



South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment

Supplementary Planning Document

South Gloucestershire Council

Draft report

Prepared by LUC

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Appendix A.6: Broad Valleys LCT

LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge

LCA 13: Frome Valley

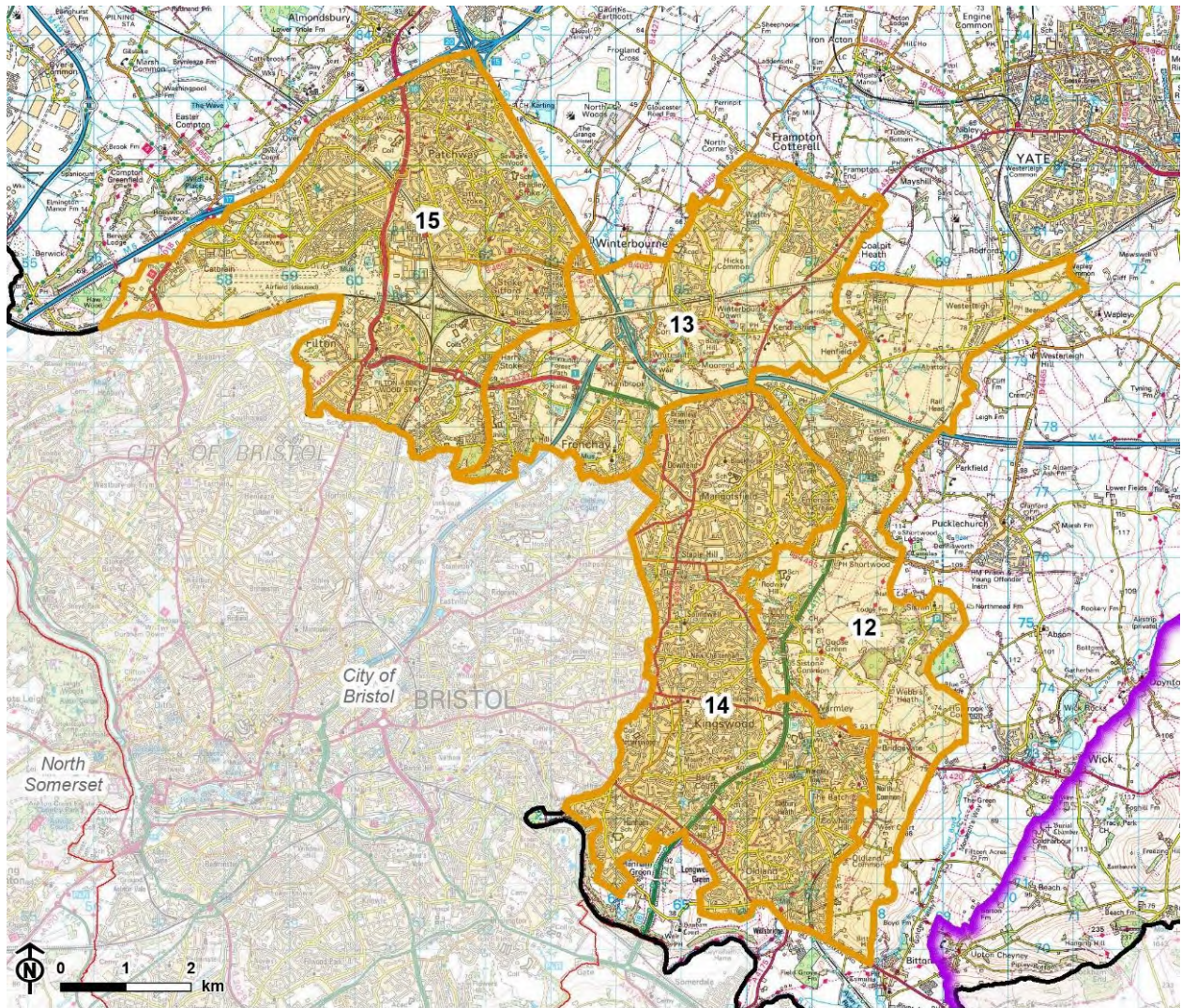
LCA 14: Kingswood

LCA 15: Patchway, Filton and the Stokes












Broad Valleys LCT

Figure 6.1: Location of Broad Valleys LCT



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- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|  | Broad Valleys LCT |  | LCAs within Broad Valleys LCT: |
|  | Council boundary |  | LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge |
|  | Neighbouring local authority |  | LCA 13: Frome Valley |
|  | Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary |  | LCA 14: Kingswood |
| | |  | LCA 15: Patchway and Filton |



Description

The Broad Valleys landscape character type (LCT) comprises shallow broad valleys located on the north-eastern and eastern edge of Bristol and bisected by major roads. These landscape character areas differ from others within South Gloucestershire due to the influence of the conurbation edge and the extent of residential, industrial, and commercial development. Urban areas to the north and west have only pockets of open space, but further east there is a mix of urban edge land uses and some farmland.

Key Characteristics

- An urban fringe landscape north and east of Bristol, comprising large areas of residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- Larger-scale development focused around major roads, motorway, and junctions, which dominates the local landscape and views from roads.
- Relatively recent residential development, predominantly comprising red brick estates, contrasts with the older, denser mixed development around Kingswood and Filton.
- Scattered areas of open space and vegetation help to break up the density of the built form and provide local character within the urban fringe.
- A relatively rural landscape within broad valleys is located beyond the urban edge. Smaller-scale settlements including villages, hamlets and scattered farms are well-integrated within the surrounding landscape.
- The rural landscape consists of a mix of regular pasture and arable fields, divided by clipped hedges, some stone walls, linear bands of trees and limited woodland.

Landscape Character Areas

The Broad Valleys LCT is subdivided into four landscape character areas (LCAs):

- LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale & Oldland Ridge
- LCA 13: Frome Valley
- LCA 14: Kingswood
- LCA 15: Patchway, Filton and the Stokes

LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge

The Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge LCA comprises a diverse mix of farmland, settlement, roads, commons, and industrial heritage.

Photo 1: View south-west from the Pucklechurch Ridge across rolling fields with woodland, with Bristol visible beyond.

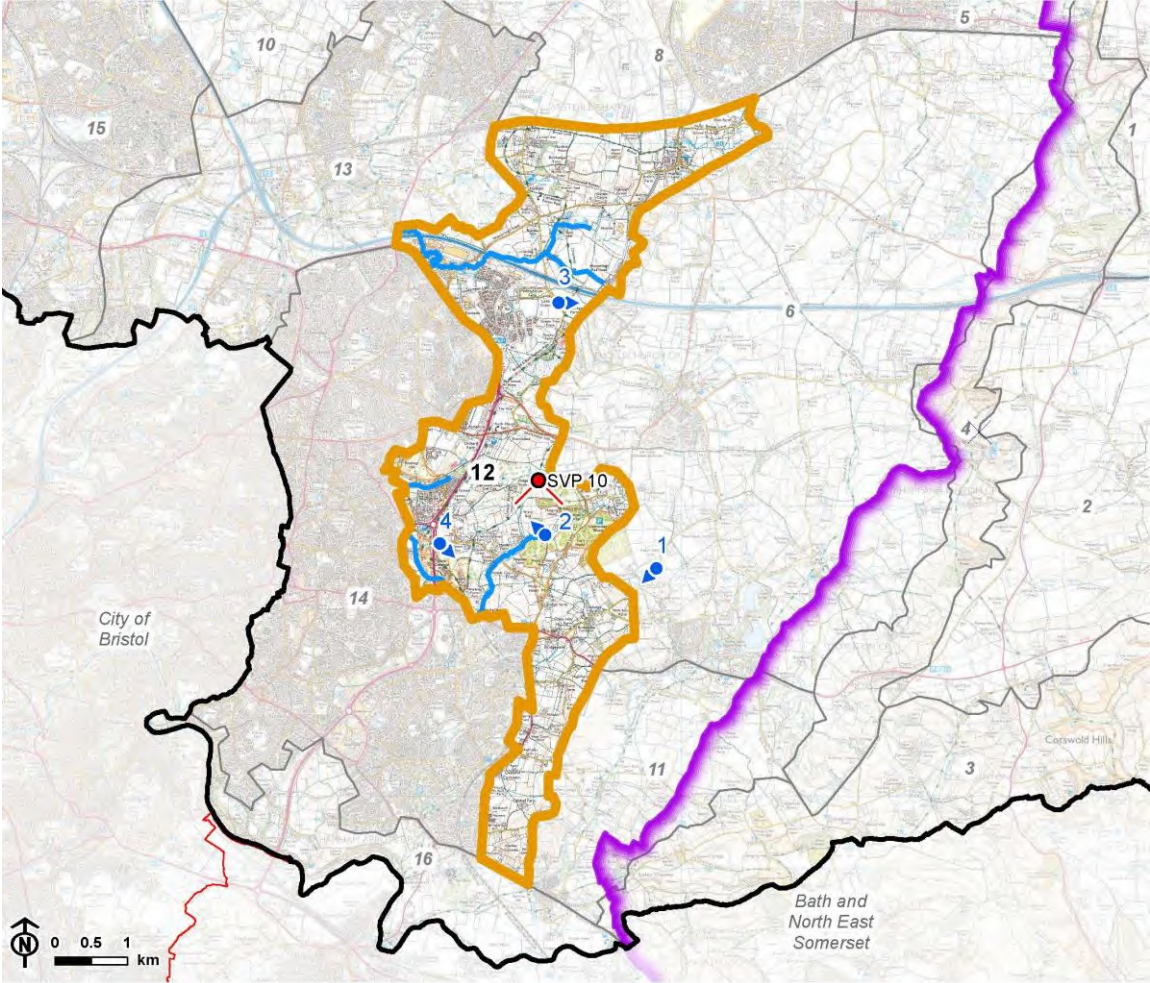


Location








The Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge landscape character area (LCA) is located along the eastern edge of the Bristol conurbation. The north-eastern boundary follows the toe of the Pucklechurch Ridge, which tapers out to less distinct rolling low hillsides to the south of Shortwood Hill. The south-eastern boundary follows the Oldland Ridge. The short southern boundary follows the A431 and topographical boundary with LCA 16: Avon Valley. The western boundary follows the urban edge of Bristol to the M4. The northern boundary follows the distinct embankment of the South Wales to London railway line.

Broad Valleys LCT

Figure 6.2: Location and Landscape context of LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge



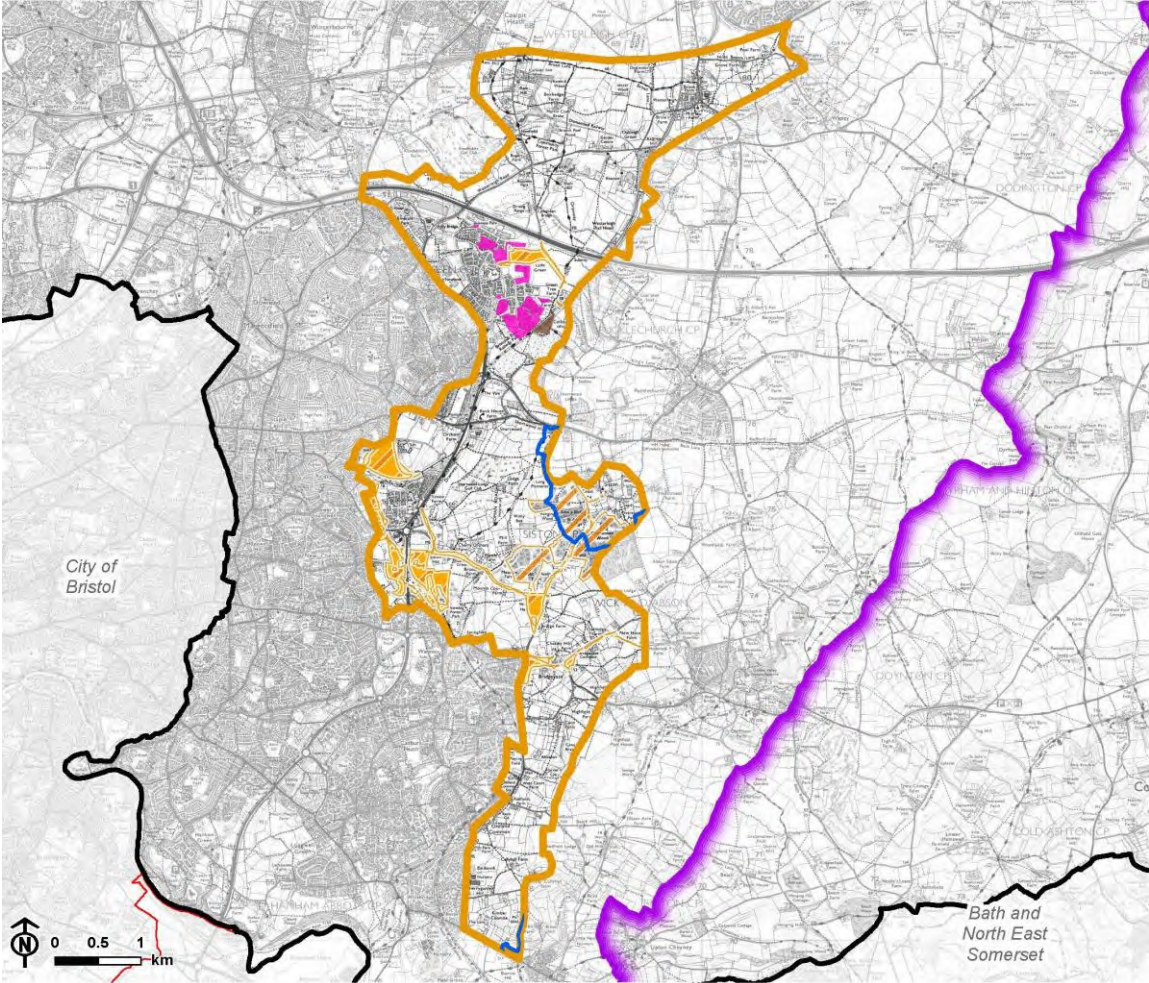
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-  LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge
-  Neighbouring LCA
-  Council boundary
-  Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
-  River
-  Photograph location and direction
-  Strategic viewpoint and angle



Broad Valleys LCT

Figure 6.3: Development and Heritage context of LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge



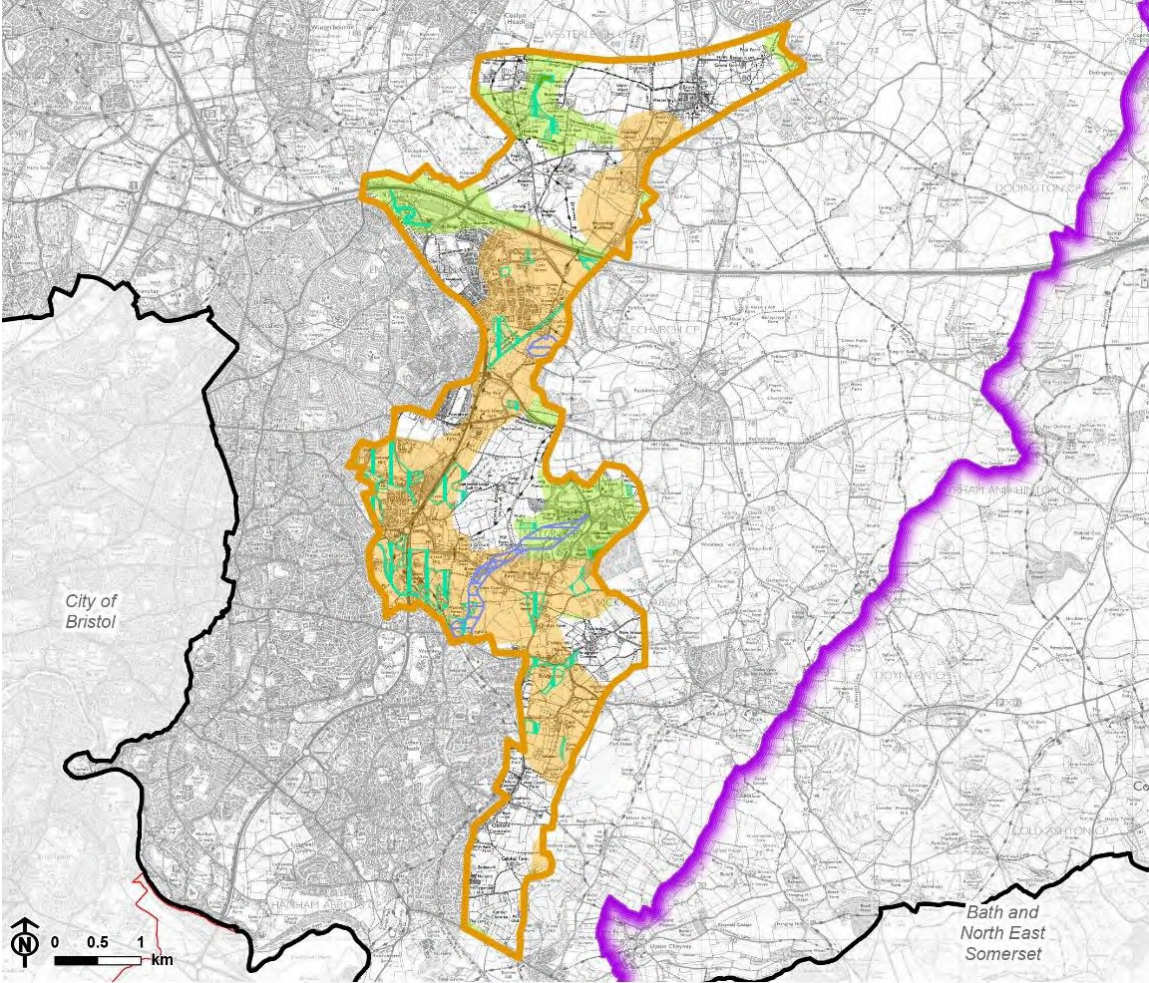
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-  LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge
-  Council boundary
-  Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
-  CRoW Common Land
-  CRoW Open Access Land
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Conservation Area
-  Recent development (since 2014)



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Figure 6.4: Ecology and Biodiversity context of LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge



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-  LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge
-  Council boundary
-  Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
-  Site of Nature Conservation Interest
-  Ancient woodland
-  Regionally Important Geological Site
-  Grassland Strategic Network
-  Wetland Strategic Network
-  Woodland Strategic Network



Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- The gentle to rolling landscape is contained by the prominent Pucklechurch and Oldland Ridge to the east and influenced by the dominant urban edge of Bristol to the west.
- The mix of land uses includes pasture with some arable, horse paddocks, a golf course and common land, with public open space and playing fields along the urban edge.
- Woodland cover is limited. Variable hedgerow and woodland tree cover are often associated with older settlement and commons, with more frequent cover to the east.
- Scattered areas of diverse habitats include neutral, marshy, and acid grassland, broadleaf and ancient woodland, flowing water, and bankside vegetation.
- A dispersed settlement pattern includes a village, hamlets, and scattered farms, contrasting with a significant area of recent development to the east of Emerson's Green.
- Historic remains of coal industries are evident in the north and east, including disused tramways, railways, chimneys, scattered worker settlements, excavations, and spoil mounds.
- The historic hamlet of Siston, designated as a Conservation Area, is a distinctive feature in the east of the LCA.
- The residential urban edge contains the west of the area, with large-scale commercial/ industrial sheds in the north near the M4.
- Main roads cross and segment the area. Frequent, winding minor roads and lanes with grass verges cross the area.

Natural Influences

Geology, Landform and Hydrology

The underlying geology is mixed, with predominately Coal Measures (Upper and Lower series with sandstones, mudstones, and shales) centrally. A band of Keuper marl and clays is located on either side of the M4 corridor and along the lower slopes of the Pucklechurch Ridge. Some small areas of White and Blue Lias (limestone) are located near Siston and along part of the Oldland Ridge. The soils are a combination of Gleys, Pelo- Stagnogleys and typical Argillic Pelosols.

The area has a varied topography that is given structure and containment by rising ground to the north and more significantly, along the eastern boundary. Broadly, the topographical features within the LCA comprise the broad bowl of the Folly Brook to the north, the central rolling Siston Brook valley and linear Warmley Brook valley, with the linear Oldland Ridge to the south. The north-east of the LCA is bounded by the Pucklechurch Ridge, comprising a linear ridgeline rising up to 110 metres AOD beyond the LCA. To the south, the linear ridge, and gentle slopes of the Oldland Ridge rise to the east, from the generally level valley at approximately 45 metres AOD, to the ridge line at 80 to 88 metres AOD.

