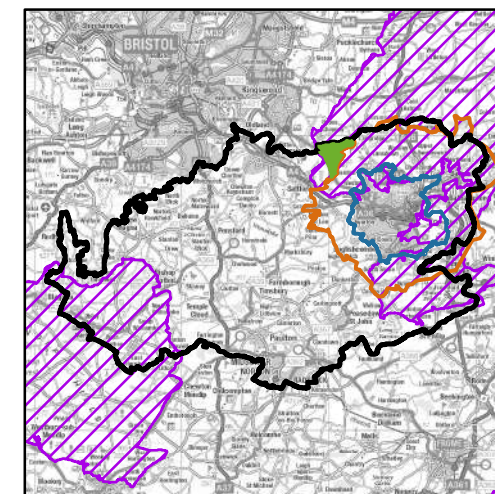
The North Stoke Scarp LCA comprises the north and west facing scarp slope rising from the Avon Valley.

The landscape character area is located in the north east of the district and is within the Cotswolds AONB. The western boundary is marked by a change in topography to the lower slopes of the Avon Valley. The district boundary with South Gloucestershire marks the northern boundary, and the setting boundary of the Bath World Heritage Site is to the south east. The scarp which defines the character of the landscape extends across both these boundaries and the area to the south east is described within Area ESC1: Dean Hill to Prospect Stile, in the *Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment*.



8a North Stoke Scarp

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Steep north-west facing scarp rising from the Avon
- Deeper slowly permeable clayey soils on lower scarp sides with thinner soils on higher slopes
- Pasture with broadleaf woodland along upper slopes
- Fields enclosed by often untrimmed hedges with trees
- Historic field pattern of irregular small to medium sized fields
- Historic nucleated settlements with warm coloured Oolitic Limestone buildings and walls
- Narrow sunken winding lanes
- Expansive views over the surrounding landscape
- Highly rural and remote character reflected in its designation as part of the Cotswolds AONB

Geology and soils

The character area lies on Fuller's Earth beds that have been important economically in the area. These beds are in turn underlain by the Lower Oolitic Limestones and then the Bridport Sands and Charmouth Mudstone that locally form the base of the scarp.



Sloping pastoral fields above North Stoke with long views north-west over lower lying land.

The Fuller's Earth supports shallow clayey soils that are still alkaline and brashy but are less well drained. On the scarp face above the Bridport Sands and Oolitic Limestone a thin brashy calcareous clay is found that supports short term and permanent pasture, these slopes tend also to be very uneven from slippage.

Landform and drainage pattern

The slopes rise abruptly from the River Avon forming a distinctive north-west facing scarp which rises from 15m AOD near Swineford to high points to 210m AOD at Little Down in the east. The slope is dissected by a minor stream valley to the north of Kelston that drains into the River Avon. There are also numerous springs rising on the scarp slopes.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Woodlands are most common on the steeper slopes especially on the upper slopes (many identified as Priority Habitat deciduous woodland) and are often ancient in origin. Pipley Wood is identified as a SNCI. The woodlands are mainly broadleaf, and beech is common. Lines of trees, some scots pine, are characteristic. Individual trees such as ash are more common in the hedge lines of the scarp slopes.

Agriculture and land use

Land use is predominantly pastoral. There are also areas of historic parkland at Kelston Park designed in 1768 by Capability Brown.

Fields and boundaries

The fields are small to medium in size and irregular in shape. On the steeper slopes, fields are usually enclosed by hedges which are often untrimmed and 'gappy'. In some places, hedgerows have been augmented by sheep netting or subdivided by electrical tape. Walls are less common, but where present are traditionally built in local limestone.

Historic environment

The HLC identifies the irregular and small to medium field patterns to be the result of late medieval *piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields*. On steeper slopes fields originate from the piecemeal clearance of wooded landscape that occurred from the Bronze Age through to Saxon times.

The historic core of the villages North Stoke and Kelston are protected by conservation areas. There is a cluster of listed houses around the grade II* listed church of St Martin in North Stoke.

Development and infrastructure

Settlement is limited to the two nucleated villages Kelston and North Stoke, and isolated farms.

One of the major unifying elements of this landscape is the use of the local Oolitic Limestone in buildings and walls. The traditional building style has many features that are

characteristic of the 'Cotswold style', including steep-sided roofs using limestone tiles and the detailing around windows and doors designed to shed water away from the stonework.

Only one narrow winding lane crosses the area, enclosed by high hedgebanks. It connects North Stoke to the A431 (which runs along the western edge of the LCA). Several public rights of way radiate out from North Stoke, including a small part of the Cotswolds Way. An area of open access common land is situated in Brockham End and is surrounded by woodland.



Traditional limestone-built houses in North Stoke village.

Views and perceptual qualities

There are expansive views from the scarp slope over the wider countryside to the north, south and west, as well as longer views to Bristol to the north. Views towards Bath are limited by the steeply sloping topography, as well as by the strong network of hedgerows, trees and woodland.

The landscape has a particularly rural and remote character with an experience of dark night skies and high levels of tranquillity, except where locally disrupted by traffic on the A431 Bath Road. The characteristic building style in local Oolitic limestone creates a strong sense of place, particularly in the village of North Stoke. The scenic character of this landscape is reflected in its designation as part of the Cotswold AONB, and landscape qualities associated with the AONB, such as the scarp landform, unifying character of the limestone geology, historic settlements, ancient broadleaved woodland and expansive views, are present throughout the LCA.

LCA 8b: Mendip Slopes

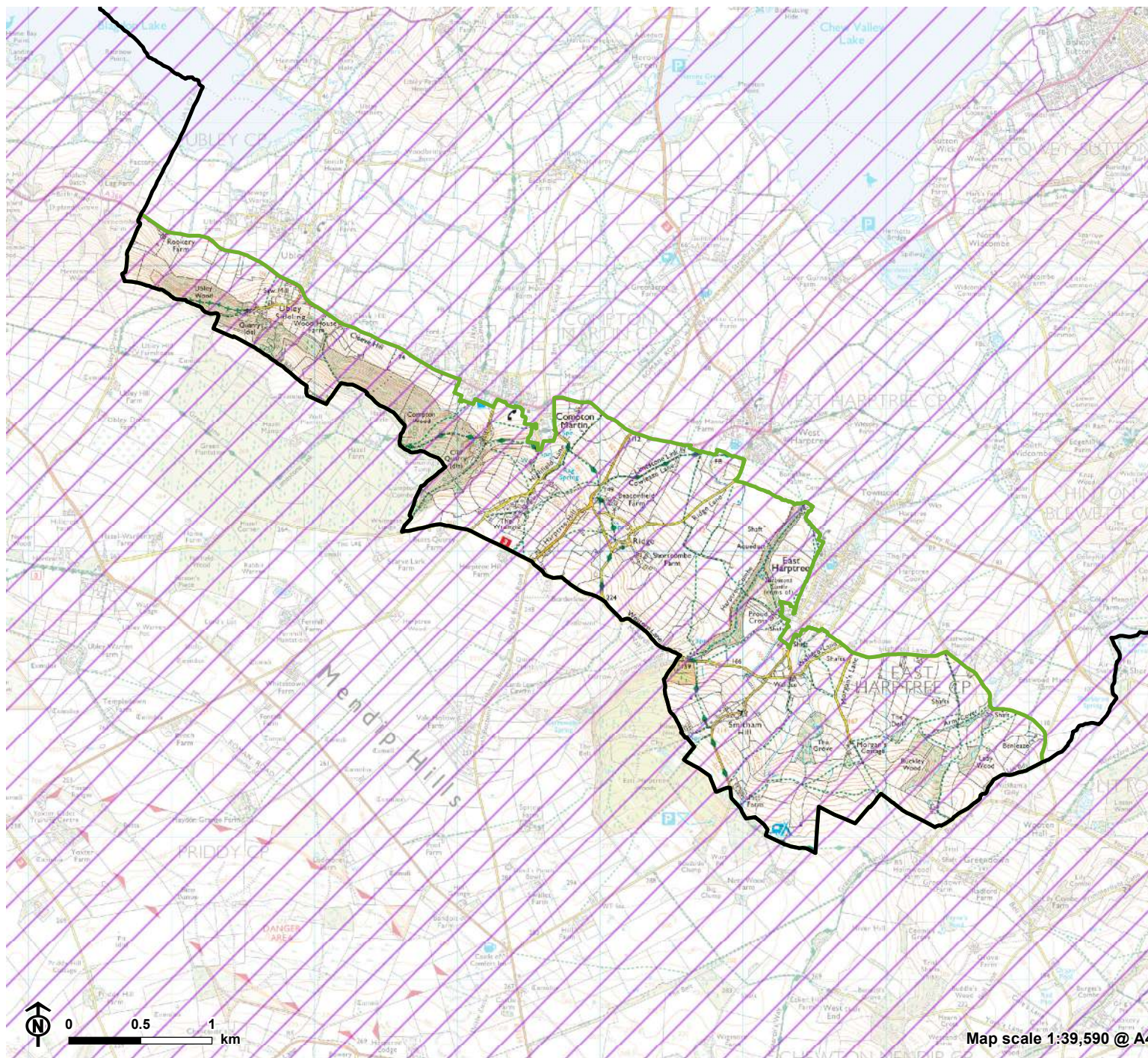


West Harptree village nestled at the foot of the Mendip scarp rising up from the Chew Valley

Location and summary

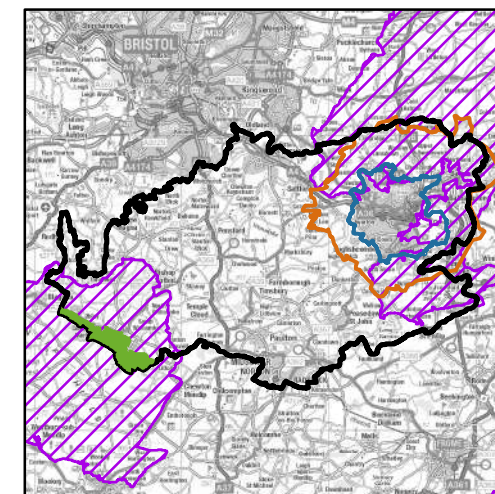
The Mendip Slopes LCA is located along the south-west district boundary and comprises a scarp slope which forms the transition between the gently undulating farmland of the Upper Chew and Yeo Valleys character area and the Mendip Hills plateau. This is a strongly rural area characterised by the sloping land which supports both arable and pastoral agriculture.