The westerly flowing tributaries of the Folly Brook largely follow an irregular, sinuous course within the northerly bowl with some regular ditches along field boundaries to the east. Centrally, the Siston Brook valley forms a complex landform. The south-westerly flowing meandering Siston Brook and its tributaries join Warmley Brook south of this LCA, before continuing southwards to the River Avon. The Warmley Brook follows a linear valley to the south of Shortwood, between the Pucklechurch Ridge and Rodway Hill. To the north its course is a natural channel, however to the south, some sections within Felicity Park, adjacent playing fields and across Siston Common have been modified.

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Land Cover

The gently undulating landform in the north of the LCA is predominantly pastoral. Scattered pockets of arable land and horse paddocks are located near to settlement. A driving range and fishing lakes are located to the south of the Westerleigh Road. Field sizes are typically medium (some large) and regular shaped to the north, with generally smaller fields, some of irregular shape, nearer the M4 and around the settlement edges. Field boundaries typically comprise clipped hedgerows with few hedgerow trees. Some intermittent hedgerows or post and wire fences are located around horse paddocks. Dense linear sections of scrub and trees line the old tramways and unpaved tracks in this area. Deciduous and mixed woodland areas cover higher ground at Ram Hill.

The science park and relatively recent dense residential development is located south of the M4. The open space network around this development comprises retained hedgerows and hedgerow trees. To the south-east of Emerson's Green, the regular pattern of medium to large fields generally follow the linear form of the Warmley Valley. Boundaries include a mix of clipped and overgrown hedgerows with frequent mature trees.

Within the Siston Valley, the pasture fields are medium to small and irregular shaped with thick, often overgrown hedges. Mature trees and small copses are located along upper slopes, with maturing areas of Community Forest woodland cover located within this framework. Warmley Forest Park provides links to the cycle network and includes facilities such as a skate park and scout building. The field pattern is disrupted to the west of Siston, where the Shortwood Lodge Golf Club occupies a significant area in the centre of the valley. The planting pattern is largely unrelated to the former field pattern, reflecting the layout of greens and fairways. The irregular urban edge along the western boundary, from the B4465 southwards, is occasionally interwoven with or edged by commons, school playing fields, public open spaces, and horse paddocks.

The Oldland Ridge in the south of the LCA has a relatively regular field pattern of pasture, with medium sized, linear fields generally following the contours. Smaller fields and horse paddocks are associated with the irregular settlement edge to the west. Fields are defined by clipped or overgrown, sometimes

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intermittent, hedgerows, with timber fences typically around paddocks. Along the ridge, post and wire fences supplement the intermittent hedges.

A number of commons lie within the area. Lyde Green Common, severed by the M4 in the north of the LCA, comprises a field and broad road verges of unimproved grassland, partly edged by water-filled ditches and dense hedgerows with intermittent trees. Charn Hill and Rodway Common, on the urban edge in the west of the LCA, comprise rough, unenclosed heathland and a dense scrub/ woodland framework, covering elevated ground and slopes of a steep sided valley. Siston Common and Webb's Heath comprise broad open areas of common with a mix of rough, unimproved grassland with thickets of hawthorn and blackthorn scrub, small groups of deciduous trees and informal hedges. Both are crossed by country lanes with scattered farms/houses and are defined variously by the adjacent field boundary pattern, property boundaries, or the urban edge. Siston Common forms the most extensive common within the LCA but is now bisected by the Avon Ring Road. Bridgegate Common comprises two small areas with different patterns of open grassland and scattered trees.

Much of the area is influenced by former industrial activity. Coal extraction at Ram Hill has left Bitterwell Lake, once a header lake providing water to feed the steam pumps for the local pit, now a recreation feature. Numerous tramways cross the north of the LCA, including one of the earliest railways in Britain, the 19th century Dramway. Remnants of coal extraction and brick works are very closely associated with the toe of the Pucklechurch scarp, including the Parkfield Colliery which extends into the adjacent LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley.

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Photo 2: Undulating pastoral fields with wooded boundaries north of Webbs Heath.



Biodiversity

Although immediately adjacent to the urban edge and bisected by major roads, this LCA includes a diverse and ecologically valuable mosaic of grasslands, woodland, and farmland.

Ponds and watercourses criss-cross the LCA and are connected by wildlife corridors including hedgerows. Many of the watercourses within this LCA form part of an SNCI, including those at Folly, Warmley and Siston Brooks. These watercourses will support a diverse range of species from aquatic macro-invertebrates to fish and water voles. Ponds and pools within the area will support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species).

There are approximately 3 hectares of ancient woodland comprising two small woodlands, representing less than ten percent of the total wooded cover within this LCA. Several woodland areas are designated as SNCIs. Key species likely

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to be associated with the broadleaved woodland include bats and dormice, both of which are present across the wider area and are UK priority species. There appears to be good connectivity for species such as these between the wooded areas via hedgerows and scattered trees.

There are fifteen sites designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) due to the quality of the grassland (neutral, calcareous, acidic, and marshy) present and includes areas of species-rich grassland and priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland and lowland dry acid grassland. This diverse habitat supports a range of invertebrates and ant hills are a regular feature. These invertebrates in turn provide a food source for mammals, including bats.

The majority of the agricultural land use within this area is pastoral farmland with a small area of arable farmland within the eastern section of the Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge. Arable farmland provides habitat for many species of ground nesting including some that are listed as being Globally Threatened Red listed species. The winter stubble in these areas also provides a foraging resource.

There is a history of coal industry in this character area, including mining, tunnels, and underground quarries. Mines and disused railway tunnels provide an ideal habitat for many species of bat including European Protected Species.

The golf course presents the opportunity for appropriate planting and management to present a mosaic of habitats of value to a diverse range of species.

The Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridor D: Wickwar-Westerleigh-Biton (*Westerleigh Vale/Oldland Ridge/East Fringe*) covers much of the LCA, excluding some areas along the settlement edge including recent development at Lyde Green.

Cultural Influences

Land Use and Time Depth

Land use within the Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge LCA is largely associated with agricultural practices, urban fringe development and amenity use associated with the urban edge.

The hamlet of Siston (designated as a Conservation Area) has Saxon origin and is located in close proximity to the former Kingswood Forest, in the east of the LCA. A particularly distinctive feature is the adjacent Siston Court, an Elizabethan manor house, situated above the hamlet within a designed landscape setting, which extends into the adjacent LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley.

Relics of past industrial uses of the landscape are scattered throughout the LCA. The 19th century Dramway crosses the north of the LCA, passing the Ram Hill Colliery Scheduled Monument. The remnants of Parkfield North Colliery lie within the adjacent character area, on the lower slopes of the Pucklechurch Ridge. However, Brandy Bottom (Parkfield South) Colliery is located within this LCA and includes a chimney, pit head buildings and earthworks, all now absorbed within a framework of scrub and trees. The site is a Scheduled Monument and the most complete example of a 19th century coalmine in the Bristol Coalfield. A disused railway forming a spur off the Bristol to Bath Railway Path, runs past the former collieries and Shortwood Claypit. Less visible remains of former land use within the landscape are found at Warmley Forest Park (adjacent to A420), previously the site of Warmley Clay Pipe Works, later a landfill site and at Webb's Heath, where vegetated mounds indicate the remains of coal spoil, and a coal mine ventilation shaft remains a local feature. The Webbs Heath Drift Mine is locally listed and is currently being restored by local volunteers.

Historic earthworks are evident to the south of Oldland Common, comprising a circular mound adjacent to the A4175.

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Settlement and Infrastructure

The Bristol conurbation forms a prominent, dense edge along much of the western LCA boundary. Settlement within the LCA is scattered, though varied in pattern.

The urban edge has a complex and irregular pattern of development, which has expanded and pushed the rural edge eastwards. Expansion has included large-scale residential, commercial, and industrial development in the north-east at Emerson's Green East/Lyde Green. The northern part of this urban edge, extending between the A4174 and the M4 comprises an employment area at Emerald Park made up of very large distribution sheds, offices, light industry and linking road infrastructure. More recent residential development extends further east, with proposed development planned to extend to the base of the Pucklechurch Ridge. Original farmhouses within this area, including Hallen Farm, Lydes Green Farm (Grade II listed) and Newlands Farm (Grade II listed) have been restored. The A4174 and this linear urban edge forms a distinct urban boundary in outward views from the LCA. Further north along the Westerleigh Road a number of recent developments including garden centres and nurseries have introduced large buildings, sheds, glass houses and parking areas and some new housing.

The wider rural landscape in the north of the LCA contains the village of Westerleigh, hamlets and scattered farms. Westerleigh is located below the Pucklechurch Ridge and comprises a linear settlement with large Pennant stone houses and farms, brick terraces, and more recent reconstituted stone and rendered infill properties. The majority of the village is located on gently sloping ground, nestled below the Pucklechurch Ridge, with a more recent housing spur ascending the ridge, along Shorthill Road. The relatively dispersed linear settlement of Ram Hill and the clustered hamlet of Henfield are located to the west. These smaller settlements consist of a mix of Pennant sandstone with more recent render and brick buildings, focused around a convergence of minor roads and lanes. Recent industrial and non-agricultural activity in the north of the LCA include an abattoir, processing plant and oil terminal located to the north of the M4.

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In the centre and south of the LCA, the urban edge recedes westwards and includes a mix of old Pennant stone and more recent brick buildings, intermixed with a number of industrial complexes and school playing fields. This area comprises a complex and interwoven historic pattern of settlement, common land, small-scale industry and agriculture. The historic settlement pattern focuses upon the former village centres of Warmley, North Common and Oldland Common. Small-scale incremental infill and expansion along roads and lanes has occurred beyond the village centres. Two small areas of housing to the south of Rodway Hill sit largely within a rural framework. Siston Park, adjacent to Siston Common, includes mid-20th century housing and a more recent extension to the north. Relatively recent housing development to the west of the A4174 is focused on Carson's Road and Ridley Avenue. The isolated, clustered hamlet of Siston is located in the east of the LCA. Designated as a Conservation Area, the hamlet comprises traditional limestone buildings and church, along lanes lined with limestone walls. Scattered farms are common, with some with large modern agricultural barns.

The A4174 Avon Ring Road defines a section of the north-western boundary and continues south through rural low-lying parts of the LCA, where it generally follows the line of the former Bristol to Bath railway line. It travels variously at grade in the north, cut into higher ground to the west adjacent to and south of Emerson's Green, where it is associated with a large-scale earth sculpture and is contained within cuttings and stone walling to the south. The associated infrastructure planting is maturing to integrate this road into the wider landscape and to screen adjacent development.

The M4 cuts across the north of the LCA east to west, in slight cutting to the west, briefly at grade and then on embankment before cutting into the Pucklechurch Ridge. The South Wales to London railway line, situated on high embankment, forms the northern boundary of the LCA.

A number of roads cross east to west, connecting with the rural settlements of Westerleigh, Pucklechurch and Wick. The irregular pattern of minor roads and lanes generally follow gentle landform or spurs on steeper terrain.

A number of promoted recreational routes cross the area. The Bristol and Bath Railway Path follows the disused railway over low-lying ground beneath the Pucklechurch scarp to the east of the urban edge, before following a new

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section adjacent to the Avon Ring Road along the boundary of the LCA. The Dramway is an important former industrial tramway, which is now used as a public footpath passing centrally north to south through the LCA. The original route is largely intact, although parts have been removed by the Avon Ring Road. In places the original limestone track sleepers are still evident.

One of the circuits within the series of Circular Rides in South Gloucestershire passes through the north-east of the area, through Westerleigh and the Folly Brook valley. The Community Forest Path, within the Forest of Avon, passes centrally through the area north to south. There is also an extensive network of public rights of way connecting the urban edge to the wider countryside. All combine to form an intricate network across the area. This is particularly dense in the southern part of the area.

One overhead powerline and associated pylons pass north to south centrally through the area, before bisecting the undulating Siston Brook valley, then turning south, over Bridgegate Common and along the lower slopes of the Oldland Ridge.

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Photo 3: Traditional farmhouses (Grade II* listed) to the east of Lyde Green.



Perceptual Influences

Visual Character

The Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge LCA is influenced by the urban conurbation to the west, with its industrial history, more recent development and recreational infrastructure layered over an agricultural landscape. The area is contained to the east by prominent rising ground.

The northern bowl of the Folly Brook valley comprises predominately low, gently sloping pasture, with some arable fields. The valley is contained by the Pucklechurch Ridge to the east and urban edge of Emerson's Green East/Lyde Green to the south-west and is roughly bisected by the M4. The dense and textured framework of tall hedgerows, some clipped, over a mosaic of pasture, rough grassland, and common land results in a mix of open and semi-enclosed views. The clustered settlement pattern and non-agricultural activities, such as

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storage compounds and a fishing lake, are reasonably well-integrated as a result of this framework. However, horse paddocks are locally evident where hedgerows have become replaced with fences. Associated ad hoc home-made stables and sheds and the use of old railway wagons are also evident and untypical of a rural landscape. Large modern agricultural sheds are prominent within older farm complexes within this area. The M4 is screened to some degree by existing planting along the motorway embankments but is visually and audibly prominent in places. There are some views over this area from the motorway.

The South Wales to London main railway line cuts across the northern boundary of the LCA on high embankment. Scrub clearance to sections of the embankment, as part of maintenance works, has in places raised the prominence of this landform, with the elevated, artificial horizontal skyline now more evident within some local views. Some lower density maturing compensatory planting is softening this artificial skyline. Parts of the railway line remain largely well-integrated, particularly where nearby hedgerow trees, or overgrown hedgerows, provide a strong vegetation structure. This landform also forms a significant visual barrier to views northwards into the adjacent LCA 8: Yate Vale.

Westerleigh is located to the north-east and is well-integrated by its landform setting and vegetation structure, although landscape character is influenced by heavy traffic. The railway embankment to the north of the village visually separates Westerleigh from the urban edge of Yate, located less than a kilometre away to the north-east, in the adjacent LCA 8: Yate Vale. The church forms a distinctive focal point to the village and local landmark, visible against the skyline from the north. However, the expansion of the village to the east and west is more evident in local views.

To the south-west of Westerleigh, below the Pucklechurch Ridge, the abattoir/processing plant, oil terminal and occasional line of goods wagons along the railway form a scattered pattern of large structures, visible from the scarp, local landscape and from the M4. This concentration of features is taller than the adjacent vegetation and therefore is prominent within the local landscape. The large warehouse buildings at Emerald Park are also visually prominent within the locality and wider landscape, particularly in views from Downend and other elevated locations. The housing edge of Emerson's Green

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and associated linear planting abutting the boundary of this LCA form a regular dense urban edge and a prominent built skyline, often elevated above the A4174. The sculpted earth mound located along the A4174 to the east of Emerson's Green and north of Pumphrey Hill provides a distinctive landmark and recreational area, affording wide ranging views of the wider landscape to the east, beyond the ring road.

The Pucklechurch Ridge, beyond the LCA's eastern boundary, is a prominent backcloth and skyline feature to the Folly Brook valley and in views from the urban edge. It also provides expansive panoramic views over the LCA. The two chimneys and wooded spoil mounds along the scarp's toe form local landmarks.

The claypit stockpiles at Shortwood are locally evident, with the rich red colour of the clay excavation areas and stockpiles contrasting with the surrounding dense green woodland framework. This framework connects to both the adjacent Brandy Bottom Colliery and the wider vegetation pattern on the Pucklechurch Ridge.

To the south, the Siston Brook valley within its upper reaches comprises a gently rolling enclosed pastoral valley, with a strong landscape framework which encloses views. Siston hamlet is well-integrated within the valley, with the more elevated Siston Court, on the boundary of this area, evident within distant views from the west. One powerline and occasional middle-distance views of the Bristol conurbation influence the perception of remoteness and tranquillity otherwise obtained within this part of the LCA. The area to the west and south of Siston now has a more wooded character as the extensive Community Forest Woodland is now established.

Open elevated views over Siston, Webb's Heath, and Bridgegate Common are variously influenced, visibly and audibly, by traffic levels, the close proximity of the urban edge of Kingswood, the Avon Ring Road, Shortwood Lodge Golf Course, powerline and A420, all of which influence and dilute the rural character of the area.

Warmley, within LCA 14: Kingswood 14, and Bridgegate are located within the lower Siston Valley, extending along both its floor and lower eastern slopes. The tree and vegetation cover associated with Siston Common and adjacent

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field hedgerows, plus tree cover within the settlement areas, provides generally good integration of these settlement areas. The church spire at Warmley is a prominent and distinctive landmark, set within a pocket of urban development nestled within the valley.

To the west, the low-lying Warmley Brook valley forms a gentle uniform valley, with a small, elevated plateau and recreational landscape of playing fields at Rodway Hill and broader landform to the south, contained by the rolling hills of the Siston Valley to the east. Within this context, the Shortwood Lodge Golf Course occupies the upper slopes and skyline between Siston and Warmley Valley. The fairways and greens are visually evident, contrasting in texture with adjacent pasture fields. Similarly, hedgerow removal and restructuring of the vegetation within the golf course has created a more open landscape, with irregular planting areas, which contrasts with the surrounding field pattern.

The irregular urban edge of Kingswood along the western edge of the LCA comprises a complex mosaic of built development, commons, playing fields, horse paddocks, and roads. This settlement edge contains and visually influences the rural landscape to the east and south, with limited vegetation structure following this edge. Conversely, the rural ridgelines to the east of the area are a prominent feature within views from the urban edge and provide a strong sense of place and local distinctiveness.

Along the urban edge in the centre of the LCA, the elevated rolling, gently sloping commons at Rodway Hill and Charn Hill are edged to the west and south with steep wooded slopes, which have a visually enclosed character. This contrasts with open views available from slightly elevated areas of dry acid grassland within Rodway Common. Rodway Common has a clearly defined urban edge to the north and south and is visually prominent and distinctive from numerous urban edge and rural vantage points, due to its elevation. Open views over the area are available from the slopes and top of Siston Hill within Siston Common.

The amenity landscape of playing fields, school grounds and public open space forms a distinct open landscape along the urban edge. Visually their openness, due to the lack of vegetation, increases the prominence of the settlement edge from the wider area.

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The Oldland Ridge in the south of the LCA forms a distinctive backdrop within views from the urban edge and in intermittent views from the A417 and A420 corridors. Although influenced by the adjacent prominent urban edge and audible effect of traffic on the A4175, along its lower slopes, this area provides a rural setting to the urban area. A powerline following the lower slopes is the only prominent built feature within this rural context. The few scattered farms and properties along lanes, which climb towards the ridge, are small-scale and generally well-integrated by the vegetation structure. From the open upper slopes and crown of the ridge, there are extensive views of the urban edge and Bristol to the west and of the large-scale landform of the Ashwicke Ridges to the east.

Low Pennant sandstone walls are common features along roadsides, within the older centres of settlement to the south, and are often accompanied by stone piers of either Pennant sandstone or limestone and Victorian-style copings at property boundaries. Copper slag coping stones (a by-product from the former Warmley Brassworks within LCA 14: Kingswood) are visible along boundary walls, e.g., Upper Cullyhall Farm on the Oldland Ridge. The use of this material is scattered widely within the rural areas of South Gloucestershire and forms a distinguishing feature within buildings and boundary walls. Historic stiles are occasionally present in areas with a retained historic field pattern.

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Photo 4: View south-east across Siston Common towards the Oldland Ridge.



Tranquillity and Dark Skies

The proximity of the Bristol conurbation settlement edge, movement, and noise from traffic on the M4, A4174, A431 and A420 and presence of industrial development including the abattoir/processing plant and oil terminal influence the sense of tranquillity across the LCA.

The proximity of dense settlement and associated light pollution influences the experience of dark night skies throughout the LCA. Areas of woodland, including Overscourt Wood in the east, filter some of the light pollution from the settlement edge.

Visually Important Hillside

The Pucklechurch Ridge Visually Important Hillside (VIH) forms part of the boundary and passes into the east of the LCA. The Oldland Ridge Visually Important Hillside is located in the south-east of the LCA. Key characteristics of each VIH include the following:

- Pucklechurch Ridge VIH: a distinctive scarp of folded landform and textured landcover that forms a prominent rising landform and skyline feature in comparison to the lower-lying adjacent areas. The southern part of the Pucklechurch Ridge VIH forms an intrinsic part of the setting to the Siston and Pucklechurch Conservation Areas.
- Oldland Ridge VIH: an area of steep ridges and a series of hills separated by the north-south Golden Valley (River Boyd). The Oldland Ridge forms a visually prominent horseshoe-shaped landform of rising ground with a distinct rural character. The eastern part of the VIH is intrinsic to the setting of the Upton Cheyney Conservation Area, which straddles the steep west-facing valley side of the VIH, and the western part forms a green backdrop to the Bitton Conservation Area.

Further details are provided in **Annex I: Visually Important Hillside**.

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Strategic Viewpoints

One Strategic Viewpoint (SVP) is located within this LCA at the Community Forest Path near Siston Court (SVP 10). It provides a panoramic view of the Siston Brook Valley, Lodge Farmhouse, the setting of Siston Court, and the landmark features of St Barnabas Church and Church of the Holy Trinity.

Further details are provided in **Annex II: Strategic Viewpoints**.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Valued Features

- The topographical variety of the landscape, including the rolling brook valleys in the centre of the LCA and the ridges along the boundary which form the backdrop of views from the urban edge, including the Pucklechurch Ridge in the north and Oldland Ridge in the south.
- Hedgerows and woodland which contribute to biodiversity and habitat connectivity, and contribute to sense of place, particularly within the Siston Valley and Oldland Ridge.
- The flowing water and bankside vegetation of Folly Brook, Siston Brook, Warmley Brook and associated tributaries that provide habitat for a range of notable species and contributes to biodiversity, with some areas designated as SNCIs.
- The mosaic of neutral, calcareous, acidic, and marshy grassland that supports a diverse range of flora and contributes to biodiversity, with some areas designated as SNCIs.
- Areas of commons, with their variable land cover, which contribute to a diverse landscape pattern and sense of place.
- Relatively dispersed settlement pattern which contributes to a sense of rurality, away from the dense urban edge in the west.

- The historic hamlet of Siston (designated as a Conservation Area), including the manor house of Siston Court, that contributes to time depth.
- Industrial archaeological features, including the Brandy Bottom Colliery Scheduled Monument, that contribute to the time depth of the landscape.

The Changing Landscape

The following section sets out the changes and pressures to the Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge LCA.

Climate Change

- Climate change leading to increased temperatures and periods of drought resulting in a change in stream flows, altering the species composition of wetland habitats (ponds, flowing open water and bankside vegetation associated with SNCIs), particularly Folly Brook, Siston Brook and Warmley Brook.
- Climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of seasonal flooding in lower-lying valleys, particularly along Folly Brook in the north of the LCA. Associated pressures to build flood management works that are unsympathetic to local landscape character and sensitive habitats.

Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery

- An increase in tree planting is required to contribute towards South Gloucestershire's objective of doubling tree cover by 2030, and in accordance with the proposed woodland strategic network which forms part of the West of England's Nature Recovery Network. This may include the establishment of additional woodlands in a corridor between Overscourt Wood and Warmley Forest Park and also to Shortwood Landfill Site, and in a corridor linking Kendleshire Golf Course through the 'Westerleigh Gap', as set out in the Forest of Avon's Tree and Woodland

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Strategy [See reference 1]. This may change the character of views towards the Pucklechurch Ridge, although this may also contribute to the strengthening of the landscape framework.

Land Use and Cover

- There is little evidence of active management of much of the existing vegetation framework, or new planting to create succession and sustain the landscape structure in the long term. Without this, the strength of the vegetation framework will decline in the future, potentially reducing its ability to integrate either existing, or future changes, and potentially reducing its biodiversity value.
- The scattered ponds and pools within this area along with their surrounding terrestrial habitat are vulnerable to any loss of habitat.
- The landscape is sensitive to change which would affect the character and setting of the commons and heritage features, or result in the loss of vegetation, which would reduce the biodiversity value and erode the landscape framework. Any change also has the potential to be visible from the Pucklechurch Ridge, potentially affecting the rural setting and character of this landform.
- The further encroachment of the urban edge has the potential to introduce significant landscape change into this area. The areas of ecologically important grassland can be particularly sensitive to changes in management or changes in drainage regime.
- At Shortwood, landfill and progressive restoration is being implemented along the toe of the Pucklechurch Ridge and into a section of the lower scarp face in the adjoining LCA, with the ultimate aim of restoration back into the wider landscape, which should also create new habitat. The final restoration currently proposed will however restore the whole site, including the existing claypit and reintroduce a landscape framework across the area. New planting will incorporate a hedgerow structure similar to that existing before the works and a much more significant area of woodland, which will link with existing areas, contributing to, and strengthening the landscape framework of the local area.
- The distinctive character of the commons and heathland within the lower Siston Valley are sensitive to change, such as settlement infill along lanes

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which cross these areas. The built form, landscape setting, condition and general maintenance of common edge properties greatly affects both the landscape character and habitat value of these spaces. Ad hoc development of sheds and variable maintenance of property boundaries also has a detracting visual influence.

- Recreational pressure for 'horsiculture' is evident within many parts of the area, especially north of the M4 around Ram Hill and Henfield, along the urban edge of Bristol and adjacent to the Oldland Ridge at the settlement edge. This change in land use is a relatively recent trend, which in places has led to the loss or erosion of hedgerows. The cumulative effect of this and the associated infrastructure of fencing, stables, access tracks, exercise areas, jumps and floodlighting, can result in a marked change in landscape character and disturbance to wildlife.
- The maturing tree cover of the Community Forest planting along the upper valley sides of Siston Valley and within Warmley Forest Park, on the reclaimed claypit, is providing a more well wooded landscape, increasing the degree of enclosure, whilst also providing recreational opportunities. Improvements to parking at Overscourt Wood has enhanced the amenity of the open access land.
- The hedgerow framework is a strong, generally intact feature of the ridgelines, contributing to landscape character, habitat value and connectivity, with the exception of localised extents of the Oldland Ridge, where some has been replaced by fencing.
- The Shortwood Lodge Golf Course, north of the Siston Valley, has changed the agricultural field pattern, resulting in a more open landscape and erosion of the rural character. The golf course is most evident where it extends over the upper valley slopes and less so where it is contained below the skyline.
- The Oldland Ridge to the south has areas where landscape character has been eroded, due to the poor condition of some landscape features and particularly due to the visual prominence of the urban edge, which encroaches upon its lower slopes. Further change along this edge, would increase this effect and the erosion of the distinctive rural character of the area and threatens to reduce its habitat value.

Development

- The centre and west of the Folly Brook valley in the north of the LCA is greatly influenced by the Bristol urban edge. Development, comprising residential fringe, the A4174 corridor, the industrial character of Emerald Park and recent development at Emerson's Green East/Lyde Green, has a prominent local influence. Limited integration with the wider agricultural landscape erodes the character of the adjacent rural area.
- Maturing structure planting implemented at Emerald Park, is providing a degree of integration of the development within the surrounding area. However, the scale and massing of the development is such that, even in the long term, planting has limited potential to integrate the development within the surrounding smaller-scale development to the east. The buildings remain visually prominent in the local area and from elevated positions on the adjacent Pucklechurch Ridge.
- Relatively recent development at Emerson's Green East/Lyde Green covers an extensive area, extending to and along the toe of the Pucklechurch Ridge, contained to the north by the M4. Much of the existing landscape framework has been retained, however further enhancement will improve integration of this extensive area.
- The M4 has replaced the A4174 as the new urban edge. In the wider context, development of the Emerson's Green East/Lyde Green area has altered the wider landscape setting to the M4 and around the north-eastern edge of Bristol and is prominent in views from the Pucklechurch Ridge.
- Small-scale settlement at Ram Hill and Henfield is well-integrated within the framework of hedgerow trees and woodland. The area has a generally tranquil and enclosed character, although the presence of stables and fences associated with the increase in land use change to 'horsiculture', modern large farm buildings and storage compounds can detract from this, visually eroding the rural character and resulting in removal or fragmentation of hedgerows. This area is also sensitive to infill or incremental changes which might further erode the character and distinctiveness of the rural landscape.
- Prominent development located to the north of the M4 along Westerleigh Road, including the abattoir, processing plant, oil terminal, garden centres

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and nurseries, reduces the perception of tranquillity and erodes the rural characteristics of the area.

- Westerleigh is sensitive to further change which might affect the distinctive linear pattern and historic core of this village. The extension of the village along Shorthill Road, in terms of layout, building style and elevation above the vale, is in marked contrast to the original village core and has diluted the distinctive settlement character.
- Despite some detracting influences, the Folly Brook valley has pockets of distinct character and a good vegetation framework, particularly around the area of Lyde Green, Hallen Farm and associated with the industrial heritage in the area below the Pucklechurch Ridge. These areas are sensitive to incremental changes which might further erode the character and distinctiveness of the rural landscape.
- The Siston Brook valley is a relatively tranquil area, with a characteristic mosaic of strong and intact hedgerows, hedgerow trees and traditional buildings. Siston Conservation Area extends over the upper slopes of the ridge and beyond, into the adjacent LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley. The collection of traditional and historic buildings of Siston within this elevated location makes the visual setting particularly sensitive to change.
- Increasing traffic on the adjacent roads has introduced significant visual and noise disturbance to Siston, Webb's Heath and Bridgegate Commons. The new Avon Ring Road has relieved vehicle pressure on the minor roads and lanes adjacent to the commons, enhancing their potential for recreational use, linking to the new network of footpaths and cycleways associated with the new road.
- The Avon Ring Road, following a rural corridor within the Warmley Valley, has introduced significant visual and physical impact upon the local landscape character. The road corridor and associated junctions, overbridges, large-scale earth sculpture, signage, and lighting, introduces built form which locally erodes the rural character. Linear planting along the road helps integrate and reduce these effects.
- Siston Common was bisected by the Avon Ring Road, with part of the common becoming more enclosed by relatively recent residential development at Siston Park on one side and the urban edge on the other.

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This has brought changes in character, management, rural associations, and an increase in recreational and urban edge pressures.

- Relatively recent housing at Carson's Road near Siston Hill, adjacent to the Avon Ring Road, presents a harsh built edge. Maturing planting, when in leaf, is helping to integrate this development into the wider landscape. The density and levels of the development have had a particularly urbanising effect, while the increase in population increases pressure on nearby green spaces and footpaths.
- The common at Rodway Hill presently has signs of footpath erosion and is sensitive to inappropriate management which would lead to changes in its character.
- Sections of the Dramway were removed by the construction of the Avon Ring Road, however new footpath connections provide a continuous route, albeit along tarmac paths in close proximity to the road corridor and its traffic.
- The Avon Ring Road introduced a potential catalyst for change, leaving a mix of common land, school playing fields, public open spaces and remnant agricultural land sandwiched between the urban edge and the road. Pressures to extend the built urban edge within this area would change the character of wider views across the surrounding landscape, including for example from Siston and Rodway Commons and high ground to the east.
- Open spaces adjacent to the urban edge presently have visual and some physical links with the wider landscape. Their open character and views are visible both from the urban edge and from within these spaces. These spaces and their habitats are under pressure from current physical recreational activity and the level of potential future change, particularly from settlement encroachment, which may result in visual severance from the wider rural context.
- The ridgelines and hills, generally to the east of the area, form distinct landforms with strong rural character. These include the ridges south of Pomphrey Hill and Shortwood Hill; the open rural hillside and skyline between Orchard Farm and Rodway Common to the west and the continuation of the Pucklechurch Ridge to the east then extending south between Siston Hill, Mounds Court Farm, Webb's Heath area and south along the Oldland Ridge. These ridgelines form natural skylines, with very

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limited development, which are evident within local views and are therefore sensitive to change which might erode their distinctive character.

- Embankment stabilisation works which cleared railway embankments of tree cover have significantly increased the prominence of the railway within the north of the LCA. Electrification of the London to South Wales railway line has added to the visual intrusion of the line from overhead gantries in the north of the LCA.

Guidance

These guidelines recommend how the landscape can be managed to ensure future change respects the local character and should be read in conjunction with the objectives of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Landscape Strategy and Guidelines [See reference 2], so as to avoid adverse indirect effects on the setting of the CNL, as well as the overarching management strategy objectives set out in Chapter 4.

Landscape Strategy

Landscape Management

- Design any increase of woodland cover to protect key views and complement new grassland connections in line with the aims of the Forest of Avon's Tree and Woodland Strategy
- Implement key woodland linkages, including from the Kendleshire Golf Course (in LCA 13: Frome Valley) through the 'Westerleigh Gap' in the north of the LCA, and between Overscourt Wood, Warmley Forest Park and the Shortwood Landfill site in the centre of the LCA, whilst protecting key views and priority habitats, in line with the aims of the Forest of Avon's Tree and Woodland Strategy [See reference 3].
- Strengthen the green open character of the hillsides, ridges and skyline that form an important part of the rural setting of the urban area and proposed new development areas.

- Encourage and support the management, restoration, and enhancement of the relic industrial landscape of this area including the structures and tramways associated with the coal mining industry at Parkfield North, Brandy Bottom (Parkfield South) and Ram Hill Collieries, and the locally listed Webbs Heath Drift Mine.

Ecology/Biodiversity Management

- Protect and improve the riparian habitat of the Siston Brook, Folly Brook and Warmley Brook and seek opportunities to naturalise sections currently impacted by engineering structures (except heritage features).
- Enhance, extend, and manage neutral, calcareous, acidic, and marshy grasslands of ecological importance, including the network of common land (including Siston, Bridgegate and Webbs Heath and Rodway Commons).
- Protect and manage the commons, Warmley Forest Park, and Overscourt Wood and Community Forest from recreational pressures likely to damage their habitat value.
- Ensure the conservation and enhancement of the habitats within this LCA and ensure their continued connectivity via hedgerows, broadleaf tree cover and water courses.
- Seek to avoid the introduction of fencing in rural areas due to its landscape impact and lack of biodiversity value, in favour of native hedgerow planting or stone walls that are in keeping with the local architectural vernacular.

Development Management

- Carefully consider issues such as layout, massing, colour, and texture to ensure high quality views are maintained from surrounding elevated vantage points.
- Avoid development which may diminish or detract from the landform and skyline of the Oldland Ridge and Pucklechurch Ridge.
- Ensure that the character and biodiversity value of the remaining rural landscapes in this LCA is reinforced, and that any new development is sensitively designed and landscaped to achieve this, including careful

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consideration of details such as lighting to ensure that wildlife is not disturbed.

- Preserve and enhance the landscape setting of Siston Conservation Area, together with key views towards and from it. Ensure that new development does not harm the character, significance or setting of the formal grounds, former parkland, fields, and woodlands associated with Siston Court.
- Encourage and support the repair and retention of natural stone walls and other traditional features such as historic stiles, pennant stone kerbing and copper slag coping stones.

LCA 13: Frome Valley

The Frome Valley landscape character area (LCA) is a diverse, enclosed valley, characterised by an intricate combination of agriculture and settlement, divided by major roads.

Photo 1: View south towards the Huckford Viaduct crossing the River Frome to the east of Winterbourne.



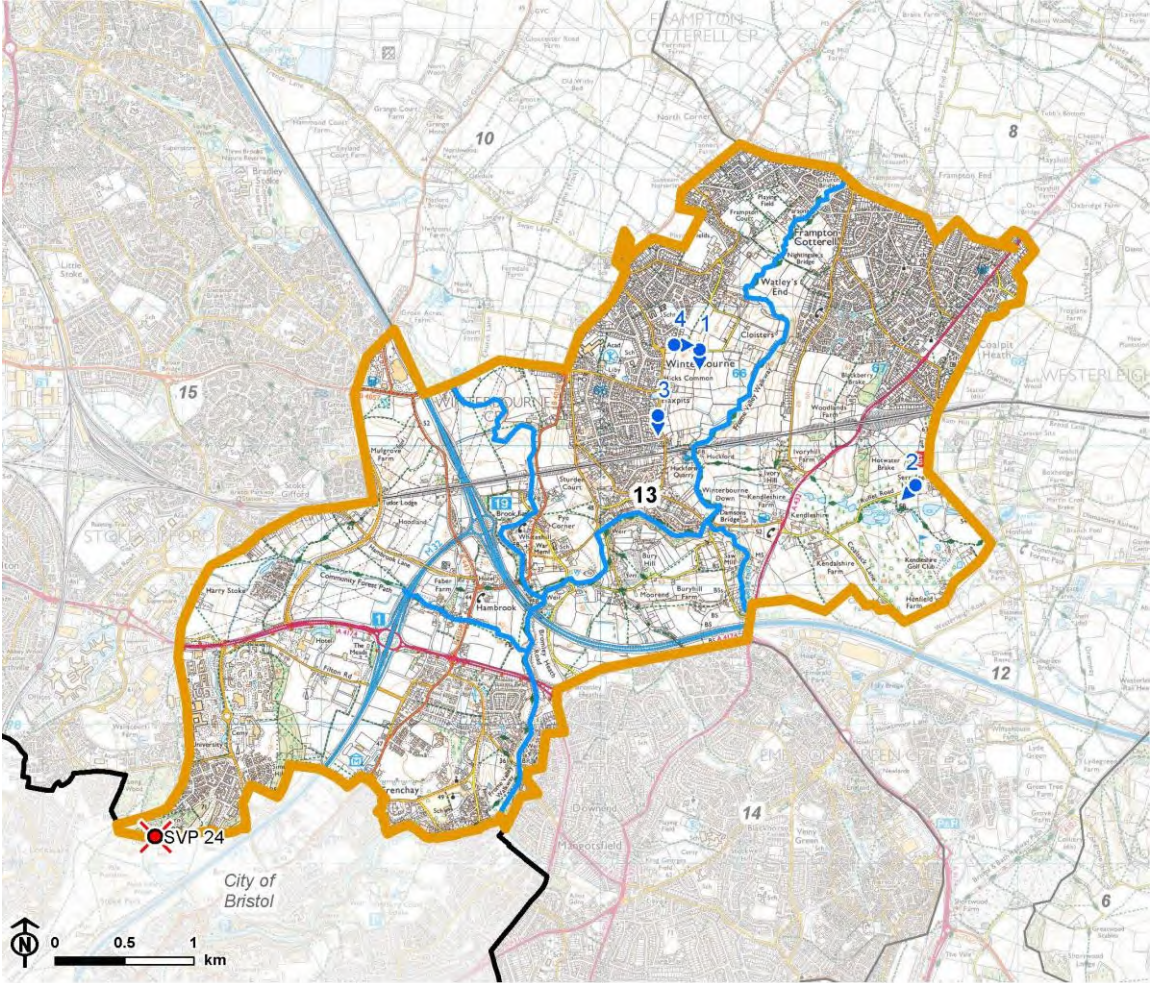
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Location

The Frome Valley LCA is located centrally on the south-western boundary of South Gloucestershire. The LCA boundary is defined to the north-west, north, and north-east by the settlement edge of Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath. The eastern boundary encloses the edge of the Kendleshire Golf Course. The southern boundary follows the South Gloucestershire/Bristol City administrative boundary around Frenchay. The western boundary follows the approximate crown of a broad ridgeline through Stoke Park and the urban edges of Harry Stoke and Stoke Gifford.