The northern boundary follows the bottom of the scarp slope with its characteristic local undulations. The southern boundary runs along the break of slope at the top of the scarp, along the district boundary. The whole LCA is within the Mendip Hills AONB.



8b Mendip Slopes

- Bath and North East Somerset boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Indicative World Heritage Site setting
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Map scale 1:39,590 @ A4

Key Characteristics

- Gentle to steeply sloping edge to the Mendip Hills with local undulations and rocky outcrops
- Slopes incised with minor valleys or combes which are often wooded
- Ancient semi-natural woodland on steeper slopes
- Most agricultural land is grassland including both rough grazing, cultivated and re-seeded grassland
- Field boundaries typically marked by tall hedges and more rarely walls towards the upper slopes
- Fields are generally small, with irregular medieval assarts on upper slopes and more regular late medieval fields on the lower slopes
- Settlements nestled at the foot of the slope along the spring line located along the boundary of the area
- Local use of traditional buildings materials including limestone and red sandstone
- Features relating to the industrial heritage of the area include disused quarries and lime kilns
- The area is well served by minor roads and public rights of way including a number of long-distance paths
- Extensive views across Chew Valley
- Generally tranquil except for local disturbance from the A368

Geology and soils

The predominant formation is Dolomitic Conglomerate of the Triassic period. It formed as a result of desert erosion and weathering of the scarp slopes. It takes the form of rock fragments mainly derived from older Carboniferous Limestone cemented together by lime and sand which hardened to sometimes give the appearance of concrete. The resultant landform is characteristically irregular.



Long views north over pasture fields to Chew Valley Lake and the Dundry hills beyond.

Carboniferous Limestone, which is a major influence on the characteristic form of the Mendips, extends only a small way into the area. It is represented by Hotwells Limestone straddling the area boundary and an outcrop of Clifton Down Limestone east of Morgan's Lane near East Harptree.

Mercia Mudstones are found to the south of East Harptree typically on the lower slopes of the Mendip Hills beyond the Dolomitic Conglomerate. They consist of red siltstone and mudstone of the Triassic desert basins.

There are two main soil types that correspond to the underlying geology. Most soils, found on the Dolomitic Conglomerate, are shallow well drained reddish loamy neutral to acid soils over rubbly subsoils. Soil types found on the Mercia Mudstones on lower slopes, are fertile, slowly permeable reddish clayey neutral to acid soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

The north-east facing slope falls dramatically from the edge of the Mendip Hills and is moderate to steeply sloping. The steepest slopes occur towards the west of the area where the Dolomitic Conglomerate outcrop is narrower, such as to the west of Compton Martin with slopes of about 25°. Where the Dolomitic Conglomerate outcrop is wider, as around East Harptree, the slopes are gentler between 4° to 8°. The land is characteristically undulating with occasional rock outcrops. Rocky combes or gorges such as Compton Combe above Compton Martin and Harptree Combe near East Harptree typically incise the Mendip Slopes.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The steep slopes and incised valleys have given rise to significant woods or groups of trees where cultivation was not possible, as at Harptree Hill. Many of these woods including Ubley Wood, Compton Wood, Harptree Combe, The Grove and Lady/Buckley Wood are ancient in origin. They form prominent features when viewed from the Chew Valley. The nature conservation value of the woodlands is recognised by their designation as SNCIs and in the case of Harptree Combe as a SSSI. Occasional groups of old gnarled apple trees indicate the remnants of old orchards, while flower rich limestone characterise the slopes. Compton Martin Ochre Mine is designated as a SSSI for its geological and ecological interest.

Agriculture and land use

The soils are generally suitable for a range of agricultural uses, but cultivation is limited in places by the steepness of the slopes. In these areas the land has been left as woodland or used as rough grazing for dairy and beef cattle and typically has bracken and thorn scrub. Rocky outcrops have also hampered cultivation even on shallower slopes. The gentler slopes particularly to the east of the area are characterised by pastoral fields and include ley pasture.

Fields and boundaries

Tall hedges containing trees generally enclose the fields. Walls, which are more characteristic of the Mendip Hills plateau, occasionally extend onto the Mendip Slopes. Where there are walls, they have generally been neglected and have become overgrown with scrub. Some fields around properties are further subdivided by fencing.

Historic environment

Most of the fields on the upper slopes are small and irregular, formed in the Middle Ages by piecemeal clearance of woodland and rough pasture. By contrast fields on the lower slopes were enclosed during the late Middle Ages. The resultant fields are typically small to medium in size and regular in outline following the natural lie of the land. A distinctly different field pattern occurs at The Wrangle to the south of Compton Martin where the small-scale rectilinear field pattern is characteristic of late 18th or early 19th century enclosure of remaining heathland.

Small quarries and lime kilns, which were once a feature of the landscape, are often marked by undulations on the ground. The grade II listed 19th century aqueduct at Harptree Combe and shafts located along the line of the Bristol Waterworks supply pipes, still supply water to the Bristol reservoirs. The position of the pound to the south of West Harptree is also evident and this is overlooked by the site of a castle dating from the 12th century.

Development and infrastructure

Settlement principally comprises individual houses and farms scattered along lanes running north-south up the scarp slope. There are two hamlets at the Wrangle and Ridge. The villages of Ubley, East Harptree, Compton Martin and West Harptree are located at the bottom of the Mendips Slope on the spring line. Whilst situated in the adjacent Upper Chew and Yeo Valleys character area, these villages have a strong visual connection to the Mendip Slopes, nestled at the base of the scarp.

Buildings within the area are typically roofed with clay tiles and include many white painted or rendered houses. Traditional building materials include Carboniferous Limestone and red sandstone.

Minor roads cross the area, particularly concentrated around West and East Harptree where the slopes are gentler or elsewhere following the gentler inclines. Some originated as droveways to open pasture. They have straight and winding sections, are sunken and frequently bounded by tall banks and hedges which create a strong sense of enclosure. The ancient route of the A368 west of West Harptree follows the foot of the Mendips Slopes and is the major road within the area and effectively marks the boundary between the Mendip Slope and the Upper Chew and Yeo Valleys.

National cycle route 3 skirts the southern edge of the LCA, following Shire Lane/Western Lane. The Monarchs Way long-distance recreational trail runs north-south through the LCA.



Medieval field patterns at the foot of the wooded scarp slope.

Views and perceptual qualities

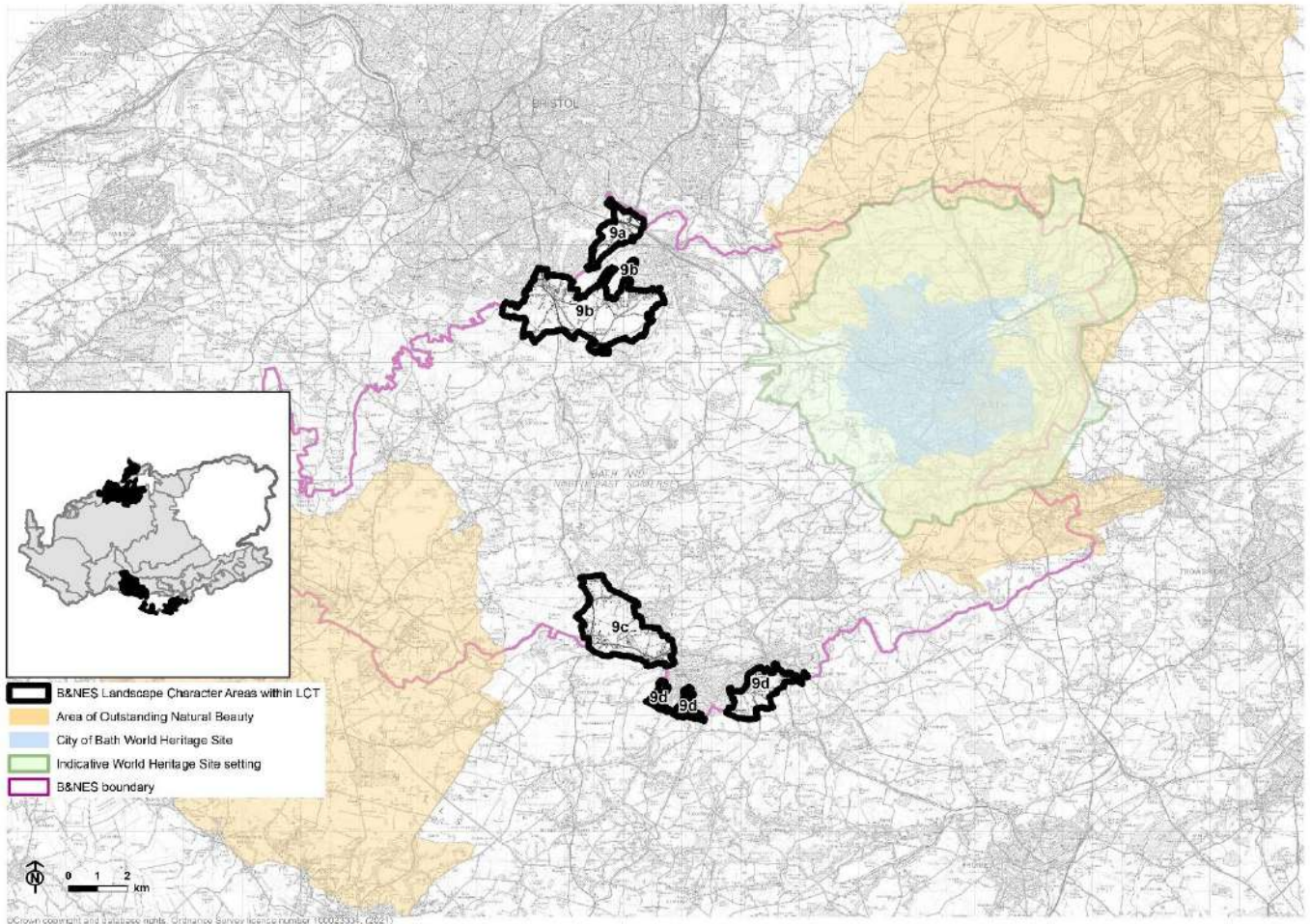
The Mendip Slopes are visible over a wide area stretching northwards to Dundry Hill. They offer spectacular views over the Chew Valley including to Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes. The landscape, however, has an unexpected intimate quality provided by the incised valleys or combes, the local undulations in the topography, narrow lanes and the tall hedges and woodland blocks.