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Figure 6.5: Location and Landscape context of LCA 13: Frome Valley



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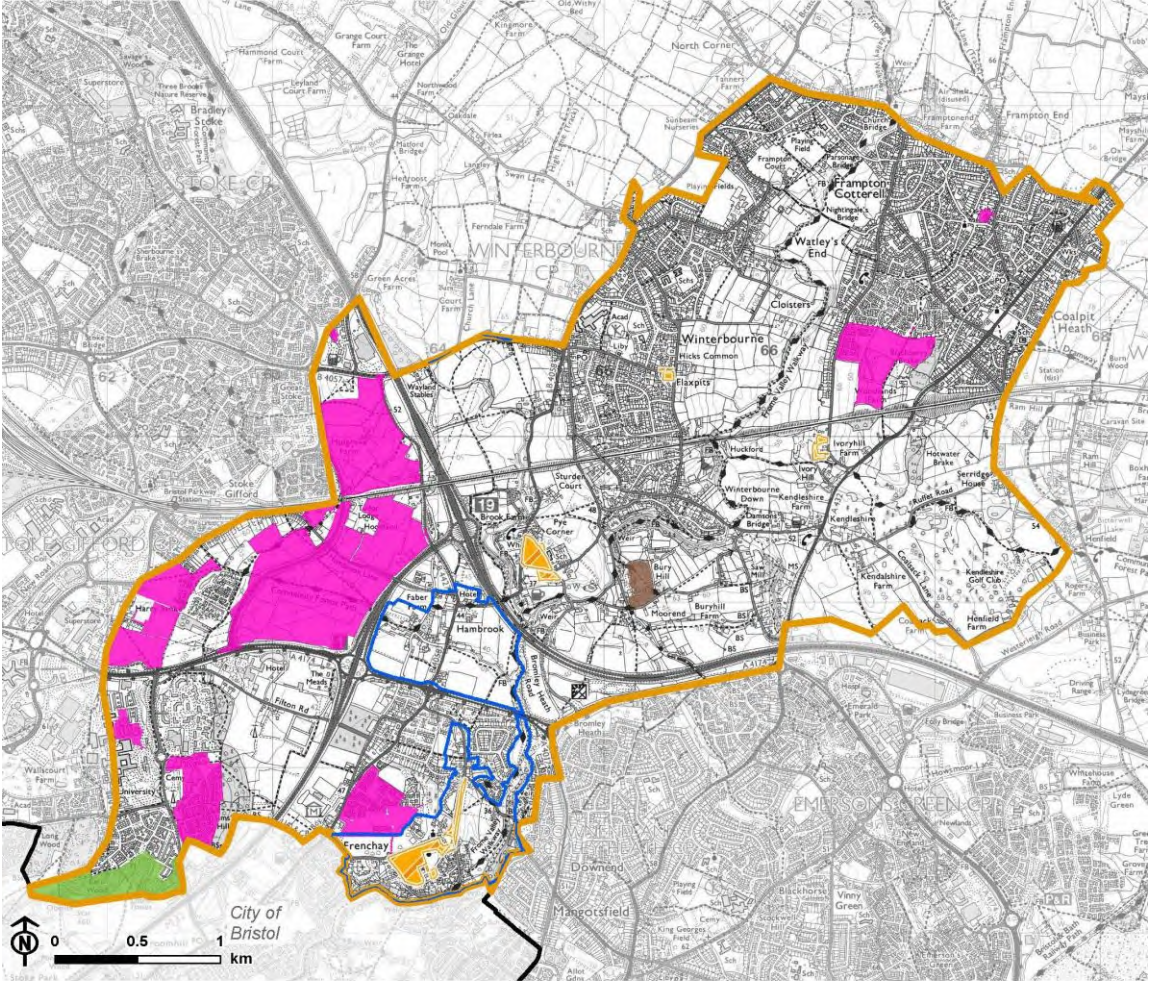
-  LCA 13: Frome Valley
-  Neighbouring LCA
-  Council boundary
-  River
-  Photograph location and direction

 Strategic viewpoint and angle



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Figure 6.6: Development and Heritage context of LCA 13: Frome Valley

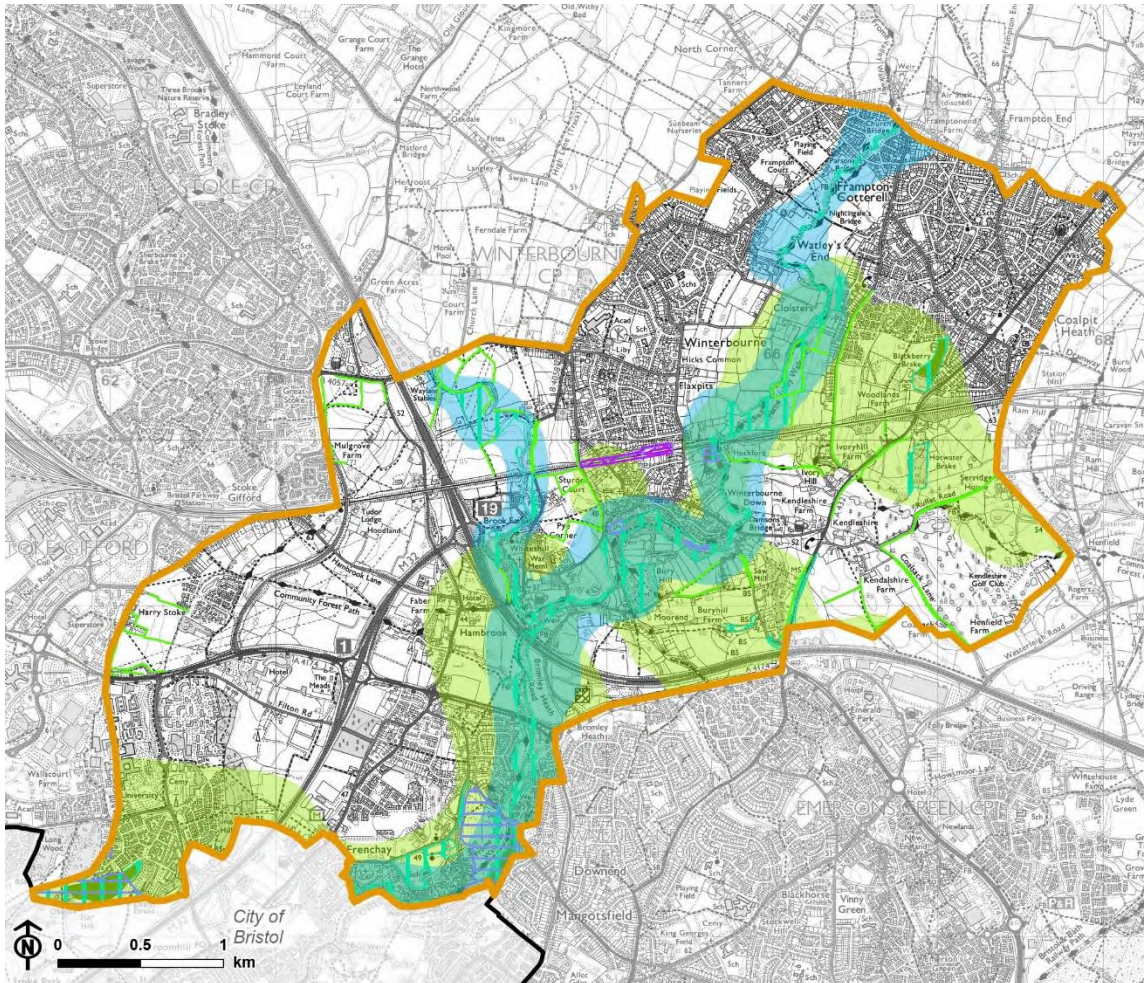


- LCA 13: Frome Valley
- Council boundary
- CRoW Common Land
- CRoW Open Access Land
- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Recent development (since 2014)













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Figure 6.7: Ecology and Biodiversity context of LCA 13: Frome Valley



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- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  LCA 13: Frome Valley |  Local Nature Reserve |
|  Council boundary |  Wetland Strategic Network |
|  Site of Special Scientific Interest |  Woodland Strategic Network |
|  Site of Nature Conservation Interest |  Important hedgerow |
|  Ancient woodland | |
|  Regionally Important Geological Site | |



Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Undulating landform is defined by the shallow valleys of the River Frome and Bradley Brook / Folly Brook tributaries. The River Frome follows a meandering incised course, through small gorges adjacent to Bury Hill and Frenchay.
- The landscape is contained and influenced by settlements, the urban edge of Bristol and a dense network of roads and railways.
- The smaller-scale and enclosed character of the River Frome valley contributes to a sense of localised tranquillity and rurality.
- Rural areas comprise a mix of medium sized pasture and arable fields, with some limited common land. Fields are bound by hedges and post and wire fencing, with Pennant stone walls near settlements.
- Land use along the settlement edge is more mixed, with paddocks, plant nurseries, recreation grounds and storage compounds. One golf course lies in the east.
- Areas of neutral and acidic grassland supports a diverse range of flora and include areas of ecologically valuable species rich grassland.
- Dense riparian shrub vegetation and linear woodland runs along the River Frome Valley.
- Woodland is associated with Stoke Park, Sims' Hill, Bury Hill, and the Frome Valley, and retained along some settlement edges. Scattered smaller areas are also associated with the Bradley Brook and former small-scale quarry sites.
- The settlement pattern is related to the historic layout and expansion of former village centres. Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath form a horseshoe shape surrounding a rural landscape.
- Hamlets, farms, and residential properties are scattered across the wider rural landscape.
- Distinct historic features include Bury Hill Fort (Scheduled Monument), Stoke Park (Registered Park and Garden), Hambrook and Frenchay

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Conservation Areas. A number of railway viaducts form prominent landmarks.

- The concentration of road infrastructure, the M32/M4 corridors and railway embankments has a localised influence on the landscape. Pylon towers and powerlines influence the landscape in the south-west.

Natural Influences

Geology, Landform and Hydrology

The underlying geology is diverse, varying from a mix of alluvium and sandstone to the west, leading into a mix of Coal Measures and shale to the east. Soils are generally Brown Earth Loam.

The geology, in conjunction with the drainage pattern of the River Frome, Bradley Brook and Folly Brook, has produced largely distinct, simple valley landforms of gentle vale, broad but shallow 'V'-shaped valleys, with some smaller areas of more complex and irregular, steep sided valleys and undulating landform. Topography generally varies between 30 metres in the valleys to 60 - 70 metres AOD on the ridges, reaching 75 metres AOD at Sims' Hill and 80 metres AOD at the southern end of the ridge at Winterbourne. A railway cutting at Winterbourne includes a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The landform has been most significantly shaped by the River Frome, which flows southwards through Frampton Cotterell, Winterbourne Down and Frenchay. Its upper reaches form an asymmetric and sometimes irregular, broad but shallow 'V'-shaped valley, the river flowing within a sinuous channel and meandering around a low hill at Cloisters, creating a scarp slope to the east of the river. The valley slopes rise to a small, rounded ridgeline to the east (beyond which lies a parallel dry valley) and to a broader, flatter, and higher ridge to the west, occupied by Winterbourne. An area of grade 1 and 2 (categorised as best and most versatile) agricultural land is located along the M32 corridor and the Bradley Brook Valley.

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Further south, the river is contained within a small narrow gorge and the steep sided slopes of Bury Hill. The river again passes through a small, incised valley and gorge through Frenchay, before flowing south-west, beyond this LCA, through Bristol and into the River Avon. A number of tributaries join the River Frome from different directions, the most notable being the Bradley Brook to the west and the Folly Brook to the east.

The Bradley Brook follows an irregular meandering course southwards from the adjoining LCA 10: Earthcott Vale, before forming a small, incised valley in the area of Whiteshill, before joining the River Frome. The Folly Brook follows a relatively irregular course, passing west from the adjoining LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge before crossing north to join the River Frome near Damsons Bridge.

The western area of the LCA comprises part of a larger vale which runs north-south, contained by broad low-lying ridges, occupied by Winterbourne and Mangotsfield to the east and Harry Stoke and Stoke Gifford to the west. The continuation of this ridge along the south-western boundary forms a scarp slope within Stoke Park and Sims' Hill, continuing southwards beyond this character area.

Land Cover

The land cover of this LCA is a diverse mix of rural uses, contained and variously influenced by settlement areas, urban edge, roads, and railway.

To the north, the land within the River Frome valley is contained on three sides by settlement. It consists of rolling pasture of small to medium sized and regular shaped fields and enclosed common at Hicks Common. A small area of woodland (Rockwell Wood) covers the steep scarp slope above the River Frome, opposite Cloisters. Fields are divided by a mix of clipped, intermittent, and overgrown hedges.

The dense settlement pattern of Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath in the north of the LCA includes a mix of public open spaces, school grounds, playing fields and broad verges/village greens. These punctuate the

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settlement edge or are integrated within the settlement fabric. There are frequent mature deciduous trees within hedgerows and along settlement boundaries. Post and wire and timber fencing is also present, particularly on the upper slopes close to the settlement edge. Pennant sandstone walls are common, associated with the settlement edge and roads.

Further south, tree and woodland cover generally increases, associated with the Frome Valley and dry valley to the east; a number of small disused and overgrown quarries along the Frome Valley between Winterbourne and Frenchay; along the Bradley Brook valley; the M4 and M32 verges and embankments; and the high South Wales to London railway embankments. In this area, the River Frome is contained by a narrow corridor of dense riparian shrub vegetation and occasional trees, with linear woodland associated with the gorges near Bury Hill and Frenchay and elsewhere along steep riverbanks.

South of Winterbourne, the upper slopes of Bury Hill are heavily wooded, with a mix of mature deciduous trees and Scots pine. This is combined with overgrown hedges and Pennant stone walls, often in a state of disrepair. On the lower slopes towards the M4, the medium sized, sometimes irregular shaped, pastoral fields and areas of rough grassland include fenced field boundaries, with some stone walls, hedges, and fewer trees. To the east lie small fields and a tree lined stream course within a small, tight valley section of the Folly Brook.

The Kendleshire Golf Course is located in the east of the LCA. The golf course retains some lengths of the former agricultural hedgerows and tree structure amongst extensive ground remodelling and earthworks to form fairways and greens. The north-western extension to the golf course comprises ground modelling and open grassland with native tree and shrub planting.

A section of the Bradley Brook valley lies to the west and below Winterbourne. The surrounding fields are predominantly in pastoral use and vary in size. They are defined partly by overgrown, intermittent hedgerows, some containing dead elm, with some trees and scrub along the course of the brook and timber fences around some paddocks. Fields become more irregular where they abut the meandering Bradley Brook. Sections of linear woodland line the incised valley of the Bradley Brook further southwards, in the area of Whiteshill, and also follow the railway and M4 embankments. To the west of Winterbourne Down,

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along the northeast side of the M4, an area of land raising is gradually being absorbed within woodland cover.

In the centre of the LCA, a village green at Whiteshill, used as a cricket pitch, is edged by roads and mature trees, and is partly contained by stone walls and some scattered buildings and cottages. A regular, medium to small sized field pattern is associated with the village of Hambrook, divided by Pennant stone walls, hedgerows, hedgebanks and mature trees, remnant orchards and small fragmented pasture and paddocks. To the east of Bromley Heath lies a narrow strip of rough grassland and paddocks. Former field boundaries have largely disappeared, with containment now provided by roadside tree planting.

Within the M32 corridor in the south of the LCA, the broad vale is defined by the urban edge of Harry Stoke and Stoke Gifford to the west, the M4 to the north and Frenchay to the east. It is characterised by a mix of medium sized, regular fields of pasture and arable land, though there is an increasing influence of settlement in this area. Fields are divided by a mix of clipped or overgrown hedges, some containing hedgerow trees, including some dead elms and fences. Nearer to the urban edges lie plant nurseries, a caravan storage area, and a recreation area. The boundaries of these non-agricultural sites are variously formed by overgrown hedgerows, conifer hedges, or timber fences. Pennant sandstone walls follow lanes which extend into this area from Hambrook and Frenchay.

To the south-west, woodland, scrub, and unimproved grassland cover Sims' Hill. Adjacent parkland within Stoke Park, a listed historic park, comprises large areas of woodland on the ridgeline, with open grassland covering steep rolling slopes. The park partly lies within this LCA extending south-westwards into the Bristol authority area. The built area of Frenchay includes a variety of open spaces, with the wooded Frome Valley connecting to parkland pasture, commons, and village greens. These spaces are contained within a framework of groups of mature ornamental trees, both deciduous and coniferous specimens and numerous stone cottages and large houses.

Horse paddocks are scattered throughout the LCA, and are often associated with the edge of settlements, or in close proximity, accessed by the many roads which cross the landscape.

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Photo 2: View south-west across horse paddocks near Coalpit Heath, with the landscaped grounds of Kendleshire Golf Course behind.



Biodiversity

Although containing significant built-up areas, the Frome Valley LCA includes a valuable and diverse mosaic of grassland, woodland, and farmland, with a number of watercourses and ponds connected by wildlife corridors, including hedgerows and stone walls, providing important habitat for a diverse range of species.

Approximately 9 hectares of ancient woodland is found within three small woodlands and comprises one third of the total wooded cover within this area. Several woodland sites are designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). Key species likely to be associated with the broadleaved woodland include bats and dormice, both of which are present across the wider area and are UK priority species with associated Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP).

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There are 5 SNCIs designated for grassland (neutral and acidic) including areas of species- rich grassland which supports a range of invertebrates, and ant hills are a regular feature. These invertebrates provide a food source for mammals including bats.

There are a number of watercourses and their tributaries draining the Frome Valley, some of which are designated as SNCI. These watercourses will support a diverse range of species from aquatic macro-invertebrates to fish and water voles. Ponds and pools within the area will support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species).

There appears to be good connectivity for species between the wooded areas and other habitats via hedgerows and scattered trees. However, the area is dissected by two motorways and a railway which may form a barrier to the commuting/foraging/habitat availability of these species.

Agricultural land use within this area is a patchwork of arable and pastoral farmland, the arable farmland in particular provides habitat for many species of ground nesting farmland birds including some that are listed as Globally Threatened Red species. The winter stubble in these areas also provides a foraging resource.

There is a history of quarrying in this area. Underground quarries and mines provide an ideal habitat for many species of bat including European Protected Species.

Stone walls are a feature associated with the older settlements within this LCA and many of them are in disrepair. This feature may be utilised by a diverse range of species from invertebrates to reptiles and amphibians for commuting, foraging and as a refuge.

There is a golf course within the Frome Valley; such use can provide a mosaic of habitats which can be utilised by a diverse range of species. Also, residential gardens and amenity spaces within the developed areas can also provide valuable ecological habitat.

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The Strategic Blue Infrastructure Corridor C: Winterbourne-Kendleshire-Yate (*River Frome Corridor*) crosses much of the LCA, broadly following the River Frome, Bradley Brook, and Folly Brook. The Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridor D: Wickwar-Westerleigh-Bitton (*Westerleigh Vale/Oldland Ridge/East Fringe*) is located in the east of the LCA.

Cultural Influences

Land Use and Time Depth

The historic village of Hambrook is located in the south of the LCA. The historic importance of its 18th and 19th century Pennant stone cottages, farmsteads, large houses, church, and village green, clustered at a junction of lanes extending outwards in a linear pattern, is recognised through designation as a Conservation Area. Stone boundary walls extend along some lanes and there is an old packhorse bridge across the Frome to the east of Hambrook.

The Frenchay Conservation Area is also located in the south of the LCA. The phases of historic development were influenced first by the 18th century milling industry, with stone cottages and buildings adjacent to the River Frome. Large houses, stately homes, manors, and churches sympathetically relate to open common land and contain smaller green spaces. The sometimes irregular pattern of winding lanes and alley ways descend into the Frome Valley. Buildings are constructed from a range of Pennant stone, limestone, brick, and render, with stone boundary walls lining some lanes. The Conservation Area extends within Frenchay Park, to include playing fields and open space along the park's southern and eastern boundary.

The Bury Hill Fort (Scheduled Monument) is located on the broad hilltop, above steep slopes of the River Frome south of Winterbourne and comprises earth ramparts. Though the western boundary has been damaged by quarrying, the earth ramparts remain a distinct feature locally.

Woodland within the Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden extends into the south of the LCA and influences the historic character of the landscape locally.

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Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath have a range of small-scale coal mining features spanning several centuries.

Settlement and Infrastructure

In the north of the LCA, Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath form a distinct horseshoe shaped area of settlement. These settlements are located on raised ground, partly enclosing the River Frome valley in this location. These historic villages developed from a series of farms located along the pattern of lanes. A small-scale, tight pattern of Pennant stone cottages and large houses developed in the 18th and 19th century to house workers in the local coal mines, hat making industry and associated with the agricultural economy. These cottages edge the typically winding pattern of small lanes. Victorian and later 20th century development introduced brick buildings and infill development, resulting in the coalescence of the three villages. There have been two areas of more recent infill development which have impinged on the horseshoe settlement pattern, extending into the adjoining rural landscape. There has also been some infilling on the edge of Winterbourne Down, making the settlement more prominent in wider views.

A few scattered farms and buildings occur within the Frome Valley, adjacent valley to the east, the Bradley Brook valley and land north of the M4. Elsewhere, farm buildings are generally associated with hamlets and villages, or have been absorbed within the edge of the urban area.

Pennant sandstone is used throughout the LCA for walls, bridges, and buildings. Imported limestone and Old Red sandstone are also common.

In the south-east of the LCA, Hambrook village includes a mix of residential properties clustered at a junction of lanes extending outward in a linear pattern. The M32, M4 and River Frome surround the village. Frenchay village comprises a diverse pattern of settlement and open space. The redevelopment of the Frenchay Hospital site has changed the settlement pattern in this area and introduced some further open space into the otherwise dense settlement pattern. North of the hospital site, Frenchay also contains 20th century residential development of housing, flats, and bungalows. This settlement partially defines the urban edge.

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In the centre of the LCA, north of the M4, the settlements near Bury Hill such as Whiteshill, Pye Corner Moorend and Kendleshire, largely consist of older stone and render cottages and houses, clustered at road junctions or form scattered linear development, along the complex network of minor roads and lanes.

In the south-west of the LCA, a number of relatively new and active development sites are located within the M32 corridor, which is extending the urban edge of Stoke Gifford and Harry Stoke into this previously agricultural landscape. The adjacent urban edge to the west forms an irregular edge and in places extends over the skyline, onto the upper slopes within this area. The variety of development along this boundary includes, from south to north, the stately Dower House in Stoke Park, the large institutional building complex of the University of the West of England (UWE), relatively recent residential development west of Sims Hill Community Woodland, the Bristol Business Park, hotel, and grounds.

A number of public footpaths cross the area, including the Frome Valley Walkway and Community Forest Path, both promoted recreational routes, which connect the urban area of Bristol to the wider landscape to the north and west. The Frome Valley Walkway closely follows the course of the River Frome through this area, from Bristol in the south to the wider landscape to the north. The Hatters Trails around Frampton Cotterell and Watley's End link a range of buildings and features associated with the 300-year hatting trade that formed an important part of the local economy from the late 1500's onwards. The Community Forest Path passes from east to west in the south of the LCA.

Four brick railway viaducts are highly prominent, distinctive landmarks crossing the River Frome and Bradley Brook valleys and roads from east to west. The M4 is crossed by a more recent metal railway bridge.

Numerous roads cross the LCA and variously define settlement or divide the landscape and influence settlement pattern. The M4 and M32 with associated junctions, slip roads and overbridges largely include road sections at grade or on embankment. Part of the M32/M4 junction and M32 approach is in cutting. The M4 crosses over several country lanes and the River Frome and is itself crossed by the South Wales to London railway. The railway generally crosses the area on high embankments or viaducts and is only in cutting through the

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ridge on which Winterbourne lies. The A432, A4174, B4058, B4427 and numerous minor roads and lanes pass through the area largely at grade.

Three overhead powerlines follow a tight corridor to the west, crossing the Bradley Brook valley, the M4, through part of the M32 corridor and then rising towards Harry Stoke and beyond. An existing solar farm is located between the ring road and M4 in the east of the LCA.

Photo 3: Views south along Hicks Common Road to houses on the edge of Winterbourne.



Perceptual Influences

Visual Character

The Frome Valley LCA is a diverse and intricate area. The concentrations of major settlement and smaller settlement pattern are contained within a rural framework of varying scale and character. The LCA is defined in part to the

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south by the urban edge of Bristol. A dense network of road and rail infrastructure cross and segment the area. The combination of the undulating landform, plus the varied and textured vegetation structure help to integrate some of the settlement edges, urban edge, and roads within the wider landscape.

Despite the extensive areas of settlement and urban edges, there are areas of the landscape and pockets within settlements which largely retain, a rural character. To the north, both the Frome Valley and dry valley to the east, comprise an undulating rural valley landscape which is visually contained by adjacent ridgelines, the 'horseshoe' shaped pattern of Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath and the railway embankment to the south. The rolling pasture, intermittent thick hedgerow structure, mature trees and occasional areas of woodland provide local visual enclosure. The visual balance of landform and vegetation creates a strong rural character and a degree of tranquillity which contrasts strongly with the surrounding settlement. The numerous internal views possible from more elevated locations and from the settlement edges of Winterbourne and parts of Frampton Cotterell are a particular characteristic of this locality. The more limited presence of hedgerows (largely replaced by timber / wire fences, in some places associated with paddocks) along the upper slopes of the Frome Valley, increases the prominence of the settlement edges of Winterbourne and Frampton Cotterell locally within this valley.

On the northern edge of Frampton Cotterell, St Peter's Church forms a local landmark adjacent to the River Frome within the adjoining LCA 8: Yate Vale. It forms a focal point along the road corridor, from which outward views are available looking across roadside greens and breaks within the scattered roadside development.

At Flaxpits, on the eastern edge of Winterbourne, the large duck pond is partially contained by prominent tall Pennant stone walls, mature roadside trees to the north and a large period house to the east. With views overlooking the Frome Valley, this area has a distinct rural character.

To the south-west of Winterbourne, the village green at Whiteshill forms a distinct and unenclosed area of grassland with mature trees and forms a focal point at the junction of several local minor roads.

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Within Coalpit Heath, the churchyard of St Saviour's Church, with mature trees, stone wall boundary and adjacent school playing fields, form a distinctive open area along the otherwise enclosed, linear built character of the A432.

The railway viaducts are distinctive, large-scale local landmarks, prominent within the Frome and Bradley Brook valleys. The viaduct across the Frome Valley both emphasises and complements the valley form viewed from the north and south, whilst greatly limiting views into and beyond this area. The railway embankments are also large-scale features, physically cutting across the Frome and Bradley Brook valleys and blocking views along them. The removal of much of the former strong woodland cover on these slopes in the east of the LCA has substantially increased their prominence in and influence on the wider landscape, as have the gantries introduced for the electrification of the London to South Wales railway line.

In the centre of the LCA, the tree and woodland cover creates an enclosed and secluded landscape. Around Bury Hill Camp and to the south and westwards towards Hambrook, the combination of diverse landform, woodland, and complex mix of small settlements, creates a distinctive, small-scale and intimate landscape that helps to reduce the impact of the motorway infrastructure. The historic hilltop location forms a prominent feature in the locality and offers extensive views south through mature woodland, over fields, woodland, and copses towards Bristol. Stone walling and Scots pine are distinctive features over parts of the lower slopes of the hill, although the area also has wire fence boundaries and is generally less enclosed by trees.

To the east of the A432, the extended Kendleshire Golf Course has introduced a different landscape structure, compared to the adjacent agricultural landscape. A more open landscape of mown fairways, low mounding, remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees and young planting is evident within local views including from the A432 and occasionally elsewhere.

The agricultural field pattern in the centre of the LCA has been overlain and bisected by the contrasting character of the M4, M32 and railway network. A number of substantial embankments, overbridges and road junctions physically divide and visually contain/ segment some areas, particularly to the west and north of Hambrook. Road and rail overbridges have also generally increased the visibility of traffic and range of audible impact upon the landscape. These

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vantages can also be significant in permitting views across the landscape of this area. Within these views, the pylon towers are a prominent feature in the west of the LCA. The existing solar farm in the east of the LCA is relatively well-integrated by the retained landscape framework of hedgerows and woodland along the M4.

The influence of settlement and infrastructure is evident across much of the south-west of the LCA. The dense settlement edge encloses the area and rooflines of residential and commercial buildings are prominent. More recent settlement expansion in this area is evident, at times extending onto lower ridgeline slopes with limited integration into the wider rural landscape framework. However, relatively recent residential development south of Filton Cemetery is well-integrated by Sims' Hill Community Woodland to the east. Sims' Hill woodland, which forms part of the Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden located along the southern boundary of the LCA, is a distinctive and prominent landscape feature in views from the LCA and wider Bristol area.

Within the LCA as a whole, the older pattern of lanes and minor roads are largely well-integrated within hedgerows or Pennant stone walls (nearer older settlements) with 'cock and hen' coping, or where their alignment follows the natural landform and/or relates well to the agricultural field pattern.

In a number of locations across the LCA, the change in land use from agriculture has disrupted the vegetation framework, through changes in the management regime of hedgerows and/or the replacement of hedgerows and timber fences. This is particularly evident in relation to horse paddocks, but also occurs in relation to other non-agricultural land uses. The consequences of this have been the creation of a more open landscape character which in relation to horse paddocks has increased the visibility of stables, parked vehicles, open storage, jumps and other associated features.

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Photo 4: View east across the Frome Valley near Winterbourne, looking towards Coalpit Heath.



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Tranquillity and Dark Skies

The proximity of the urban edge of the Bristol conurbation, settlement at Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath, busy roads including the M4, M32, A432 and A4174 influence the sense of tranquillity within the LCA. A degree of tranquillity exists within the enclosed wooded valleys, away from the settlement edge.

The proximity of dense settlement and associated light pollution influences the experience of dark night skies throughout the LCA.

Visually Important Hillsides

The Bury Hill, River Frome and Sims' Hill Visually Important Hillsides (VIH) are located in this LCA. Key characteristics of each VIH include the following:

- Bury Hill VIH: a single steep-sided hill that forms an elevated landform above the River Frome, with the Bury Hill Camp scheduled monument located along its western margin. The steep sides and wooded nature of the top of the VIH contribute to the locally-prominent landscape feature formed by the VIH.
- River Frome VIH: a steep wooded western valley side that contributes to the setting of the River Frome and is associated with views towards and from Frenchay Conservation Area.
- Sims' Hill VIH: a distinctive short, narrow, wooded and steep scarp slope that contributes to the setting of the listed historic stately house, Dower House (Grade II*), and Stoke Park RPG (Grade II).

Further details are provided in **Annex I: Visually Important Hillsides**.

Strategic Viewpoints

One Strategic Viewpoint (SVP) is located along the southern boundary of this LCA within Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden (SVP 24). It allows an appreciation of the CNL and provides a panoramic view, though mainly focused

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to the south, east and west away from LCA 13 and towards the wider Stoke Park Estate, Dundry Hill and the Cotswold Scarp, and the landmark features of Dower House, Purdown BT Tower, clock tower at University of the West of England (UWE) Glenside Campus, Stapleton Holy Trinity Church, St Mary's Church and the clocktower of Cossham Hospital in Hillfields. The SVP is a designed viewpoint from a Registered Park and Garden.

Further details are provided in **Annex II: Strategic Viewpoints**.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Valued Features

- The intimate valleys of the River Frome, Bradley Brook, and Folly Brook, which contribute to sense of place and the experience of rural tranquillity.
- Areas of neutral and acidic grassland in the north of the LCA, which contribute to biodiversity and sense of place.
- Riparian vegetation and woodland along the River Frome, woodland at Stoke Park, Sims' Hill, Bury Hill, and areas of mature hedgerows, which are important landscape features and contribute to habitat connectivity.
- The flowing water and bankside vegetation of the River Frome, Bradley Brook and Folly Brook that provide habitat for a range of notable species and contributes to biodiversity, with some areas designated as SNCIs.
- The use of Pennant sandstone for walls, bridges, and buildings throughout the LCA, which contributes to sense of place.
- Heritage features which contribute to the time depth of the landscape including Bury Hill Fort, Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden and features associated with the area's history of mining.
- The historic villages of Hambrook and Frenchay, which are designated as Conservation Areas and contribute to time depth.
- The railway viaducts which cross the Frome and Bradley Brook valleys and provide prominent local landmarks.
- The green ridgelines that are free from development such as Stoke Park and Sims' Hill which provide a rural backdrop to adjacent settlements.
- The network of public rights of way and cycle paths, including the Frome Valley Walkway and Community Forest Path, that provide recreational opportunities across the landscape.

The Changing Landscape

The following section sets out the changes and pressures to the Frome Valley LCA.

Climate Change

- Climate change leading to increased temperatures and periods of drought resulting in a change in stream flows, altering the species composition of wetland habitats (ponds, flowing open water and bankside vegetation associated with SNCIs), particularly the River Frome, Bradley Brook, and Folly Brook.
- Climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of seasonal flooding in lower-lying valleys, particularly the River Frome Valley in the north of the LCA. Associated pressures to build flood management works that are unsympathetic to local landscape character and sensitive habitats.

Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery

- Pressure to expand existing solar farm development in the south-east of the LCA would likely result in further adverse and cumulative effects on landscape character and visual amenity.
- The vertical and linear nature of pylon corridors is prominent within local views. Pressure for further electricity infrastructure, associated with additional deployment of renewable energy, may lead to further visual influence, and may lead to the perception of a 'wirescape' in parts of the LCA.
- An increase in tree planting is required to contribute towards South Gloucestershire's objective of doubling tree cover by 2030, and in accordance with the proposed woodland strategic network which forms part of the West of England's Nature Recovery Network. This may include the establishment of new woodlands in a corridor between Coalpit Heath and the M32 as set out in the Forest of Avon's Tree and Woodland

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Strategy. This may change the open character of the landscape and its expansive views, most notably views towards the Cotswold Scarp.

Land Use and Cover

- Boundary hedgerows are often not actively managed as a result of land use changes. This influences the condition, integrity, appearance, and the degree of openness of the landscape framework in the locality.
- Stone wall boundaries around Hambrook and south of Winterbourne are in a variable state of repair, which will decline further without appropriate management. Buildings and structures within the non-agricultural land uses are often in a poor state of repair or unmaintained, and this area is also under pressure for recreational uses.
- The increased use of small lanes by commuter traffic, in places continues to cause the erosion of verges, banks, hedges and walls. The effects are often subtle but lead to an erosion in the condition of features which contribute to local character. An increase in traffic volumes or perceived need for highway improvement measures has the potential to introduce standard highway design solutions including kerbs, new signage, and materials. These could have a localised, but cumulative effect, eroding the existing landscape character.
- Recreational pressure for 'horsiculture' is evident, particularly within the Frome and Bradley Brook valleys adjacent to settlements, along the M32 corridor, between the M4, M32 and A4174 and adjacent to Hambrook. This change in land use is a recent trend, which in places has led to the loss or erosion of hedgerows or, in some instances, to the subdivision of fields. The cumulative effect of this and the associated infrastructure of stables, access tracks, exercise areas, jumps and floodlighting, can result in a marked change in landscape character and disturbance to wildlife.
- Loss of vegetation along the ring road to allow for infrastructure improvements has opened up views within the area and increased the prominence of traffic movement. Replacement planting along the ring road is beginning to contribute to the wider landscape structure.
- Embankment stabilisation works which cleared railway embankments of tree cover have significantly increased the prominence of the railway within the east of the LCA. Electrification of the London to South Wales

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railway line has added to the visual intrusion of the line from overhead gantries in the north of the LCA.

- A key characteristic of the LCA is its varied vegetation structure, which contributes to the integration of the diverse range of development and land use found within this area, as well as to the distinctive character of open spaces within settlements. As well as changes in management, a lack of replanting or replacement of hedgerows, trees, and woodland, will eventually result in a decline in the landscape framework which could, as a result, increase the visibility of the urban and settlement edges and other development within a rural context or erode the distinctive features which contribute to local character.
- Enhancement of woodland at Sims' Hill has extended the woodland cover on the slopes and contributes to the character, habitat value and structure of the landscape in the area as well as helping to absorb relatively new housing.

Development

- Recent development in the vicinity of Stoke Gifford and Harry Stoke has replaced the agricultural landscape with a new neighbourhood. This has resulted in a relatively exposed settlement edge between Filton Road and the main line railway, however as associated planting matures, this new settlement will become better integrated into the rural framework. Pressures for further development may lead to the loss of the rural setting of the M32 corridor.
- Pressures for non-agricultural land uses along the urban edge include the introduction of nurseries with accompanying polytunnels and buildings, the provision of sports facilities or recreation fields, horse paddocks and storage compounds accompanied by rough ground and buildings. These pressures for change can also affect the management or integrity of key features which contribute to local distinctiveness and habitat value of an area.
- Widening and other signage and improvement works to the motorways and the ring road are gradually squeezing or eliminating the planting that helps to screen these urbanising features from and integrate them into the

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wider landscape. This increases the visual prominence of the highways themselves, plus the traffic and associated infrastructure.

- The current pattern of and relationship between settlements or urban areas and their adjoining rural setting, which gives an area its distinctive character, is sensitive to change. The Frome Valley, dry valley to the east, Bradley Brook valley, river corridors and Bury Hill are sensitive to further encroachment of settlement edges or change, which might erode their distinctive pattern, rural character or their perception of relative remoteness and tranquillity.
- Scattered settlements such as Winterbourne Down, Whiteshill, Kendleshire, Moorend, Pye Corner and Hambrook are sensitive to incremental infill, or erosion of the vegetation framework and field pattern, which give them their local distinctiveness. This applies also to the settlement edges of Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath, which contain pockets of older buildings and development pattern, which have a distinctive character.
- Village greens, public open spaces, common land, and school grounds punctuate these areas of settlement, providing visual and recreational amenity and a physical break within the built environment. Loss of such spaces can have a significant impact on the character of and possibly the range of habitats available in such localities.
- The condition of landscape features within the visual setting and open spaces of Hambrook and Frenchay contribute greatly to their character. Such features would therefore be sensitive to change but are afforded a greater degree of protection as a result of their Conservation Area status. The edge of the Frenchay Conservation Area has been influenced by recent redevelopment of the hospital site.
- Green ridgelines, which remain intact at Stoke Park and Sims' Hill, and which are partly intact between Harry Stoke and Bradley Stoke, are sensitive to visual encroachment of the urban edge, particularly from large built forms and infill. These areas are especially visible from road corridors and from elevated hillsides. The effect of such encroachment is already visible in some areas, where their visual prominence affects the rural character of adjacent areas.

Guidance

These guidelines recommend how the landscape can be managed to ensure future change respects the local character and should be read in conjunction with the objectives of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Landscape Strategy and Guidelines [See reference 4], so as to avoid adverse indirect effects on the setting of the CNL, as well as the overarching management strategy objectives set out in Chapter 4.

Landscape Strategy

Landscape Management

- Protect and enhance the historic and mature landscape pattern in parts of the LCA, particularly near Frenchay, Stoke Park and areas of retained field pattern within the north and centre of the LCA.
- Secure the retention, restoration, and management of hedgerows to reinforce both local character and habitat value and connectivity.
- Protect the remains of the open landscape setting of Bury Hill Scheduled Monument.
- Preserve and enhance the landscape setting of Frenchay and Hambrook Conservation Areas, together with key views towards and from them.
- Protect the green open spaces and large gardens of Frenchay and views of its church as a landmark in the local landscape.
- Encourage the conservation and interpretation of the area's heritage of mining features, for example around Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath.
- Maintain the strength of the landscape framework associated with the motorways to ensure maximum buffering and screening to the adjacent Hambrook Conservation Area, Grade II listed Dower House and Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden.

- Encourage the retention of traditional features and use of materials such as stone walls, stiles, and Pennant stone.
- Protect remaining best and most versatile agricultural farmland, especially along the M32 corridor and the Bradley Brook Valley.

Ecology/Biodiversity Management

- Protect and improve the riparian habitat of the River Frome and Bradley Brook and seek opportunities to naturalise sections currently impacted by engineering structures (except heritage features), together with opportunities for enhance recreational access.
- Protect ponds and associated terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newts and support further habitat creation.
- Increase tree cover to meet South Gloucestershire 15% target, selecting locally indigenous species (e.g., the locally distinctive use of pine in the area to the south of Winterbourne).
- Active management and strengthening of the hedgerow framework, trees, and woodlands, including replacement and new planting, to help to ensure the conservation of these key features for the long term as well as diversity and connectivity of habitat.

Development Management

- Ensure that any new infill development conserves and enhances the particular and varying townscape and landscape patterns; for example, in Hambrook, Pye Corner, Moorend, Winterborne Down, and Whites Hill to preserve their distinctive character and setting at the edge of the Bristol conurbation.
- Maintain a green setting to the motorway corridors and seek to minimise the impact of improvement and/or new lighting and signage schemes.
- Protect, re-enforce, and extend trees and woodland along Simms Hill and the east facing slopes north to the M4 to break up the impact of new development in views from the north and east.

LCA 14: Kingswood

The Kingswood landscape character area (LCA) is a heavily built-up area of residential, commercial, and industrial uses and roads, interspersed with pockets of open space.

Photo 1: View south-west from Hanham Mount across the urban expanse of south Bristol towards Dundry Hill.