The A368 and associated uses such as garages disturb what is otherwise a tranquil landscape, with a sense of remoteness and experience of dark night skies. The scenic character of this landscape is reflected in its designation as part of the Mendip Hills AONB and landscape qualities associated with this protected landscape are present throughout, such as the distinctive slopes rising from the Chew and Yeo Valleys, panoramic views, the settlement pattern along the spring line, and extensive deciduous woodland.

LCT 9 Open Farmland and Urban Fringe



LCT 9: Open Farmland and Urban Fringe



Landscape Character Areas:

The Open Farmland and Urban Fringe LCT is subdivided into four LCAs:

- 9a: Hicks Gate Farmland
- 9b: Whitchurch Farmland
- 9c; Farrington Gurney Farmland
- 9d: Norton Radstock Southern Farmland

LCA 9a: Hicks Gate Farmland

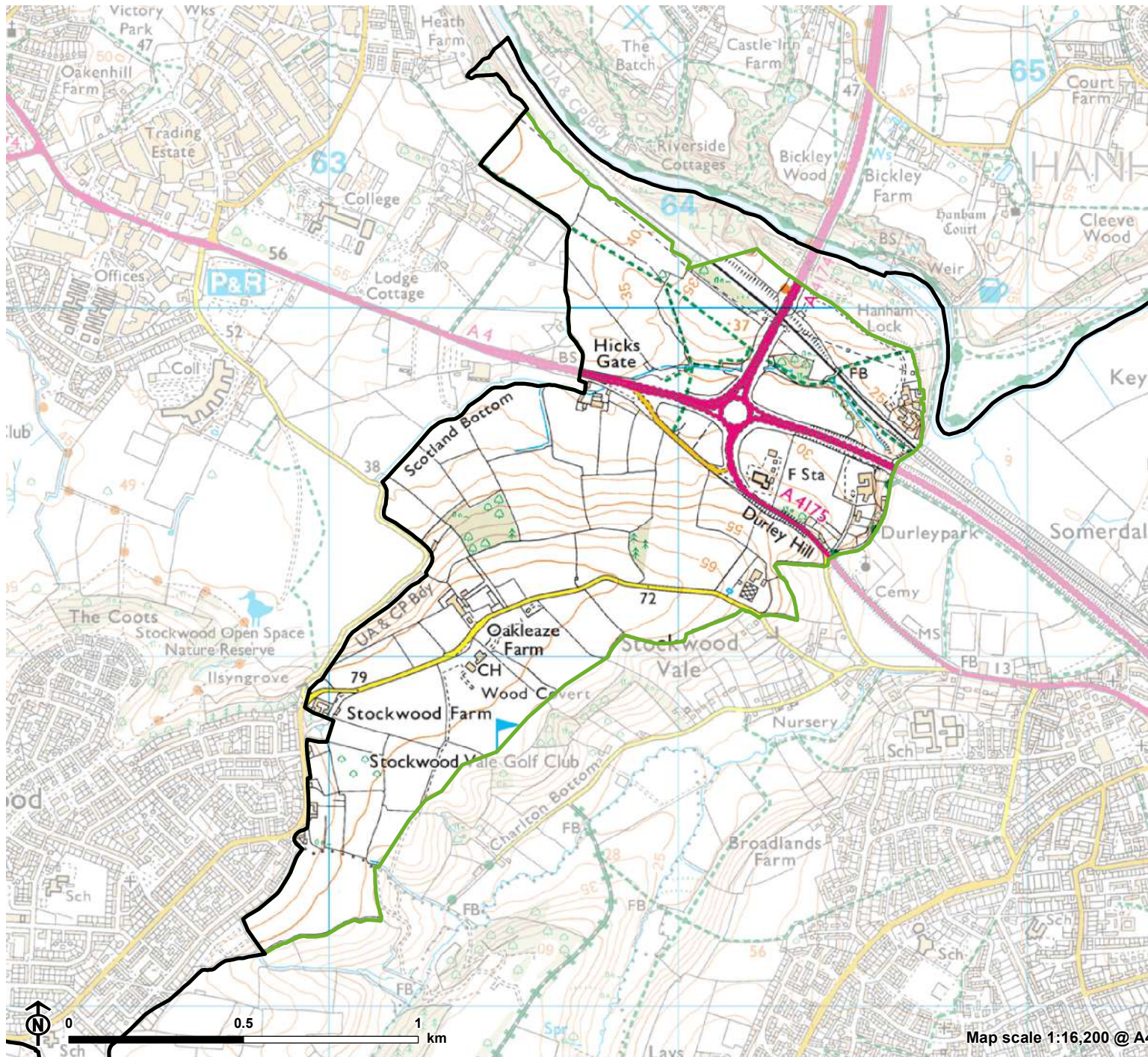


View north towards Bristol from the elevated settlement edge of Stockwood






Location and summary

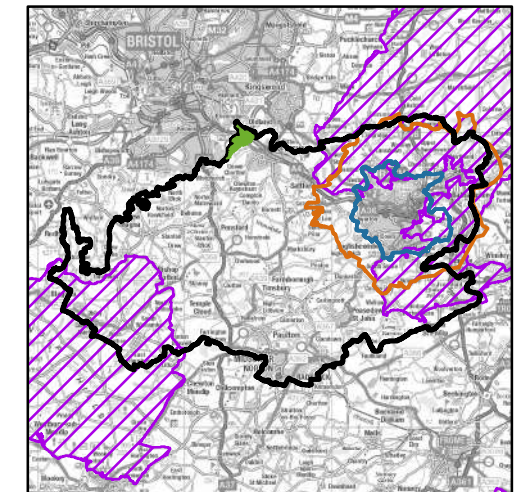
The Hicks Gate LCA consists of rising slopes and a low ridge above Stockwood Vale and the Avon Valley. It is heavily influenced by the built-up areas of Keynsham and Bristol and the A4 trunk road that connects the two and contains many features typical of urban fringe landscapes.

This small character area is located in the north of the district on the outskirts of Bristol. The boundaries of LCA are marked by the district boundary with the City of Bristol to the north west, the change in topography to the sharp slopes of Charlton Bottom to the south east and of the Avon Valley gorge to the north-east.



9a Hicks Gate Farmland

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Map scale 1:16,200 @ A4

Key Characteristics

- A low limestone ridge forms the backbone to the area with slopes down to the Avon Valley and Stockwood Vale
- Lias Limestone underlies the ridge line while lower slopes consist of a bedrock of Mercia Mudstones
- Urban fringe land uses include a golf course and a prevalence of 'horsiculture'
- Small or medium sized fields of irregular shape surrounded by hedges of varying condition
- Limited woodland and few hedgerow trees
- Open landscape with broad views across the surrounding area
- A discordant landscape influenced by busy roads and adjacent urban areas

Geology and soils

The highest part of the ridge is topped with a layer of Lower Lias Clay but most of the bedrock is Blue Lias Limestone. This limestone band sits on top of a belt of Penarth Group clays and shales that run around the slopes of the ridge. The lowest part of the area consists of Mercia Mudstones that extend south into Charlton Bottom and north into the Avon Valley.



View south of the low ridge at Stockwood from Scotland Lane

The soils on the Blue Lias Limestone and the Lias Clay are shallow, brashy, calcareous clays that are free draining. They support arable farming on the areas above the Blue Lias and more pastoral farming on the Lias Clays which tend to be less freely draining. The soils of the Penarth Group clays and shales are non-calcareous clays and tend to be slowly permeable. They support mainly permanent and short-term pasture. The Mercia Mudstones give rise to a thick reddish coloured slowly permeable clayey soil and farming here is pastoral, both short term and permanent.

Landform and drainage pattern

The principal landform feature is a low ridge which extends in an east-north-easterly direction across the area from Stockwood. The area incorporates the slopes of the Avon Valley to the east and the topography rises from 20m AOD to 80m AOD at the top of the ridge. A tributary stream runs along Scotland Bottom and continues east past Hicks Gate to join the Avon.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Semi-natural habitats are limited across the LCA, with little woodland and few hedgerow trees, creating an open landscape. However, small woodland blocks help to create structure in the landscape, particularly at the top of the ridge between the A4 and Stockwood Lane, where medieval fields are enclosed by tall species-rich mixed hedgerows with hedgerow trees and occasional in-field trees. The golf course has supplemented the existing vegetation with ornamental trees and shrubs and some new tree planting on the periphery of the course. East Wood and Keynsham Humpy Tumps SNCI, which is notified for its floristically rich acidic grassland, is located in the far north east of the area and extends down to the River Avon.

Agriculture and land use

Part of the area is taken up by a golf course to the south of Stockwood Lane. The remainder is mainly pastoral farmland with a mix of arable and grassland on the ridge top. Some of the land around Oakleaze Farm is used for grazing horses and there is also a horticultural business to the north of the lane.

Fields and boundaries

This area features a mix of small and medium sized fields. These are mostly of an irregular pattern and are nearly always bounded by hedges. The hedges on the higher ground tend to be well clipped to about 1.5-2.0m in height but on the lower slopes are taller. Hedgerow trees are rare. Most of these hedges are reinforced by post and wire fencing. The golf course still retains the original hedgerow lines but much has been removed to allow for the fairways and greens.

Historic environment

The buildings of Stockwood Farm date back to the 19th century. Oakleaze Farm is post 1881. The HLC indicates that the majority of the land is late medieval '*piecemeal enclosure*', with some small areas of '*floodplain and meadows*' landscape type.

Development and infrastructure

The area is largely unsettled except for farms at Stockwood Farm, Oakleaze Farm and Hicks Gate and wooden club buildings at the golf course. The offices at Durley Park and a small industrial estate on the flatter land beside the River Avon, are accessed via a single-track road.

The area is crossed by the busy and widely visible A4 Bristol to Bath trunk road and the A4175 linking Keynsham to the Bristol ring road via a large roundabout junction at Hicks Gate. The only other road through the area is a narrow lane along the ridge line connecting Keynsham to Stockwood and Whitchurch on the outskirts of Bristol. There are also a number of public rights of way to the north of the area towards the Avon Valley.

traffic. The sound of heavy traffic from the A4 trunk road and the aircraft using Bristol Airport is intrusive.



Urban influence is felt around the railway line, including pylons and a motocross course

Views and perceptual qualities

An urban influence is felt throughout the area both from the discordant assortment of land uses and views across to the urban edge. Land between the A4 and Stockwood Lane, has a stronger sense of rural character resulting from the well-managed pastoral landscape of small fields enclosed by mixed trees and hedgerows.

The landscape is open with views to the harsh urban edge at Keynsham to the south east and Bristol to the north. This contrasts with extensive rural views across the farmland of Chew Valley to the limestone plateaux beyond.

The golf course is prominent because of the artificial mounding, tall fencing, bunkers and the bright fresh green colour of the fairways and greens. Horse grazing around Oakleaze Farm has resulted in a prevalence of the typical features of 'horsiculture' such as fencing and horse tape within paddocks.

The A4 and A4175 visually dominate the area, as does the main Bristol to London railway line which runs parallel to the road. The lane east of Stockwood is also well used by car

LCA 9b: Whitchurch Farmland

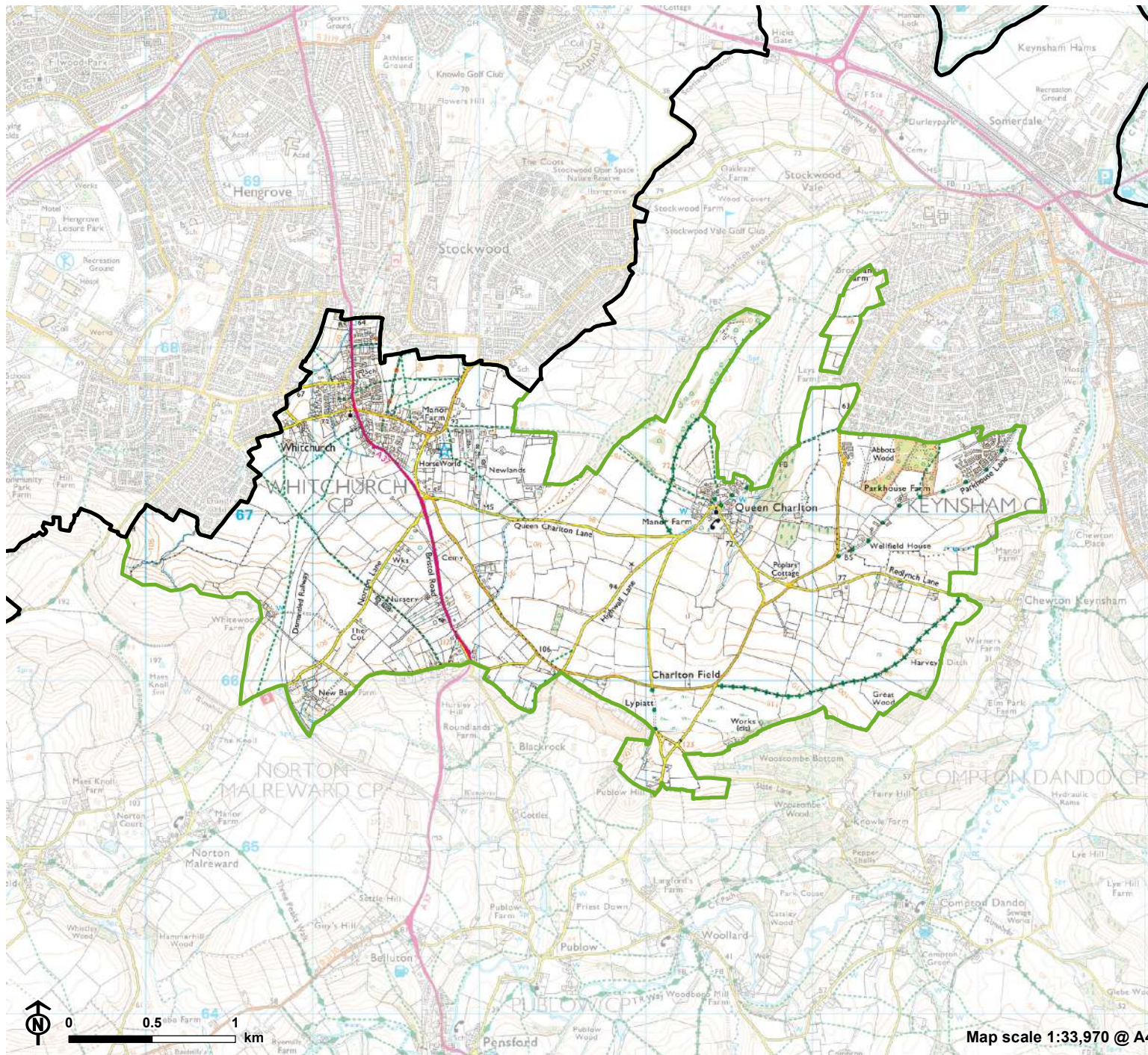


View of Maes Knoll with Bristol settlement edge






Location and summary

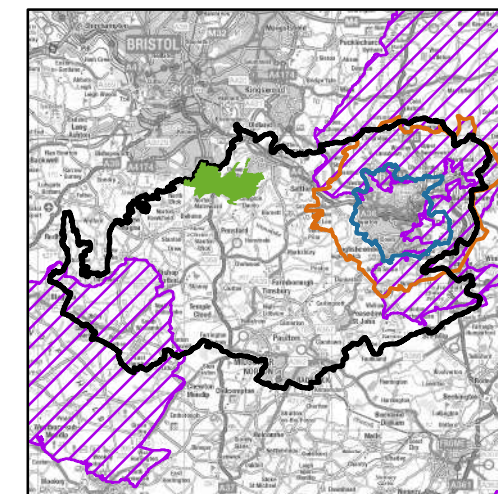
The Whitchurch Farmlands LCA consists of a low limestone shelf immediately south of the City of Bristol. It is heavily influenced by the adjacent built-up areas of Keynsham and Bristol.

It is located in the north of the district, extending from the edge of Keynsham, westwards to the slopes below Maes Knoll Fort. The northern boundary of the LCA follows the district boundary before following the foot of the distinctive ridges of the Dundry Hill LCA. The southern boundary marks the junction between the Lias Limestone and the Mercia Mudstones typical of the lower lying Chew Valley LCA to the south. The valley landform of the Stockwood Vale and Charlton Bottom LCA abuts the north eastern end of the LCA.



9b Whitchurch Farmland

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- A low shelf of Lias Limestone
- Medium size fields mainly enclosed by species-rich hedges with Bath Asparagus in hedge bottoms
- Largely unwooded except for small woods and tree belts around settlements
- Former North Somerset Railway marked by trees, scrub and field boundaries
- Settlement limited to isolated cottages or farmsteads – typically of local limestone often rendered or painted
- Prominent modern farm buildings on higher ground (pig and poultry units)
- Flat open landscape with distant views available
- Bristol to the north and Keynsham to the west exerts an influence on the landscape

Geology and soils

Bedrock geology largely consists of a shelf formed of white and blue Lias Limestone of the Lower Lias period.