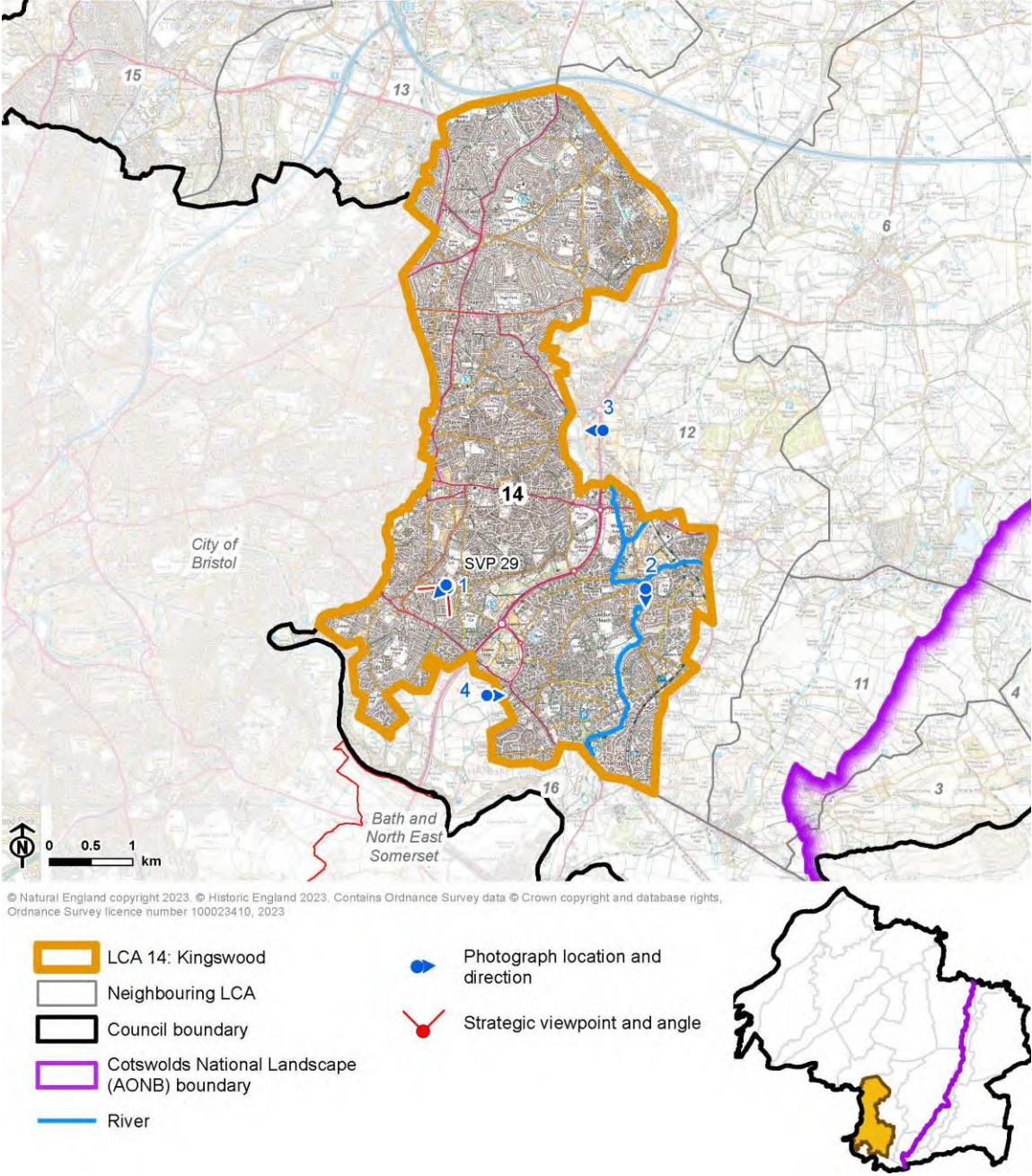
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Location

The Kingswood LCA is located in the south of South Gloucestershire and forms the eastern urban fringe of the Bristol conurbation. The northern boundary is defined by the A4174. The western boundary follows the South Gloucestershire/Bristol City administrative boundary. The southern boundary marks the limits of the urban area and the rural LCA 16: Avon Valley further south. The eastern boundary follows the well-defined edge of the urban area.

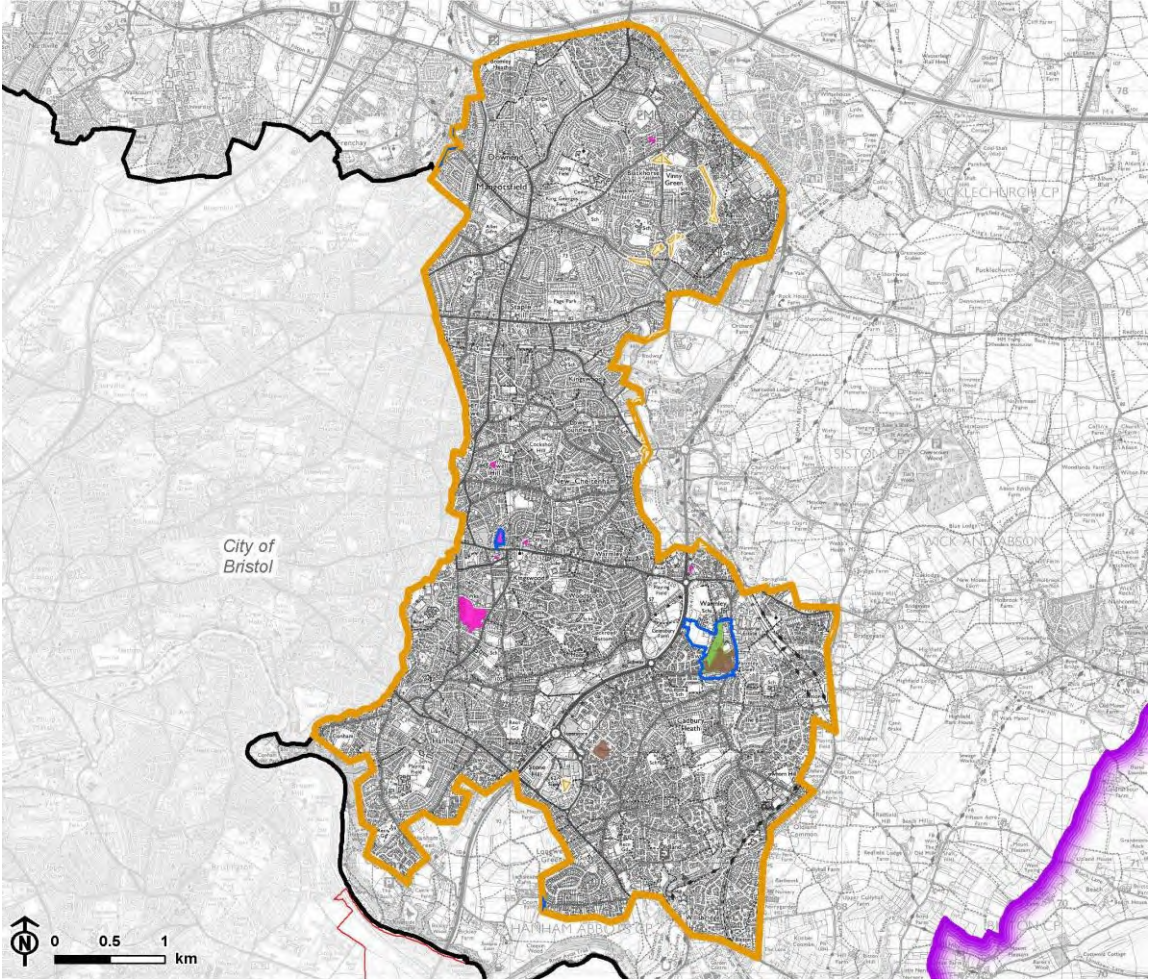
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Figure 6.8: Location and Landscape context of LCA 14: Kingswood



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Figure 6.9: Development and Heritage context of LCA 14: Kingswood



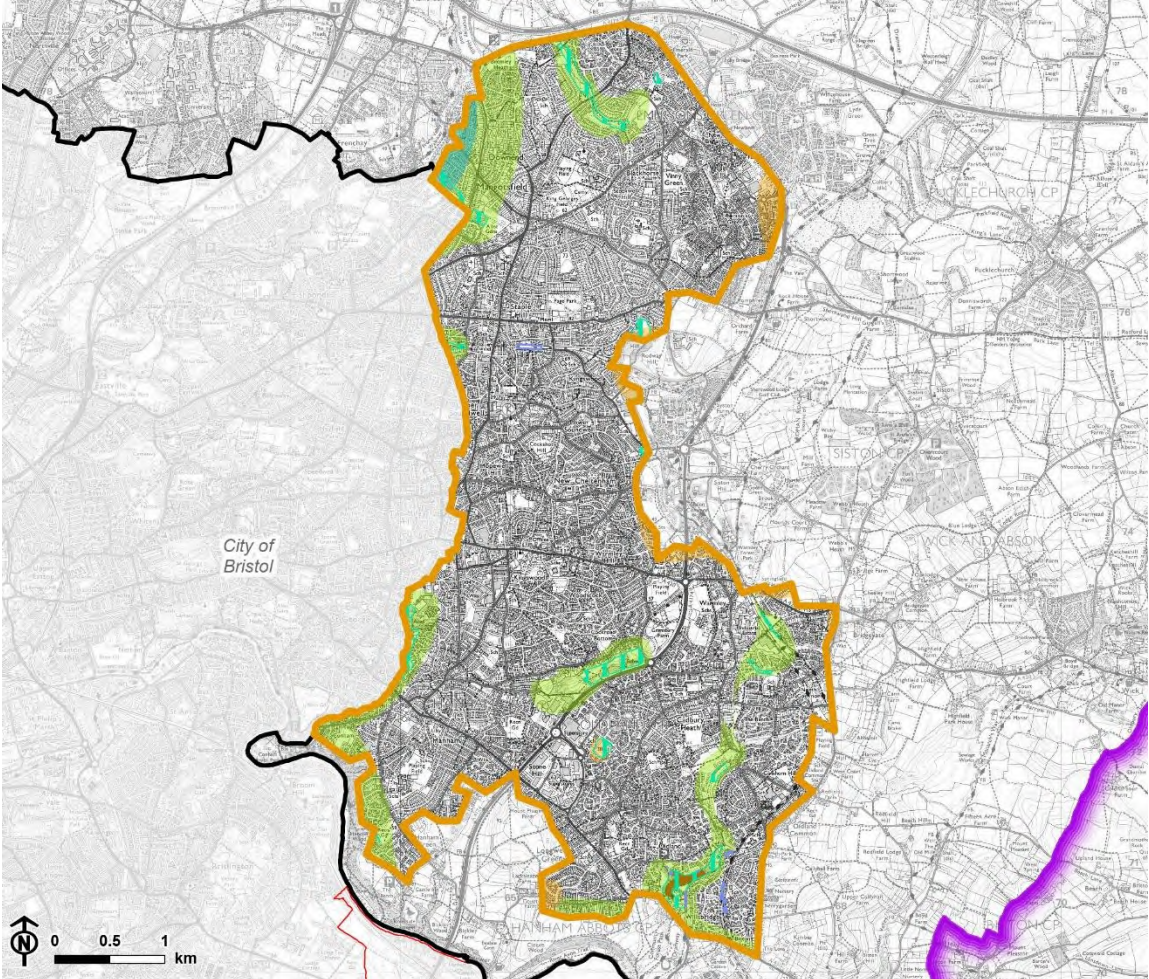
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- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  LCA 14: Kingswood |  Scheduled Monument |
|  Council boundary |  Conservation Area |
|  Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary |  Registered Parks and Gardens |
|  CRoW Common Land |  Recent development (since 2014) |
|  CRoW Open Access Land | |



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Figure 6.10: Ecology and Biodiversity context of LCA 14: Kingswood



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- LCA 14: Kingswood
- Council boundary
- Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest
- Regionally Important Geological Site
- Local Nature Reserve
- Grassland Strategic Network
- Wetland Strategic Network
- Woodland Strategic Network



Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Residential settlement dominates the area, developed around an historic core of roads and former industrial activity, surrounded by extensive late 19th and 20th century development.
- Former village settlements, with Pennant stone buildings and walls, industrial heritage features, churches, and chapels, form distinct features within the urban fabric.
- Large open spaces relate to steeper slopes, valley landforms and drainage systems, generally retaining an agricultural and semi-natural vegetation framework.
- Small formal parks and informal open spaces, including gardens, break up the urban fabric, provide setting and local identity.
- Frequent urban trees and some remnant orchards are scattered within the urban area.
- Extensive views to the east and south extend over the area towards adjacent prominent rural hills, ridges, and scarp.
- Relics of pre-urbanisation land use pattern and buildings exist, some associated with former coal/brass/pin/shoe industries, an historic estate or remnant agricultural field patterns.

Natural Influences

Geology, Landform and Hydrology

The underlying geology largely consists of Coal Measures, Pennant sandstone and shales, overlain with alluvium. In association with the drainage pattern, this creates a gently sloping and undulating landform between approximately 50 to 115 metres AOD, with some steeper slopes.

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The landform comprises a ridge of hills running approximately north/south. A few small valley features cut into and are perpendicular to the ridge, forming hilltops on which Kingswood and Staple Hill are located. A steep slope falls from the southern end of Kingswood at Mount Hill, towards the A4174 and forms a slight scarp running from Warmley, south-westwards to Hanham.

Further south, the Hanham Hills rise beyond the urban edge of Longwell Green and the LCA boundary. To the north-east lies a broad shallow bowl occupied by Cadbury Heath, contained to the east by the Oldland Ridge beyond the LCA's boundary.

Siston Brook cuts through the east of the LCA, fed by Warmley Brook and one tributary. Siston Brook flows south to the River Avon, within a green corridor contained by dense residential development. The brook is channelled through Warmley, then follows its natural, tightly meandering course, before following a small steep sided river valley, with a narrow floodplain corridor at Oldland Bottom to the south.

Also flowing into the River Avon is the Stroud Brook, which flows southwards along a small valley feature (forming part of the south-western boundary of this area, shared with Bristol). The upper valley includes Magpie Bottom (a village green), and the valley as a whole is hemmed in by residential development. The brook discharges into the River Avon at Conham Wharf.

The Leap Valley to the north forms a very shallow depression, with a small stream course draining north beyond this area to the River Frome. The stream follows a green corridor of varying width, contained by housing.

Land Cover

The majority of this LCA is dominated by settlement. A variety of green spaces and vegetation cover break up and punctuate the area. The largest open spaces are associated with steep, natural landform and valleys, which bisect or physically separate the urban area. Small pockets of open space created by parks, school grounds, linear roadside spaces, some remnant common land and some allotments are scattered within the area. Churchyards form numerous

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green spaces within the area, typically comprising grassland around the gravestones and edged by mature trees.

New parks and informal open spaces are associated with recent residential development. Landscape infrastructure planting occurs along the A4174 and the shopping centre at Longwell Green. Private gardens to houses vary in size, have a variety of vegetation, but can have mature trees which contribute to the streetscape. Remnants of orchards are often found adjacent to older cottages and former farmhouses.

The linear corridor below Mount Hill, along the A4174 to the west of Warmley, physically bisects the urban area, comprising steep slopes and rough grassland of former agricultural fields, divided by overgrown hedgerows.

Siston and Warmley Brook flow within green corridors, often including informal linear parks, riparian vegetation of trees and scrub with rough grassland, or abutting a small golf course above Siston Brook at Cadbury Heath. The Siston Valley at Oldland Bottom to the south, physically separates the urban fabric, comprising a steep sided wooded valley.

The Leap Valley in the north of the LCA forms a linear corridor of grassland, with a varied framework of overgrown and intermittent former hedgerows and scattered mature tree cover, contained by a dense residential fringe.

Within Downend there is a concentration of open spaces and vegetation at Cleeve Hill, comprising mature woodland adjacent to allotments, tennis courts and large residential gardens.

Just to the north, along the A4174 (Bromley Heath Road) lies a broad asymmetric green corridor of mown grass, ornamental trees, and shrub beds. Along the northern boundary, adjacent to the A4174 (Avon Ring Road) and contained by the residential edge of Bromley Heath, lies a linear area of open space comprising sports pitches, rough grassland, scrub, and trees.

Page Park and Kingswood Park are formally laid out parks with walled and railing boundaries, ornate gateways, tennis courts, mown lawns, pathways, ornamental planting, and mature trees. Hill House Park is an area of public

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open space that was formerly a playing field associated with Down End Lower school. The recent village parks within Emerson's Green typically comprise linear and irregular informal open spaces of grassland and tree clumps.

Traditional school playing fields and college grounds largely comprise open mown grassland, with little or no vegetation structure, however more recent school redevelopments such as Park School in Kingswood and Courtney Primary have been designed to include a robust landscape framework. Sports grounds are also typically simple open spaces, with limited built infrastructure of clubhouses and pavilions and mature trees often associated with older cricket grounds, providing structure or enclosure to these spaces.

Photo 2: Green corridors interspersed throughout the dense settlement pattern



Biodiversity

Although Kingswood is an urban area, the green spaces and riparian habitats present within this area include a diversity of habitat, as well as a resource to

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urban wildlife which may include species of conservation concern. These species are likely to be particularly vulnerable to changes impacting upon these habitats.

There are only 13 hectares of woodland within this area and these woodlands are very sparse and scattered across the area with generally few linkages between habitats. While the area may still support many species of conservation concern, but the diversity will be much lower than that in the more rural character areas.

The 13 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) within this LCA, comprise a mosaic of habitats including grassland (neutral, acidic, and calcareous), small plots of broadleaved woodland likely to be remnants of old orchards and flowing open water represented by the Siston Brook to the south-east of the area and other small tributaries of the River Frome in the north. This designation recognises the importance of these habitats within the national context for flora and fauna and their particular importance within the urban setting of this area. Key species likely to be associated with the wooded and riparian areas include bats which are present across the wider area and are UK priority species with associated Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP).

Eight of the SNCIs are designated for their neutral, acidic, and calcareous grassland, including areas of species-rich grassland. This diverse habitat supports a range of invertebrates and ant hills are a regular feature. These invertebrates in turn provide a food source for mammals including bats.

The water courses in the Leap and Willsbridge Valley are amongst the few watercourses found in this character area. As a result, species (which may include water voles) within these habitats are likely to be sensitive to any changes impacting upon the water body. The scattered ponds and pools within the area will support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species).

Gardens and amenity spaces are likely to present a potential habitat for a range of species in such an urban area, and the provision of tree cover, other planting, and the retention of 'wild corners' takes on additional importance.

Cultural Influences

Land Use and Time Depth

Land use within the Kingswood LCA is predominantly associated with settlement, including residential and commercial development.

The Whitfield Tabernacle Conservation Area is located along the A420 in the centre of the LCA. The Conservation Area comprises a relatively small area of encompassing the Masters Church, Whitfield Tabernacle and Chapel House listed buildings.

The Warmley Conservation Area is located in the east of the LCA to the east of the A4174. The Conservation Area encompasses the Grade II* listed Warmley House, Warmley House Registered Park and Garden, together with the Clock Tower (originally a pin mill), and the internationally important Champion's Brassworks (Scheduled Monument). The factory is partly constructed with slag block quoins and coping stones, which are associated with the industrial process.

The historic estate of Barr's Court in the south of the LCA at Oldland is a partially moated manor site (Scheduled Monument) and still retains much of its park boundary wall and moat, largely absorbed within residential development. Also, within the Siston Valley at Oldland Bottom is Willsbridge Mill.

Though not formally designated, the area of Hanham Mount is associated with John Wesley, a Baptist minister known for his open-air preaching to the miners of the area in the 1730s. A beacon light marks the site and is seen in views from the wider landscape.

The Dramway (an historically important tramway associated with the former coal mining industry) crosses through the south-east of the LCA.

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Settlement and Infrastructure

Settlement is the predominant land use in this LCA. The historic core of road pattern, settlement and former industrial activity is extensively surrounded by late 19th and 20th century residential, industrial, and commercial development, creating a dense urban area with relatively few open spaces.

The pre-urbanisation field pattern and road network is evident over much of the area and, in places, largely defines the shape and pattern of settlement and open space seen today. Older development within the area is typically a mix of grey Pennant sandstone cottages, farmhouses, and individual houses, with gardens and some remnant orchards contained by stone walls. Settlement of this age is either clustered within recognisable former village centres, as seen in Downend, Hanham, Warmley, North Common and Oldland Common, or elsewhere is mixed with the occasional addition of recent brick infill, as at Mangotsfield, Staple Hill and Kingswood. Many of these villages grew in association with the former industrial activities associated with coal mining, the brass/pin works, and the shoe industry.

Older stone properties are also scattered throughout the area, absorbed within more recent phases of urban expansion. Some distinctive buildings and structures include churches, chapels, monuments, and Sunday Schools (associated with Methodism), small industrial buildings, warehouses, and old factories. Stone bridges are associated with the disused Bristol-Bath railway and Dramway, with station platforms and buildings at Mangotsfield North and South and at Willsbridge.

In Hanham, Longwell Green and towards Oldland, the older stone housing is often associated with large gardens and mature trees which abut the road network or form the southern boundary with the Avon Valley. Some early 20th century housing has mature gardens and street trees which contribute greatly to the streetscape.

Later residential development is largely of brick (some rendered), detached, semi-detached and flats, varied in density and tends to lack structural tree planting or designed open spaces. Open space is largely incidental, retained

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along hedges, watercourses, and footpaths, or related to schools, sports centres, and community facilities.

More recent large-scale residential development lies to the north-east at Emerson's Green. Dense, brick estate housing extends eastwards to the A4174, which in conjunction with the industrial/commercial sheds at Emerald Park within the adjacent area, abruptly defines the urban edge here. Former farmhouses on the edge of this development area have been put to new uses such as public houses.