'Horsiculture' fields divided by pony tape. Long views of Bristol settlement edge.

The soils are over limestone and are generally well drained. Although areas of lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage occur in the centre of the LCA and are prone to seasonal waterlogging.

Landform and drainage pattern

The land is generally flat or gently sloping, situated at a higher elevation to the neighbouring valley landscapes of the Chew River to the south and Stockwood Vale and Charlton Bottom to the north-east, but below the Dundry Hill & Maes Knoll LCA to the north. Elevation within the LCA ranges from around 50m AOD along the urban edge of Bristol to 115m AOD on the lower slopes of Maes Knoll to the west and at Publow Hill to the south.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The area is largely unwooded, except for occasional scattered small woods and mature trees around settlements (often Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands) and tree belts along Queen Charlton Lane, and the former railway. Small woodland blocks occur on the settlement edges including Abbots Wood,

a large deciduous woodland on the southern settlement edge of Keynsham and conifer plantations to the east of Queen Charlton.

In the south-east of the LCA there is an area identified as a SNCI which includes an area of Priority Habitat good quality semi-improved grassland and deciduous woodland, and a large area of scrub grassland and bracken. Some smaller SNCI also mark habitats along minor watercourses. Bath Asparagus is locally common in hedge bottoms.

Agriculture and land use

The land use is predominantly pastoral. Along the settlement edges recreational land uses are more common including sports pitches to the south of Whitchurch and a golf course to the north of Queen Charlton. Around Whitchurch, 'horsiculture' fields are common, often subdivided by pony tape and sometimes containing field shelters.

Fields and boundaries

Fields are predominantly medium in size, mainly enclosed by well-trimmed hedges with high species diversity; some appear quite wide and are trimmed to an A-shape. Less frequently hedges are unclipped (for example to the south of Whitchurch). The landscape is open in appearance with few in-field trees and only occasional mature trees within the hedges.

Historic environment

The national HLC identifies the majority of field patterns as originating from *piecemeal enclosure of open strip fields*, some of medieval origin, such as around Queen Charlton.

The historic nucleated village of Queen Charlton, centred on a village green, has survived almost unaltered since the late 19th century, its collection of listed buildings recognised through designation as a conservation area.

The North Somerset Railway passed through this area south of Whitchurch. Its course is evident through remaining earthworks and surviving mature tree boundaries.

Development and infrastructure.

The landscape is crossed by a network of busy minor roads, some of which are narrow and hedge lined. The A37 main road runs north-south through the area.

The villages of Whitchurch and Queen Charlton are located around the northern boundaries of the LCA. Otherwise, settlement generally takes the form of isolated historic farms (often listed) or cottages. Local buildings are traditionally constructed of Lias Limestone, some with a painted or rendered finish, with slate or clay tiled roofs. Stone wall boundaries are also typical.

More recent post-war ribbon development such as in Lypiatt and Gibbet Lane along the southern boundary of the LCA, has an assortment of materials including brick, reconstituted stone and rendering.



Views south over the Chew Valley.

Views and perceptual qualities

This is a generally flat open landscape where the outline of isolated trees, and more rarely small woods or tree belts, on the skyline are typical of the area. Distant views are available to the surrounding low-lying valleys of Stockwood Vale where gaps in hedgerows allow and from Gibbet Lane south across the Chew Valley.

The urban areas adjoining the LCA to the north and east, exert an influence on the open landscape, particularly in the northern part of the character area.

LCA 9c: Farrington Gurney Farmland








View across arable fields to the church and settlement edge at Farrington Gurney

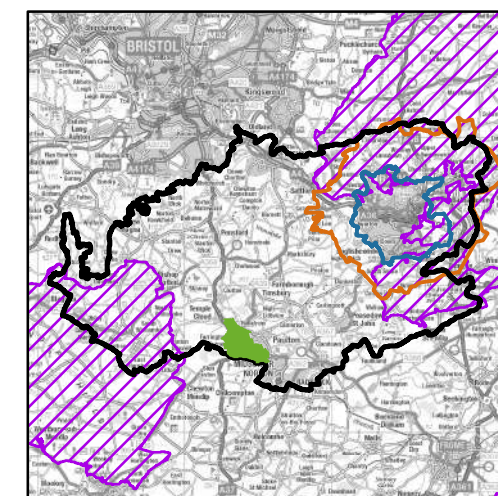
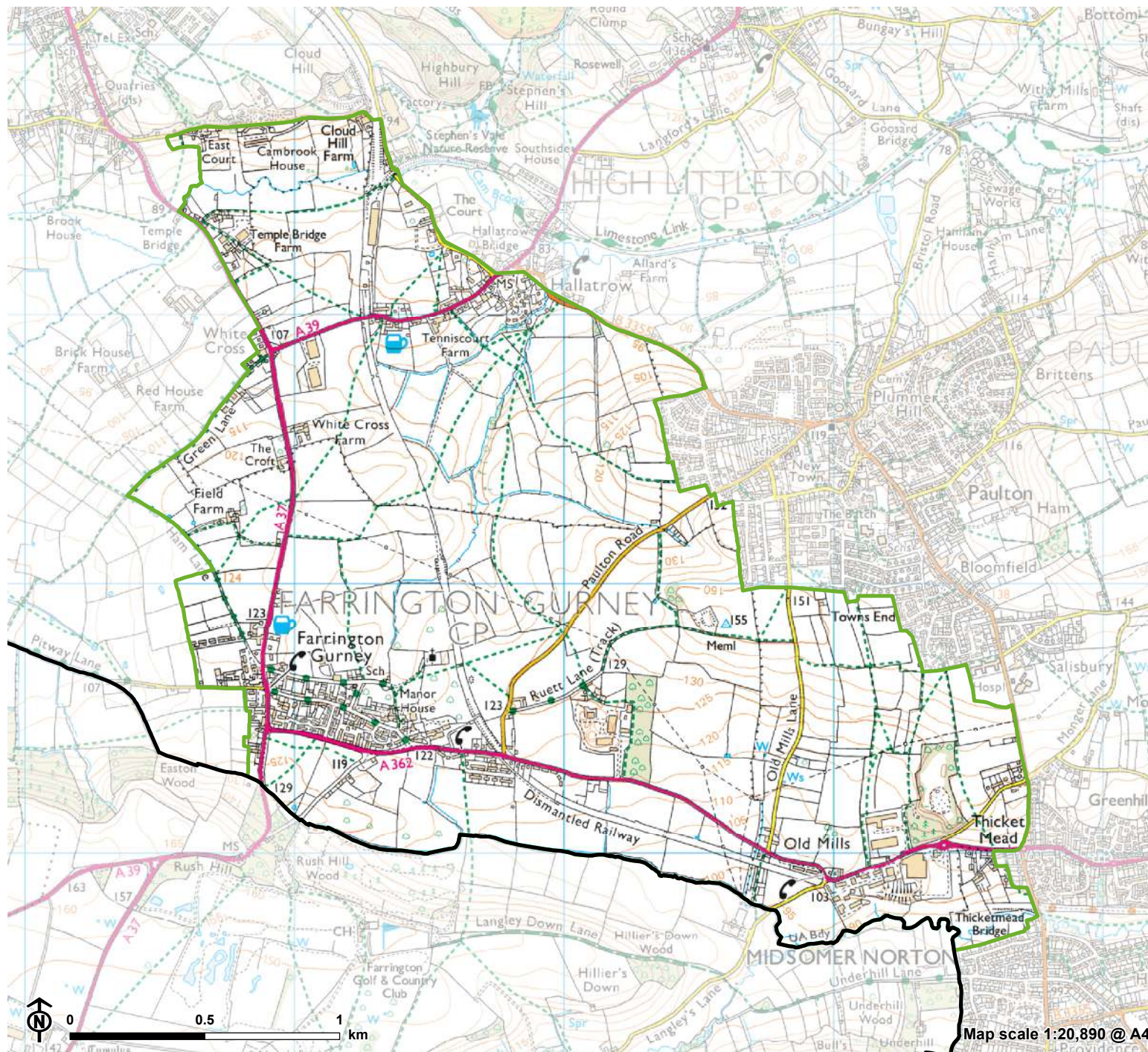
Location and summary

Farrington Gurney Farmland LCA is a gently rolling landscape linking the upper reaches of the Cam Brook in the north and Wellow Brook to the south. It is defined by an angular late medieval enclosure pattern and relicts of the mining industry on the Somerset Coalfield.

The LCA is located on the southern boundary of the district, north west of Midsomer Norton. The western boundary is marked by the change in topography to the flatter landscape of Hollow Marsh, and the eastern boundary by the settlement edge of Paulton and the limestone ridge that stretches east from the town. The district boundary marks the southern boundary.

9c Farrington Gurney Farmlands

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling or sloping landscape with numerous minor brooks and tributaries
- Arable farmland with the distinctive red soils associated with the Mercia Mudstones bedrock
- Angular field pattern of late medieval enclosure with clipped hedges
- Limited tree cover except along watercourses
- Historic core to settlements of Hallatrow and Farrington Gurney with a notable 'treed' setting
- Distinctive local sandstone stiles
- Lias Limestone and Pennant Sandstone buildings with some painted and rendered houses
- Industrial past evident from the remains of the former coal railway and colliery spoil heaps, in particular the local landmark of Old Mills
- Open landscape with views to surrounding ridges and distant churches
- Prominent modern commercial and residential development and pylons detract from the rural character

Geology and soils

Mercia Mudstones are the main geological outcrop found throughout the area except south of Hallatrow. The Mercia Mudstones consist of red siltstone and mudstone of the Triassic desert basins resulting in the underlying characteristic of the rolling valley landscape. The section south of Hallatrow consists of Supra-Pennant Measures which includes the upper coal measures and outcrops of sandstone. The soils are generally reddish and are loamy and more rarely clayey in nature. The reddish soils are mainly found in association with the Mercia Mudstones.



Pylons cross farmland north of Farrington Gurney

Landform and drainage pattern

The area is crossed by the Cam Brook and its tributaries, which flow through the northern part of the LCA. Tributaries of the Wellow Brook run along the southern boundary. This drainage pattern has given rise to an undulating character.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Tree and woodland cover within the LCA is limited. Most trees are located along the watercourses or along the line of the former coal railway or on the edge of the settlements, some of which are identified as Priority Habitat deciduous woodland. There are small traditional orchards north west of Hallatrow Bridge and at White Cross.

There are several SNCIs within the LCA, mainly associated with the watercourses (Cam and Wellow Brooks, Hornbeam gully) or former mining sites (Old Mills Tip, Marsh Lane Coal Tip, Springfield Colliery).

Agriculture and land use

The land is used mainly for arable farming. Pasture fields tend to be located around settlement edges. To the south of Paulton there is a sports field and play area (the Miners Welfare Recreation Ground).

Fields and boundaries

There is a roughly equal mix of small and medium sized fields, typically angular and irregular in form. They are generally enclosed by clipped hedges with few trees.

Historic environment

Enclosure took place during the late medieval period as evidenced by the remaining pattern of relatively small regular and often rectilinear fields. The medieval field pattern of enclosed areas of rich, wet grassland along the Cam and Wellow Brook are of particular note. Historically these areas of meadowland provided early seasonal growth of grass.

The older cores of the settlements were originally linear in form but have been extended during the 20th century. The historic core of Farrington Gurney, includes several listed

cottages and former farmhouses, including 'The Old Parsonage' which is grade II* listed. St John the Baptist church at Farrington Gurney is a local landmark, notable for its location in a field isolated from the village to protect from the plague. The traditional buildings are of Lias Limestone with clay tile roofs. Cream coloured rendering and Pennant Sandstone is also evident. Farrington Gurney church is constructed of both Pennant Sandstone and Lias Limestone. Local Pennant Sandstone was also used to make the curved stones of the distinctive local stiles within field boundaries.

Relicts of the mining industry are evident within the landscape including spoil heaps and disused collieries, some marked by batches. The line of the former North Somerset Railway that once crossed the area is now evident from scrub along its course and its gently curved alignment now forms field boundaries.

Development and infrastructure

Farrington Gurney is the main settlement in the area. The southern half of Hallatrow is within the LCA, contained by the B3355 and Harts Lane. Both villages sit within a 'well-treed' rural setting, whereas 20th century housing on the settlement edge of Paulton introduces a suburban influence. Elsewhere there are occasional isolated farms.

Three major routes radiate from Farrington Gurney including the A39 Glastonbury to Bath Road, the A37 Shepton Mallet to Bristol Road and the A362 running eastwards to Midsomer Norton and Radstock. There is also a secondary road to Paulton.

Existing industrial land uses, including a trading estate, a large supermarket and a new enterprise zone located on the western edge of Midsomer Norton exert an urban influence and character on this otherwise rural area.



20th century housing at Paulton exerts a suburban influence on the rural farmed landscape

Views and perceptual qualities

The landscape has an open character giving some long-distance views, including to the church at Farrington Gurney. Otherwise views are typically contained by surrounding ridges that are often clothed with trimmed hedges with hedgerow trees and occasional in-field trees.

The relicts of the industrial past are very evident within the area. Of particular note is the widely visible and distinct conical shape of Old Mills batch spoil heap with its unvegetated surface. There are at least three disused collieries in the area, which have subsequently been developed for light industry, a depot and a superstore. The buildings and associated features are widely visible as a result of the scale of the developments. Pylons cross the skyline between Paulton and Midsomer Norton, detracting from the rural character. Traffic noise from the A37 and A362 can be heard from most parts of the LCA.

LCA 9d: Norton Radstock Southern Farmland

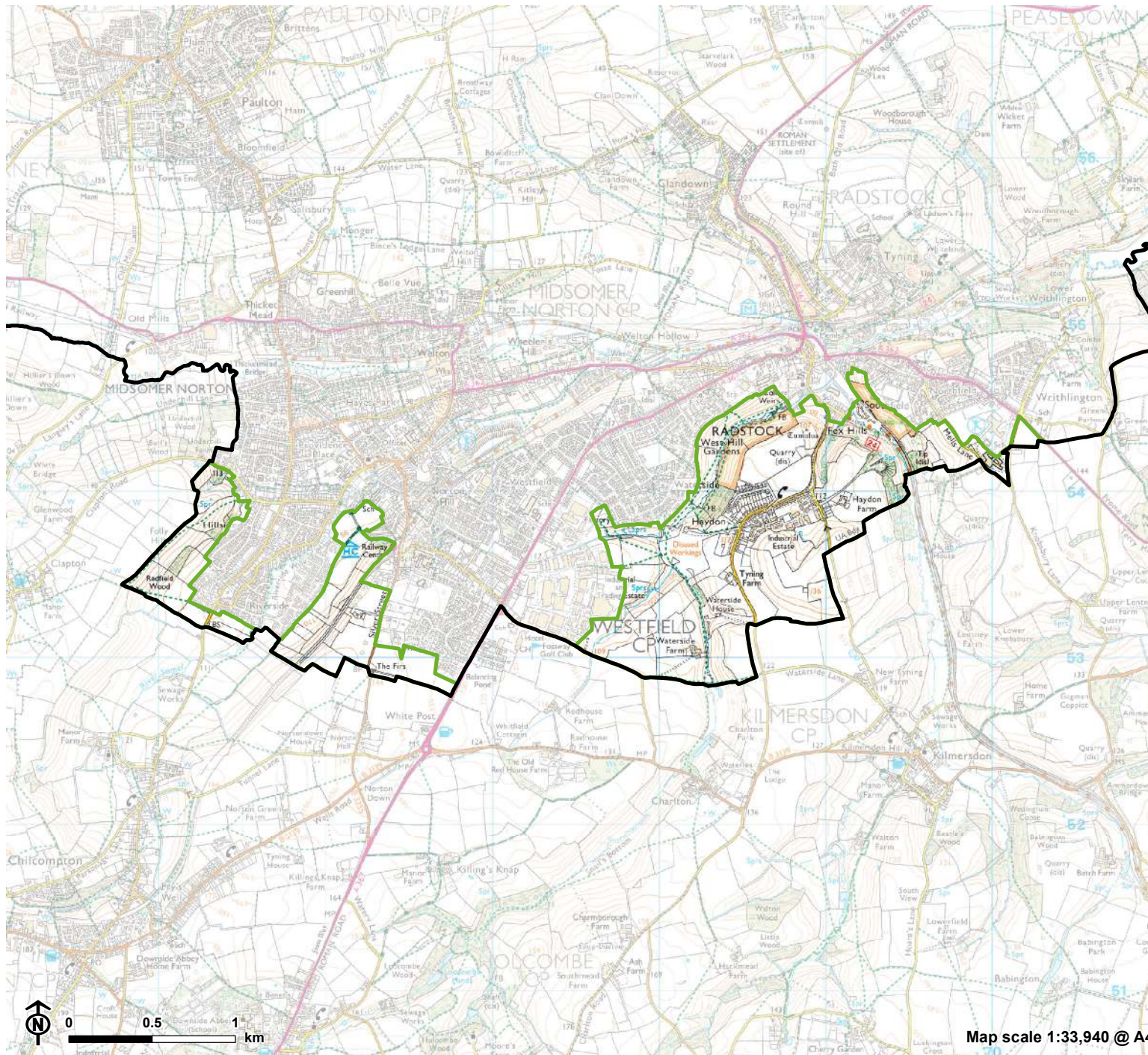


20th century housing on the settlement edge of Midsomer Norton influences the character of the area






Location and summary

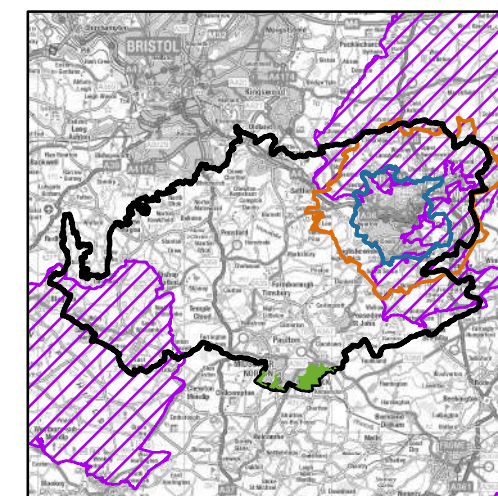
The character of the Norton Radstock Southern Farmland LCA results from its relationship to the adjacent settlements and their coal mining heritage. It is divided into three separate tributary valleys of the Wellow Brook, including the River Somer, Snail's Bottom and Kilmersdon Brook.

This small LCA is located in the south of the district, between the district boundary and the settlement edges of Midsomer Norton and Radstock.