The new housing areas include some strategic opens space corridors and are occasionally broken by village parks. The LCA is punctuated with retail centres, comprising a number of linear streets or centres located on major roads leading to Bristol City Centre. A large retail centre at Longwell Green forms a concentration of large commercial sheds, within a framework of roads, roundabouts, car parks, grass verges and ornamental planting structure.

The adjacent multiplex development below Mount Hill is cut into the steep hillside and includes a large warehouse type building, car park and peripheral steep earth banks/retaining structures, while the more recent leisure centre takes a lower profile. Industrial works are concentrated within the centres of Kingswood, Warmley and also along Kingswood's eastern rural fringe. Some have been redeveloped to residential uses. A number of historic sites are absorbed within or on the edge of the urban area.

The use of distinctive slag quoins and coping stones is widely distributed within the South Gloucestershire area, generally limited to older individual stone buildings and walls. Distribution is evident within the adjacent character areas of Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley, Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge, as well as Kingswood, Bristol and as far west as the Severn Ridges and Oldbury Levels.

The Bristol and Bath Railway Path follows a disused railway line west to east through the urban area of Staple Hill, before passing north to south along the south-eastern edge of the LCA. The southern section of the railway path is partly followed by the Dramway and the Community Forest Path. The urban

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area also includes many short sections of public footpath within pockets of open space. These connect with the widespread, dense local road network.

The area is intensely dissected by numerous lanes, roads, and major routes such as the A432, A431, A420, A4174 and A4175, connecting the residential districts.

The A4174 Avon Ring Road follows a broad corridor, generally containing the urban edge to the north and north-east and passing through the urban/semi-rural areas in the south. Generally contained for much of its length within a maturing framework of trees, the road is being absorbed within the wider landscape.

Photo 3: View across the A4174 ring road from the adjoining LCA towards the dense settlement edge



Perceptual Influences

Visual Character

The overall character of the LCA is dense settlement, with distinct areas comprising former village centres and linear hamlets linked by the road network, phased residential development, concentrations of industrial works and commercial areas, interspersed with a mix of various ages and style of development.

Industrial heritage features and distinct buildings provide landmarks and contribute to the distinctive character of the various neighbourhoods within the urban fabric. This includes buildings associated with coal mining, pin and shoe making industry, historic remains of Barrs Court Estate and the distribution of architecturally diverse chapels, churches, and their churchyards. Warmley Church in the south-east of the LCA is a prominent distinctive landmark and focus to the village settlement, nestled within the landform. The adjacent brass works also forms a prominent local feature.

A variety of open spaces punctuate the urban area, the character of which are diverse, often providing relief and contrast, contributing to local identity and the setting of built development. The 'urban forest' of numerous mature trees is significant locally and in the wider landscape, particularly in elevated views from LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge.

The ridge and hill landform of the LCA is generally marked by the dominance and enclosure created by the urban development over much of this area. However, landform and elevated position is very apparent along some road corridors and from open spaces, where views out beyond the LCA are obtained.

The steepest landforms have hindered the spread of urban development and are therefore typically the most extensive, open, and visible green spaces within the LCA. The open steep slopes and ridgeline of Mount Hill above the A4174 are a prominent local backcloth. The Siston Valley is a small enclosed and sinuous rural wooded valley, at its southern end largely undisturbed by

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development. The Hanham Hills form a prominent landmark beyond the settlement edge to the south within LCA 16: Avon Valley.

Breaks in the urban fabric on the elevated landform frequently allow long distance views eastwards of the adjacent rural fringe, Pucklechurch and Oldland Ridge and the Cotswold Scarp beyond. From the southern settlement edge, some views extend over and beyond the Avon Valley with views towards Dundry Hill and the Mendip Hills AONB available from elevated locations such as Mount Hill. From the eastern settlement edge, remnant common and agricultural land in the Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge (LCA 12) creates in places a transitional boundary between the abrupt development edge of this area and the adjacent, more rural countryside to the east. Woodland at Rodway Hill, located in the adjacent Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge (LCA 12), provides partial containment to the eastern settlement edge. The adjacent landform of the Pucklechurch and Oldland Ridge forms a prominent and distinctive backcloth within many views from the urban edge. The urban area of Kingswood is also prominent within panoramic views from the Pucklechurch and Oldland Ridge to the east.

Dense housing and commercial development within Emerson's Green and extending further north-east into the adjacent Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge (LCA 12), is prominent and visually confines the north-east of the LCA.

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Photo 4: Views east across the south of the LCA from the Hanham Hills, looking towards the Oldland Ridge



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Tranquillity and Dark Skies

The presence of dense settlement and busy roads, including the A4174, A4017, A4175 and A420, influences the sense of tranquillity experienced within the Kingswood LCA.

The proximity of dense settlement and associated light pollution influences the experience of dark night skies throughout the LCA.

Visually Important Hillsides

There are no Visually Important Hillsides (VIH) located within this LCA. The River Avon Valley VIH and Hanham Hills VIH define part of the southern boundary of the LCA. Key characteristics of each VIH include the following:

- River Avon Valley VIH: a steep wooded northern valley side which contributes to the setting of the River Avon and forms a southerly extension of the Hanham Hills VIH. The VIH contributes to the setting of Hanham Court Conservation Area.
- Hanham Hills VIH: a steep sided singular hill of convex landform that forms a northerly extension to the River Avon Valley VIH. The VIH forms a distinctive landform feature in both views towards the urban edge of Hanham and from within the settlement area itself, as well as providing a green backdrop to Hanham Court Conservation Area.

Further details are provided in **Annex I: Visually Important Hillsides**.

Strategic Viewpoints

One Strategic Viewpoint (SVP) is located within this LCA at Mount Hill (SVP 29). It provides a panoramic view, focused south and south-west towards the notable landscape features of Dundry Hill and the Mendip Hills AONB.

Further details are provided in **Annex II: Strategic Viewpoints**.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Valued Features

- The historic character of the former village settlements of Downend, Hanham, Warmley, North Common and Oldland Common, which contribute to time depth.
- The Whitfield Tabernacle Conservation Area and Warmley Conservation Area, Grade II* listed Warmley House and Warmley House Registered Park and Garden which contribute to time depth.
- Champion's Brassworks and the moated manor site at Barr's Court, which are designated as Scheduled Monuments and contribute to time depth.
- Large open spaces, including Page Park, Kingswood Park, Hill House Park, and village parks within Emerson's Green, which contribute to habitat connectivity and sense of place.
- Smaller formal and informal open spaces, including the green corridors of Siston and Warmley Brook, Leap Valley, Willsbridge Valley and Cock Road Ridge, which contribute to habitat connectivity and sense of place.
- The 'urban forest' and the role this plays in integrating and softening the settlement edge in views from the wider landscape, including from LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge.
- The network of public rights of way and cycle paths, including the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, Dramway, Community Forest Path, that provide recreational opportunities across the landscape.
- Outward views, afforded from breaks in the urban fabric, to the Pucklechurch and Oldland Ridge, the Cotswold Scarp and across the Avon Valley, which contribute to sense of place and the setting of settlement.

The Changing Landscape

The following section sets out the changes and pressures to the Kingswood LCA.

Climate Change

- Climate change leading to increased temperatures and periods of drought resulting in a change in stream flows, altering the species composition of wetland habitats, particularly the tributaries of the River Frome and Siston Brook.

Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery

- An increase in tree planting is required to contribute towards South Gloucestershire's objective of doubling tree cover by 2030, and in accordance with the proposed woodland strategic network which forms part of the West of England's Nature Recovery Network. This may include the planting of individual or groups of trees to address inequalities in canopy cover in parts of the LCA. This may change the character of views within the LCA, however further tree planting will contribute to the softening of settlement in views within the LCA and from the Pucklechurch and Oldland Ridge and the Cotswold Scarp.

Land Use and Cover

- Recent years have seen the increasing re-development of brownfield sites such as former employment sites, chapels and their grounds, or graveyards, as well as the redevelopment of houses with large gardens to make way for higher density housing. This has affected local character and, in some cases, reduced wildlife habitat. Where green spaces previously provided valuable visual amenity and physical breaks within the urban fabric, as well as softening the urban form, some locations have seen a reduction in openness within the area. This has increased the density of the built environment and introduced a variation in architectural

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style, form, massing, and colour, that has in some cases affected the distinctiveness of the locality.

- A further change affecting the character area is the paving of front gardens and loss of associated boundary treatments. In other locations hedged boundaries have been replaced by harsh close boarded fences. Cumulatively these small changes often result in a significant erosion of the traditional character and biodiversity of the locality, replacing low stone walls and associated garden planting with the harshness of a fence or a predominance of parked cars. This can also result in the replacement of soil with impermeable paving, leading to increased runoff and potential problems with drainage capacity.
- Kingswood High Street has however seen a significant improvement in the urban fabric of the town centre. The introduction of a one-way system was taken as an opportunity to reclaim urban space for the pedestrian, introducing high quality urban street furniture and features designed to reinforce and improve the character and appearance of the street.
- Existing parks provide important open spaces and, in some cases, valuable wildlife habitat within the urban fabric and influence local character. The landscape amenity of these spaces relies on their continued maintenance and management. There has been an increasing trend towards community engagement with the management and maintenance of such open spaces with the formation of 'Friends' groups, a more recent move away from the more traditional play equipment to 'natural play' that utilises natural features such as rocks, logs, and trees, as well as increased tree planting and provision of play and gym facilities to suit a wider age group. Open spaces such as Grimbsbury Farm have seen improvements that have resulted in a move away from traditional mown grass to meadow and greater diversity of habitat. Other traditional parks are seeking to ensure restoration of their historic features such as band stands and railings.
- Scattered ponds and pools, including potentially those in gardens are vulnerable to any loss of habitat including the terrestrial habitat around ponds as well as the ponds themselves.
- Open space within new developments often incorporates mature trees, often that are remnant features from the former agricultural land use, pre-urbanisation. These contribute greatly to the area's 'Urban Forest' and local streetscape. These features are however sensitive to a number of

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potentially damaging operations and types of change, e.g., work relating to underground and overhead services, site development and site access and especially where insufficient space is allowed for either existing mature trees or semi- mature trees to develop further.

- The majority of open spaces are crossed by, or connected to, the urban area by public footpaths. This accessibility provides not only an important recreational and amenity resource for the local community, but with new development increasing the numbers of users also potentially exerts an increasing physical pressure on these spaces and their features.
- The corridor of remnant agricultural land at Mount Hill, Cock Road Ridge and Grimsbury Farm are important and prominent recreational areas which separates Kingswood and Oldland. These areas have seen further infill development and are under potential pressure for further change. Hedgerows are not actively managed. The likely long-term decline of these features would weaken their visual contribution to the landscape framework of the area, as well as their ability to provide integration of both existing development and future change.
- The Hanham Hills beyond the southern urban edge in the adjoining character area are a distinct rural landmark, visually prominent within many local views. They are particularly sensitive to change, or a decline of their hedgerow framework.

Development

- Infill remains a significant pressure across this LCA, including on both larger and smaller plots and gardens. Such infill can result in the loss of significant albeit often private areas of green space, increasing the urban character and resulting in the loss of space and landscape features which impart a particular character to the area and/or provide visual relief and wildlife habitat in an otherwise dense urban environment.
- The distinct village patterns seen in many places, such as Warmley, Oldland Common, Willsbridge and Hanham, are sensitive to change such as from infill, which might dilute or erode their individual character.
- The southern and eastern urban areas exert a potential pressure for change in the adjacent rural landscape. Such change could have a potentially widespread visual influence, eroding the distinctive rural

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character of the agricultural landscape and common land which lie just beyond the eastern boundary. As much of the area is elevated, development within the Kingswood LCA has the potential to influence views from the surrounding rural areas such as Redfield Hill, Siston Common, Bridge Yate Common and the Hanham Hills.

- The relatively recent extension to Emerson's Green, north-east of the A4174 in the adjoining LCA, has resulted in a significant change to the present character of the rural fringe. The current urban edge has extended northwards, beyond this LCA boundary, with the inevitable loss of the adjoining open rural landscape.
- The more recent housing development at Emerson's Green has introduced new urban elements along the edge of Kingswood, within a former agricultural landscape. The retained vegetation framework has only a limited ability to integrate such extensive built development. While a softening of the transition between the housing edge and adjacent open space/rural fringe has been achieved as the new landscape has matured, maintenance of the landscape will remain integral to ensuring the longevity of the landscape framework.
- The large-scale commercial/retail and leisure developments at Longwell Green and below Mount Hill has had a significant effect on the urban character locally. The elevated and sloping nature of the site means that this development has not effectively integrated with its surroundings, with the result that the large-scale built forms, together with the associated car parking and road infrastructure, contrasts markedly with the character of adjacent housing areas and the remnant landscape framework.

Guidance

These guidelines recommend how the landscape can be managed to ensure future change respects the local character and should be read in conjunction with the objectives of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Landscape Strategy and Guidelines [\[See reference 5\]](#), so as to avoid adverse indirect effects on the setting of the CNL, as well as the overarching management strategy objectives set out in Chapter 4.

Landscape Strategy

Landscape Management

- Protect and extend the Kingswood 'urban forest' character imparted by street trees and maintain, manage, and extend tree cover within the urban environment.
- Where key to the character of the locality, ensure that the critical balance between the existing urban built form and green open space and/ or planting is maintained and enhanced as part of the distinctive local character, including consideration of the role that private open space places in the urban environment.
- Retain the mix of large formal open spaces and smaller formal and informal open spaces, which soften the urban fabric and contribute to sense of place.
- Look for opportunities to address the current shortfall in allotments and public open space within Kingswood and Staple Hill.
- Protect the distinctive, enclosed valley character of the Siston Brook.
- Protect and enhance the significance, setting, landscape character and heritage value of Warmley Conservation Area, including the views to and from the Grade II* listed Warmley House, Warmley House Registered Park and Garden, and the scheduled monument of William Champion's Brassworks site.
- Protect the landscape setting to the moated manor site at Barr's Court (Scheduled Monument).

Ecology/Biodiversity Management

- Seek to protect and link existing habitat areas, including the green corridors of Siston and Warmley Brook, Leap Valley, Willsbridge Valley and Cock Road Ridge, through adjacent urban areas.
- Protect and improve the riparian habitat of the Warmley and Siston Brooks and Willsbridge valley and seek opportunities to naturalise

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sections currently impacted by engineering structures (except heritage features).

- Protect Cock Road Ridge SNCI.
- Protect the woodland buffer along the Avon Valley.
- Ensure that open space areas within new development are of adequate size to be useable and effective, and that sufficient space is incorporated around retained landscape features and wildlife habitats, to facilitate their effective protection and management into the future.
- Where possible, retain remnants of the former agricultural landscape, including hedgerows and hedgerow trees to ensure the conservation of these features and their continued function as habitat and connectivity in the long term.

Development Management

- Preserve views towards Warmley church spire, together with those from Cock Road Ridge and A420 corridor towards the Cotswold Scarp and Siston Common, and elevated views from Hanham Mount looking south (associated with the open air preachings of John Wesley).
- Preserve the historic character of former village settlements of Downend, Hanham, Warmley, North Common and Oldland Common
- Carefully control boundary treatments particularly for road facing gardens, to protect the character of place and enhance the biodiversity value and visual quality of the public realm.

LCA 15: Patchway, Filton & the Stokes

The Patchway, Filton and the Stokes landscape character area (LCA) is an urban built-up area, consisting of a mix of residential, commercial, and retail development and major transport corridors, with open space scattered throughout.

Photo 1: Linear settlement of residential and commercial units along the A38 at Patchway.



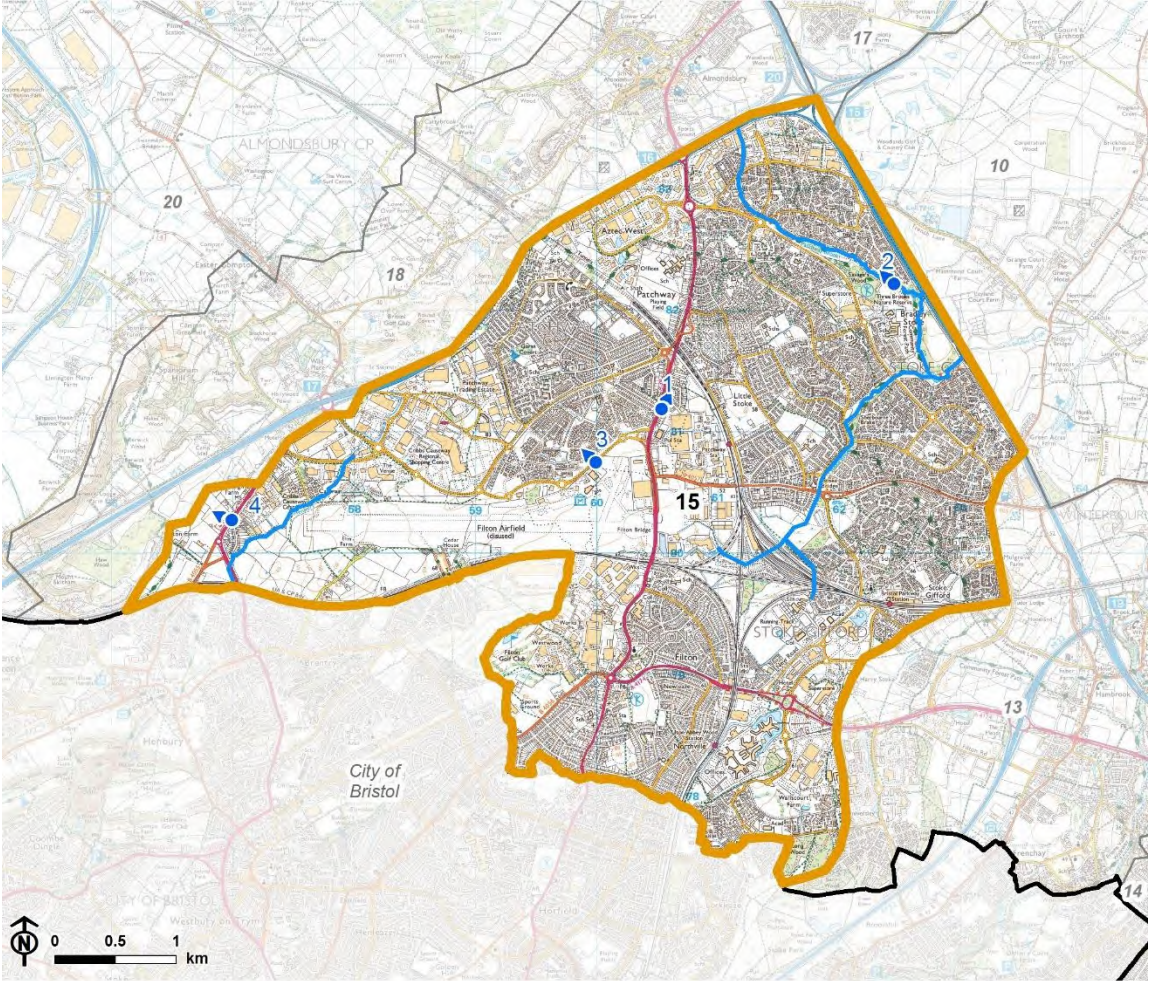
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Location






The Patchway, Filton and the Stokes LCA is located on the south-western boundary of the South Gloucestershire area and includes the northern fringes of the Bristol conurbation. The area is contained to the north-east by the M4, to the north-west by the M5, beyond which the land rises to LCA 18: Severn Ridges. The south-western boundary is contained by the foot of the slope below Haw Wood. To the south, the boundary is marked by the limits of the South Gloucestershire/Bristol City administrative boundary.