9d Norton Radstock Southern Farmlands

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Relatively steep river valleys which incise the surrounding limestone plateau
- Small irregular shaped pasture fields in the valleys and rectilinear arable fields on the plateau
- Fields enclosed by clipped hedges on the plateau with unclipped hedges in the valleys
- Few individual hedgerow trees but large areas of hawthorn scrub, scrub woodland and new plantation
- Industrial past evident from remains of a former coal railway and colliery spoil heaps
- Historic coal mining village of Haydon with small scale modern in-fill development and a few traditional farmhouses
- Older buildings built from local limestone with slate roofs. New buildings are brick with concrete tile roofs
- Prominent 20th century industrial and residential development influence the character of the area
- Open landscape on the higher plateau with wide views over the surrounding area contrast with the enclosure in the valleys

Geology and soils

The valley floors of Snail's Bottom and Somer Valley are underlain by Mercia Mudstones while Kilmersdon Valley is underlain by alluvium deposits. A band of shales and clays from the Penarth Group characterise the valley sides, which are from the Triassic period. The remaining upland is Lias Limestone with a small outcrop of Inferior Oolitic Limestone on the very highest slopes, south of Haydon. This part of the plateau is a small western outlier of the Cotswolds that has been separated by erosion over the intervening area. Both limestones are from the Jurassic period. The steepest slopes of both the Kilmersdon and Snail's Bottom Valleys have frequently slipped. Coal-bearing Carboniferous strata lies beneath the whole area.



Sloping landform of Fox Hills rising out of Radstock, south of the former Kilmersdon Quarry

The soils of the valleys and valley slopes are generally derived from the Mercia Mudstones and are slowly permeable, reddish and clayey. The remaining higher land has shallow, well-drained calcareous soil derived from the limestones.

Landform and drainage pattern

The two smaller parts of the character area lie to the west of the A367 and comprise the upper steep slopes of the Somer Valley (the lower slopes and parts of the valley floor, outside the LCA, are developed for housing).

The larger part of the character area lies to the east of the A367. The dominant landform characteristic here derives from the high central plateau of Oolitic Limestone around Haydon which reaches 136m AOD. This is bounded by two steep-sided tributaries of the Wellow Brook; Snail's Bottom to the west and Kilmersdon Brook to the east. The tributaries curve around the plateau to the north and merge at Radstock Railway Land at 75m AOD. To the south west of Snail's Bottom is a small part of a lower, more undulating Lias Limestone plateau and in this area the Snail's Bottom Valley is more asymmetrical. The western valley side is very shallow, and the eastern valley side is steep where it abuts the limestone plateau.

Several minor tributaries flow through the area, fed from numerous springs that issue from the point where the Lias Limestones meet the Penarth Group shales and clays. The frequency of springs, particularly east of Haydon, gives a marshy character to this part of the valley.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

Woodland and scrub are concentrated along the stream sides and valley slopes, including both newly planted and well-established woodland (often Priority Habitat). Grove Wood to the west of Haydon is one of the most distinct areas of woodland in the area and is ancient in origin. Other well-established woodlands are found at Silver Street Nature Reserve and Redfield Wood. Scrubby woodland has also established on the spoil heap by the colliery tramway at Haydon, consisting mainly of hawthorn and bramble with

course grasses. A more open scrub is found on the reworked colliery spoil tip west of Haydon, where the spoil cannot support larger species. The valleys are important green corridors, and this is recognised through their notification as SNCI, including the Waterside and West Hill Gardens, Radstock Railway Cutting and Fox Hill SNCI.

Kilmersdon Road and Huish Quarries are designated as SSSIs for their geological significance.

Agriculture and land use

The land on the plateau is predominantly used for arable cultivation with some short-term pasture. In the valleys the land is mainly used for permanent and short-term pasture with some scrub and woodland on the steeper slopes.

Fields and boundaries

The field pattern is angular but irregular and the fields are medium and small in size. The steeper slopes tend to have the smaller more irregular fields. The hedges of the plateau areas are low and well clipped with very few hedgerow trees, resulting in a very open character. In the valleys the hedges are commonly unclipped, and they tend to be quite 'gappy'. In places scrub merges with the hedges and as a result the boundaries of fields are often quite indistinct.

Historic environment

The village of Haydon is an outlier of Radstock and was built to house the miners from the local pit. The industrial heritage of the area is evident from the remains of the Great Western Railway. The disused railway line and earthworks incline at Haydon form important elements within the Kilmersdon Valley which is reflected in their designation as part of the Radstock Conservation Area. The nearby Kilmersdon Road quarry would have provided Lias Limestone for local buildings and spoil heaps are still evident at Huish Colliery.

There is a tumulus to the north of Haydon and the land around it is of archaeological significance.

Development and infrastructure

Haydon is the main settlement in the area. It is a compact village of mining terraces built in Lias Limestone with concrete or slate roofs. There is also some more modern in-fill development. The former colliery site is now an industrial estate to the east of Haydon.

Outside Haydon, settlement is limited to a small number of traditional stone farmhouses including the grade II listed Haydon Farm and Tying Farm.

The principal roads through the area are aligned north to south connecting settlements to the south with Midsomer Norton and Radstock. The A367 main road follows the path of

the Fosse Way Roman road. A smaller road connects Haydon to Kilmersdon across the highest point of the area.



Mining cottages in Haydon reflect the industrial heritage of the area

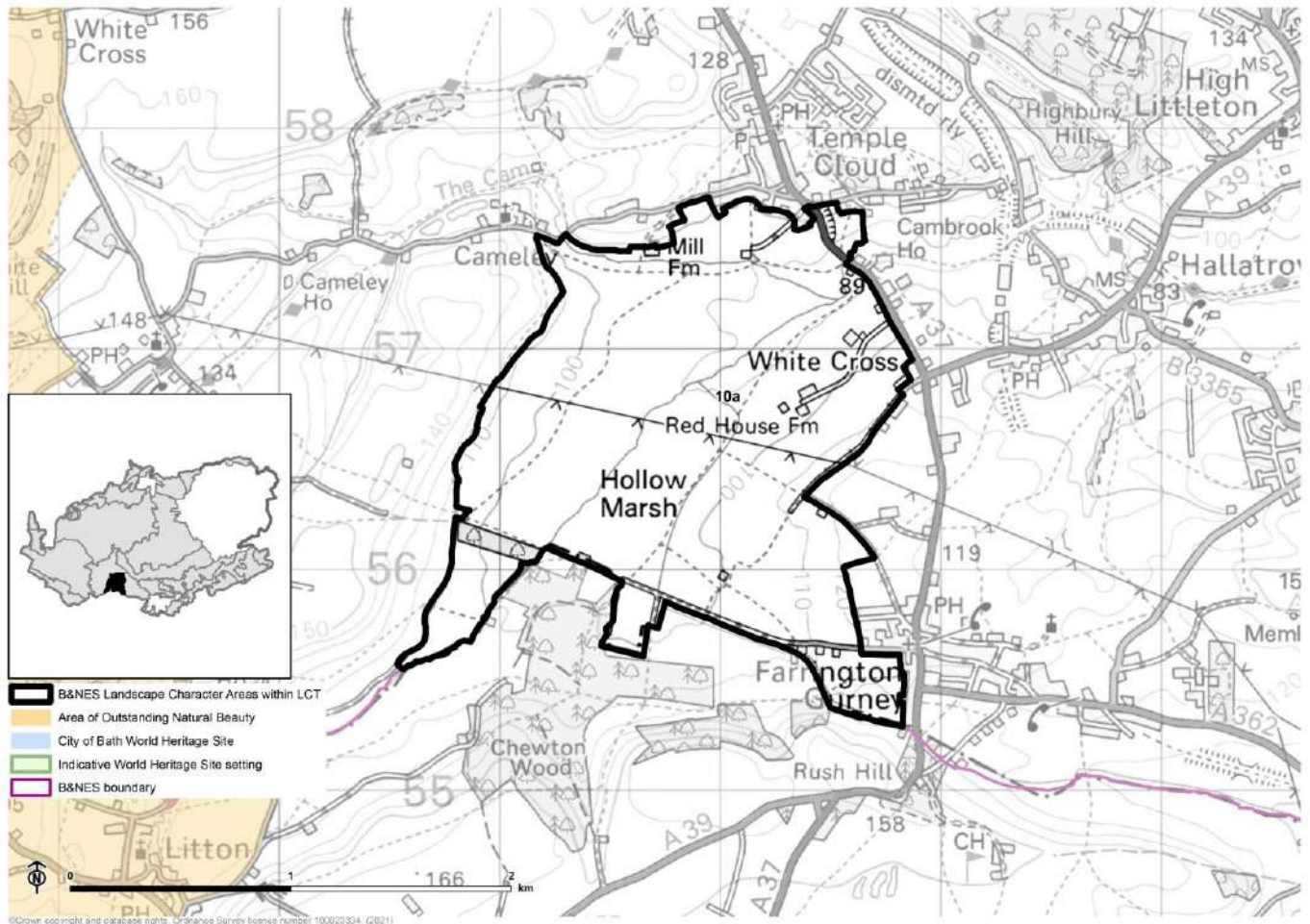
Views and perceptual qualities

The valleys give an enclosed feel to the landscape in contrast to the wide views from the open plateau. The tower of Downside Abbey to the south is visible from the plateau. The strongest influence on this landscape are the remains of the coal mining industry and the close proximity of residential and industrial areas which influence almost all views and brings with it pressures for recreational use. Snail's Bottom, the old Haydon tip and Kilmersdon Valley are particularly well used for informal recreation. The large warehouses at the Westfield Industrial Estate are an unsightly and dominating influence in the Snail's Bottom area.

LCT 10 Levels



LCT 10: Levels



Landscape Character Areas:

The Levels LCT has one LCA:

- 10a: Hollow Marsh

LCA 10a: Hollow Marsh

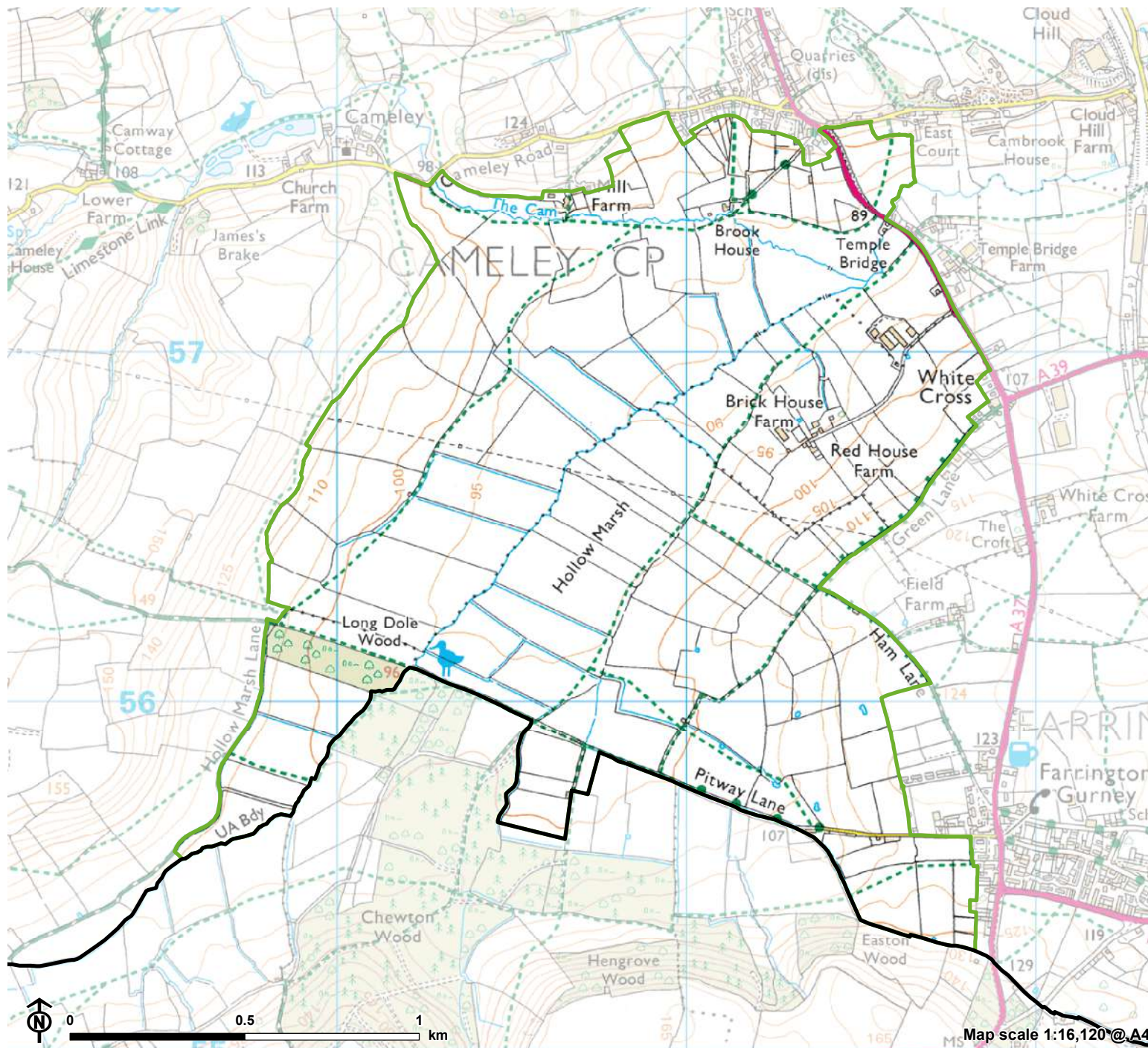


View towards Temple Cloud from the south-east of the LCA across arable fields, showing a pylon line and mature hedgerow trees.






Location and summary

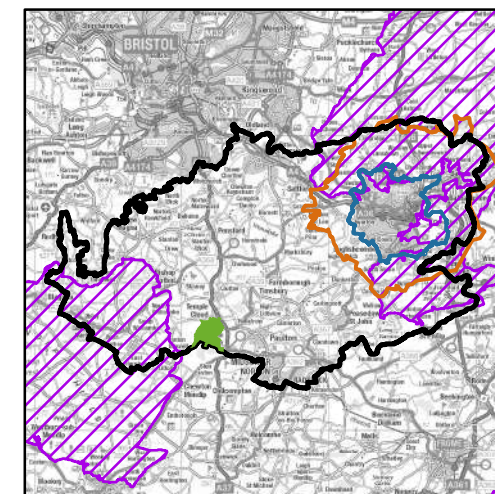
The Hollow Marsh LCA is a secluded a wide dish-shaped landform, characterised by grey clayey alluvial soils.

It is situated in the south of the district and extends north from the district boundary to the southern settlement edge of Temple Cloud. The boundaries of this flat character area are defined by the change in topography, with the low-lying landform rising to the elevated limestone plateau around Hinton Blewett to the west and north, and to the more undulating farmland around Farrington Gurney to the east.



10a Hollow Marsh

-  Bath and North East Somerset boundary
-  Landscape Character Area
-  City of Bath World Heritage Site
-  Indicative World Heritage Site setting
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Key Characteristics

- Underlain by estuarine alluvium with Mercia Mudstones at edges of area
- Grey clayey alluvial soils with reddish loamy soils on the mudstones
- Wide valley floor with a low-lying flat to gently sloping landform
- Permanent pasture with areas of arable
- Distinctive regular rectilinear field pattern and ditches are legacies of late medieval land drainage
- Clipped hedges with mature trees and in-field trees give the impression of a well-treed landscape
- Sparsely settled with isolated buildings constructed in Lias Limestone
- Tranquil and harmonious rural landscape
- Open character with views to surrounding ridgelines

Geology and soils

The majority of the area consists of estuarine alluvium reflecting the low-lying character of the area. This overlays the Mercia Mudstones which occur towards the west and east of the area.



View south-west from near the Cam showing the sloping land on the western edge of the bowl-like landscape.

The main soil is a dark grey stoneless clayey soil typically found on the alluvium of this flat landscape. The reddish loamy soils associated with the Mercia Mudstones are prevalent towards the east of the area. The land has naturally poor drainage and is drained by a series of ditches. Rushes are characteristic where drainage has become impeded.

Landform and drainage pattern

The principal characteristic is the flat to gently sloping wide dished valley landform which rises gently from 90m to 120m AOD towards the west, south and east. Drainage channels join a tributary of the Cam Brook that flows through the area in a south-west to north-east direction, whilst a section of the Cam Brook passes through the north of the area.

Semi-natural habitats and tree cover

The flattish landform with clipped hedges and mature hedgerow and in-field trees gives the impression of a reasonably 'well-treed' landscape. Principal tree species within hedgerows include oak and ash. The area is framed by undeveloped pastoral and wooded ridgelines, particularly to the south at Chewton, Hengrove and Eaton Woods, which influences its character.

The Long Dole Wood and Meadows SSSI is partially within the south-west of the LCA and supports neutral grassland communities and ancient woodland. This SSSI, as well as an area of Priority Habitat lowland meadows to the north and along the route of the Cam Brook are also identified as a SNCIs.

Agriculture and land use

Much of the area is under permanent pasture used for rearing stock, particularly on the slopes towards the edges of the LCA. There are also significant areas of arable cultivation in the south.

Fields and boundaries

The area has a distinctive regular field pattern with small to medium-sized, broadly rectangular fields aligned down the slopes towards the brook. Fields are enclosed by tightly flailed, sometimes gappy, hedges and often lined by drainage ditches.

Historic environment

The name Hollow Marsh references the historically marshy nature of the landscape. The characteristic field pattern and drainage channels are legacies of the land drainage that occurred during the late medieval period when much of the area was enclosed from the open field system. The hedge alignment often reflects the outline of the old open field strips.

The LCA does not contain any known designated features of cultural heritage significance.



View south from near Mill Farm of pasture sub-divided by pony tape and dense hedgerows. Views extend to the wooded skylines (outside the LCA).

Development and infrastructure

Roads are almost completely absent in the area, with only part of the A37 and small minor lanes crossing its edges.

The area is sparsely settled except for isolated properties and farms such as Brick House Farm and Red House Farm. The villages of Farrington Gurney, Temple Cloud and Cameley surround the LCA, with some more recent ribbon development extending from the villages along the Cameley Road and the A37, located just outside the area.

The buildings in the LCA are traditionally constructed of white Lias Limestone with clay tiles although many properties in surrounding settlements are rendered.

The area is criss-crossed with public rights of way and 'green lanes'.



Converted stone farm buildings along Pitway Lane on the southern edge of the area.

Views and perceptual qualities

The area has a harmonious quality resulting from the bowl landform and distinctive field pattern. It has an isolated, rural and tranquil character where the sound of birdsong prevails. The landscape has an open character with views to the surrounding pastoral and wooded ridgelines, particularly to the south. The church tower at Camley is a landmark feature in views.

The area has few detractors, except for views to ribbon development along the A37 (adjoining the area) and to the settlement edges of Farrington Gurney and Temple Cloud. A pylon line crosses the centre of the area (east to west) and in distant views to the south a singular turbine at Shooters Bottom is visible.



View towards the Church of St James from the south-east of the LCA, with distinctive hedgerow trees and sloping land enclosing the LCA