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Figure 6.11: Location and Landscape context of LCA 15: Patchway, Filton and the Stokes



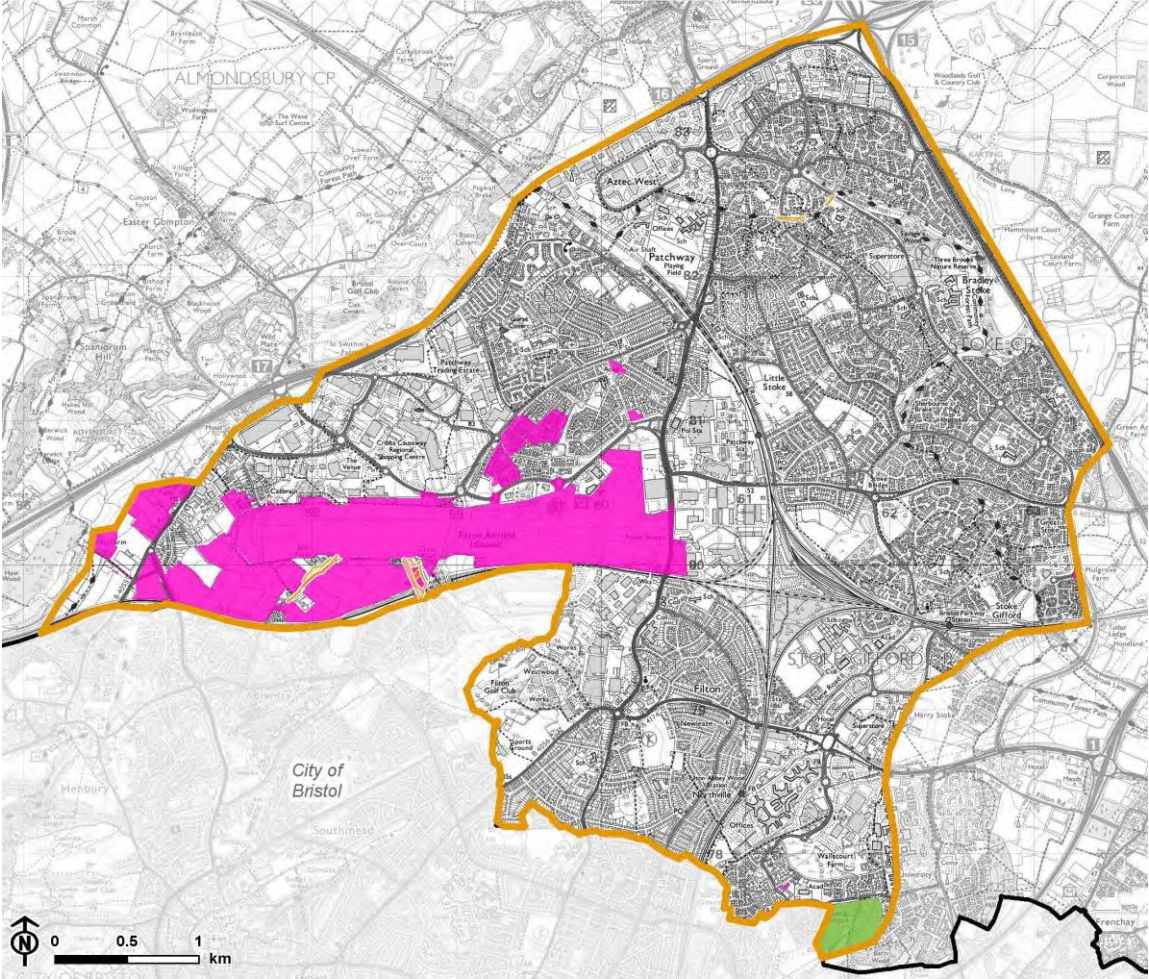
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-  LCA 15: Patchway and Filton
-  Neighbouring LCA
-  Council boundary
-  River
-  Photograph location and direction



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Figure 6.12: Development and Heritage context of LCA 15: Patchway, Filton and the Stokes



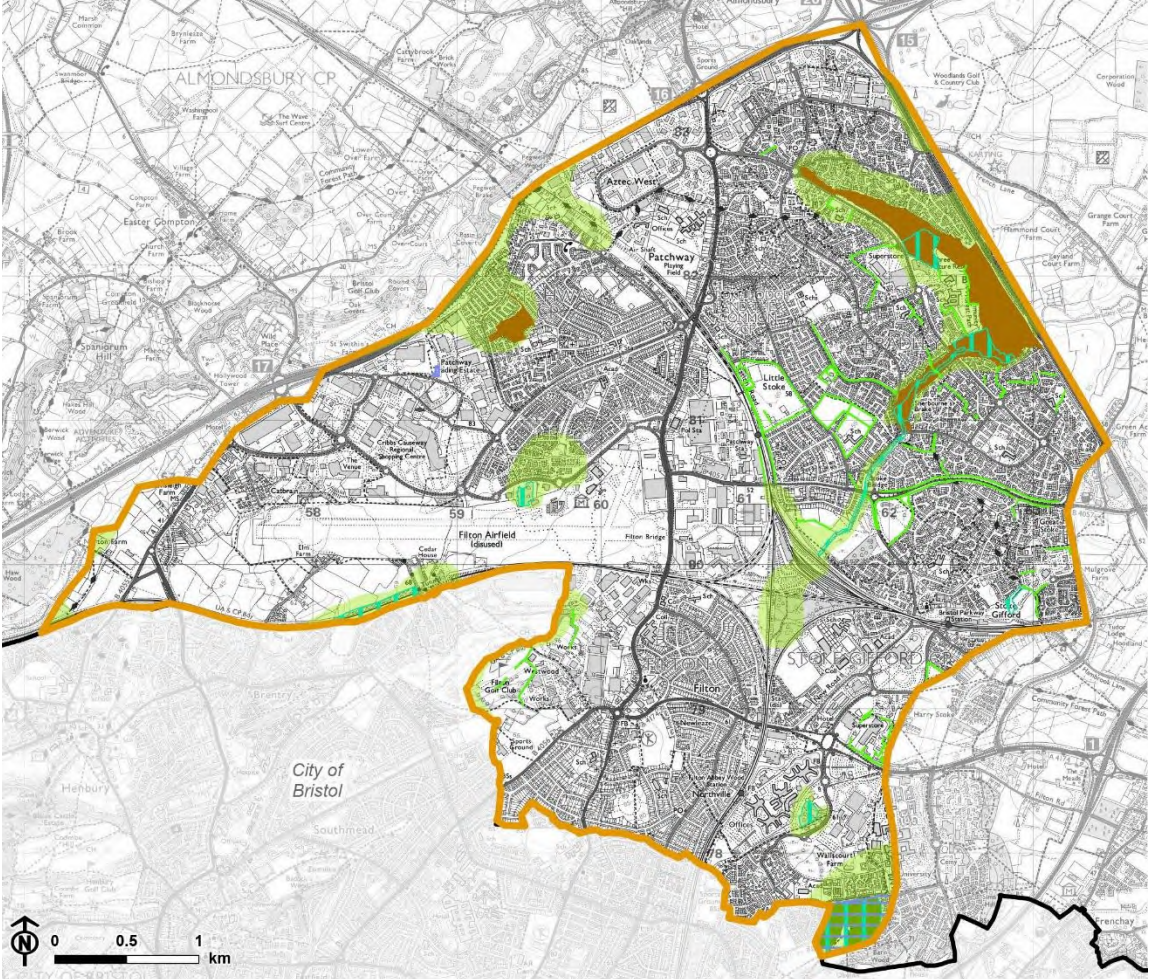
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-  LCA 15: Patchway and Filton
-  Council boundary
-  CRoW Common Land
-  CRoW Open Access Land
-  Registered Parks and Gardens
-  Recent development (since 2014)











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Figure 6.13: Ecology and Biodiversity context of LCA 15: Patchway, Filton and the Stokes



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-  LCA 15: Patchway and Filton
-  Council boundary
-  Site of Nature Conservation Interest
-  Ancient woodland
-  Regionally Important Geological Site
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Woodland Strategic Network
-  Important hedgerow



Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Settlement, including Patchway and Filton plus Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford, Harry Stoke and Stoke Park, strongly influences the area.
- The largely built-up area is bounded by motorways to the north-west and north-east, with railway lines and roads dividing the area. Road network and high traffic levels are prominent features.
- Commercial, industrial, and residential areas are of various ages, styles, building materials and densities, some of which is large-scale and highly visible within and beyond the area.
- More recent residential development occurs on fringes of an older housing core, and towards the M4 boundary, comprising uniform estates, with strategic landscape infrastructure.
- A diverse pattern of open space comprises retained areas of Filton Airfield as well as within the railway junction, the courses of Patchway Brook and Stoke Brook, part of historic Stoke Park, remnant agricultural land and smaller pockets of open space.
- Small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland, some designated as SNCI, are scattered across the LCA, including broadleaf, ancient and damp woodland.
- The wooded corridor of Stoke Brook contrasts with the surrounding built-up urban edge.

Natural Influences

Geology, Landform and Hydrology

The geology of this LCA is diverse with a ring of White and Blue Lias limestone and clays following the eastern boundary, before curving back to and beyond

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Filton. This encircles a broad bank of Lias clays. A further area of White and Blue Lias extends from Patchway, north-eastwards beyond this area. Keuper marl clays and sandstones form a band, roughly following the western boundary. The soils are a mix of Pelo-stagnogley and typical Argillic Pelosols.

The geology, together with the drainage pattern, has created a landform which is generally gently sloping to undulating. Dense urban development within the LCA limits the visibility of the landform beneath.

A number of low ridges and higher ground provide containment to an elongated central bowl, of 55 metres AOD on average. Landform dips gently north-eastwards to the Bradley Brook, with a smaller proportion of this area to the west falling south-westwards towards the River Avon.

Higher ground comprises Haw Wood ridgeline which rises beyond the western LCA boundary to 70 metres AOD (merging with the Severn Ridges). A broad rounded hill at Filton is located in the south at 96 metres AOD. A curving ridgeline runs between Stoke Park (at 85 metres AOD) and Stoke Gifford (at 70 metres AOD) to the north-east. Landform gently rises up to 85 metres AOD towards the M5 in the north-west of the LCA. Within the Patchway Brook valley and adjacent to the M4, the natural landform has been largely reprofiled, following large-scale land reclamation/ spoil deposition. This, in places, has produced a broad plateau steep sided valley profile and steep slope profile next to the motorway edge.

There are a number of minor watercourses that run through the area. These include Henbury Trym in the west, which flows south-westwards from Cribbs Causeway and Filton Airfield to the River Avon beyond this LCA. It flows within an open, gently sloping valley, contained to the west by Haw Wood ridge and to the east by more gently sloping ground. Stoke Brook flows from the central railway intersection north-eastwards, joining the Patchway and Hortham Brook near the north-eastern LCA boundary, continuing as the Bradley Brook beyond. All three brooks meander through shallow, open low valley systems, draining eastwards into the adjacent LCA 10: Earthcott Vale.

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Land Cover

The majority of the LCA is dominated by settlement interspersed with open spaces, which vary in scale.

The LCA includes numerous sports fields, public open spaces, allotments, and school grounds which service the main residential areas of Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford and Filton. Sports fields typically comprise open areas of amenity grassland enclosed by housing, industrial development and intermittent trees/tree belts and hedgerows along boundaries. Parks scattered throughout the LCA predominantly comprise mown and rough grassland with scrub/tree fringes.

The Patchway Brook and Stoke Brook valleys are linear, often organic spaces, with riparian trees and grassland contained within housing and road framework. These two brooks and their open space corridors form the Three Brooks Nature Reserve. The watercourses converge at a pool near the M4, with an adjacent large plateau landform (a former landfill site) with rough grassland cover and maturing tree planting on steeper slopes, abutting the M4.

Elevated land west of the A38, at Westwood, includes Filton Golf Course, comprising greens, fairways and an open tree structure which extends into the Bristol City Authority area.

Redevelopment of Filton Airfield includes a series public green spaces and urban squares and a new central Brabazon Park, to include a lake, play areas and public square providing a link to the new arena to the south of the site. The Brabazon development, together with the Haw Wood and Fishpool Hill developments will create a strategic network of open space with new planting to connect to existing areas of woodland; Haw Wood and Filton Wood, which currently border the overall Cribbs-Patchway New Neighbourhood (CPNN) area.

The railway junction, lying centrally within the area, physically contains a sizeable area of poorly drained and disturbed rough grassland, scrub, trees, and railway sidings. The north-east quadrant has been redeveloped as a rail depot.

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The area includes a number of significant areas of deciduous woodland, including some ancient woodland (in existence since at least 1600), such as Savage's Wood and Long/Hermitage Wood. These are typically isolated areas within green fringes adjacent to development.

Photo 2: Three Brooks Nature Reserve is an important green space for residents of Bradley Stoke, comprising woodland and river habitat with waymarked recreational routes.



Biodiversity

Although the LCA is largely an urban area, it includes a number of substantial green spaces and a diversity of habitat, some of which is designated for its nature conservation value. The green spaces and riparian habitats present within this area are likely to present a precious resource to urban wildlife which may include species of conservation concern. These habitats species are likely to be particularly vulnerable to human pressure and other changes impacting upon the habitats.

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The area includes approximately 15 hectares designated as ancient woodland which represents half of the total woodland which is located in scattered copses and a larger area within the Three Brooks Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

There are a number of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) designated for their grassland habitat (neutral, marshy, and calcareous), small plots of broadleaved woodland (including ancient woodland) and flowing open water. This designation recognises the importance of these habitats within the national context for flora and fauna and their particular importance within the urban setting of this area. Key species likely to be associated with the wooded and riparian areas include bats which are present across South Gloucestershire and are UK priority species with associated Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP). There is generally poor connectivity for wildlife between green spaces across this area which may limit their movements.

The four SNCI sites within the Patchway, Filton and the Stokes are designated for their neutral, marshy, and calcareous grassland, including areas of species-rich grassland. This diverse habitat supports a range of invertebrates and ant hills are a regular feature. These invertebrates in turn provide a food source for mammals including bats. The Hortham Brook, Stoke Brook, Patchway Brook and Henbury Trym cross the landscape through this area. A section of the Patchway Brook is situated within an SNCI. These watercourses will support a diverse range of species from aquatic macro- invertebrates to fish and water voles. Ponds and pools within the area will support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species).

Gardens are likely to present a potential habitat for these species in such an urban area, while golf courses such as those at Patchway, Filton and the Stokes have the potential to provide a mosaic of habitats which can be utilised by a diverse range of species.

Cultural Influences

Land Use and Time Depth

Land use within the Patchway, Filton and Stokes LCA is predominantly associated with settlement. There are some small areas of remnant agricultural land in the west of the LCA.

The disused airfield forms the setting to a cluster of aircraft hangars which are grade II listed buildings, associated with the Bristol Aeroplane Company which was established at Filton as one of Britain's first aircraft manufacturers in 1910.

Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden is located in the south-east of the LCA and extends into the adjacent LCA 13: Frome Valley and Bristol City authority area.

Settlement and Infrastructure

The LCA is dominated by distinct areas of development types, including the now closed airfield (which is being redeveloped), railways, road network, industrial and commercial areas, together with housing. There have been several phases of development since the First World War. The majority of Patchway, Filton and Stoke Gifford consist of a diverse mix of housing areas, with a variety of styles and ages, which include limestone, render, brick, and painted houses.

Adjacent to the M4/M5 interchange and junction off the M5 in the north of the LCA, there is a concentrated corridor of light industry and business park development, at Aztec West and Almondsbury Business Park. Aztec West comprises a large, planned business park, including large modern office and warehouse buildings and road infrastructure within a designed, now mature, ornamental landscape framework. Almondsbury Business Park to the east includes the RAC building and tower.

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In the east of the LCA, south of Bristol Parkway Station, there is a concentration of large commercial buildings/ complexes and retail sheds, some within robust landscaped grounds, as seen at Abbey Wood MOD offices, AXA Sun Life offices, Hewlett Packard, and part of the University of the West of England campus (largely lying within the adjacent LCA 13: Frome Valley).

To the north-west, adjacent to the M5 and industrial sheds of the Patchway Trading Estate on elevated ground, is the large-scale retail development of Cribbs Causeway. The concentration of large, distinctive retail structures are surrounded by an infrastructure of roads, car parks, ornamental planting, and earthworks, within a maturing landscape setting.

Filton Airfield, located to the south of Cribbs Causeway, currently comprises a runway, and a complex of light-coloured hangars, occupying an extensive area of land fringed by grassland, with a small pocket of woodland. Its westerly expansion in 1946 removed the village of Charlton. The airfield currently forms a large corridor of open space. Redevelopment of the airfield will retain parts of the runway as a linear park, with an associated network of strategic open space interspersed with built development.

Larger-scale industrial and commercial buildings line the A83 to the east of the airfield, their location and pattern of development historically associated with and related to the airfield. Notably, the recently restored Pegasus House forms an important landmark building in local views. Elsewhere along the A38, development includes some intermixing of residential groups and small-scale works, industry, and institutional buildings. Relatively recent residential and employment development at Charlton Hayes is located to the west of the road. The associated construction of a new main road has provided the opportunity to transform the existing Highwood Road into a linear park.

The majority of the remaining built environment is covered by often dense residential areas, incorporating strategic open spaces. The original hamlets of Filton, Stoke Gifford and Harry Stoke are medieval in origin, with the more recent housing pattern closely related to the economic development of this area and its proximity to Bristol. Patchway served the aircraft works/ railways and the northern part of Filton, acting as a commuter belt development, dating from the early 20th century.

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Bradley Stoke is a relatively recent residential development, of largely brick housing, with some local facilities including a retail centre, leisure centre and school. The most recent area of development abuts the M4. These dense estate developments are based around a network of broad roads, roundabout junctions, and strategic open spaces. Contained within and on the edges of these urban areas are old farmhouses. They have either become integrated within adjacent development, following the change in land use, or remain isolated features dominated by adjacent dissimilar development.

Playing fields on the boundary with Bristol are an important resource. Within the urban areas pressures for intensification of use may be seen, including at schools such as Filton and Harry Stoke where sports provision has urbanised the open areas and within the less dense residential areas where housing development is proposed to infill private gardens.

The LCA is served by a very dense network of roads, the pattern of which in many places determines the edges of residential development and open spaces. The A4174, is located in the south-east of the LCA. Generally, the M4 and M5, on the boundaries of the LCA, delineate the urban edge. Development in Bradley Stoke extends along the M4, with the exception of a large break, formed by a plateau of open space adjacent to the Patchway and Bradley Brooks. The motorways largely contain the urban edge, creating a linear barrier to the countryside beyond. The M4/M5 interchange comprises large-scale earthworks, elevated slip roads and overbridges, flanked by rough grassland and some scrub. This feature straddles the boundary of this area and two adjacent character areas. The prominence of these features has increased over recent years as widening, lighting and gantries have squeezed the associated planting and introduced new urbanising features. The A38 and A4174 radiate from Filton, north to the M5 and eastwards to the M32 and M4, with the B4057 providing an easterly link to Winterbourne, beyond this area.

The completion of the Willow Brook Centre has created a town centre for the surrounding neighbourhood, replacing the previous open and undeveloped land. The development of the Jubilee Centre site in Savages Wood Road includes a Beacon Play Scheme facility, while the adoption of the Jubilee Green as a Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust site and the building of the new town council office, has made the site a focal point for the surrounding area.

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Four sections of railway line intersect centrally within the area, forming a large junction with raised embankments, which physically contain disturbed rough ground and a recent depot facility. The railway lines include the South Wales to London line, providing links from Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway with the rest of the country. One goods line travels westwards to Avonmouth.

There are a few public rights of way which cross both undeveloped open space and public open spaces and elsewhere are absorbed within the built environment. Around the western end of the airfield, footpaths currently pass over farmland, their direct route halted and diverted around the airfield and its perimeter fence. The network within Stoke Gifford, north of the railway, is quite intricate, absorbed within the housing and road layout. The Community Forest Path passes roughly south-east from Patchway to Stoke Gifford. The Patchway Greenway also plays a role in connecting a number of smaller open spaces within the urban area.

Photo 3: Recent residential development at Charlton Hayes incorporates green infrastructure including trees and grassland, part of a sustainable drainage system (SUDs) scheme.



Perceptual Influences

Visual Character

Overall, the landscape of strategic open spaces and remnant farmland is largely dominated by the urban framework of settlement, roads, and high traffic levels. Views are typically limited by adjacent dense urban development and the generally low, undulating landform. Some views are possible from open spaces and the higher ground at Filton, including from Filton Golf Course to the south of the LCA boundary. From these vantage points, residential development generally predominates. Redevelopment of the Filton Airfield and agricultural fields in the west of the LCA will influence the open character of this part of the LCA.

Settlement abuts most of the M4 and M5 motorways along the LCA's boundary, and includes extensive areas of residential, business and retail development. This creates an often abrupt contrast between the urban and rural areas beyond. The M4 provides views largely into the adjacent LCA 10: Earthcott Vale and of limited areas of Bradley Stoke. The M5 has views of most of the northern urban fringe, with views to the north largely screened by the steep grass embankments of the Bristol Golf Course in the adjoining LCA 18: Severn Ridges. The road network and key road corridors are a visually prominent feature of the area, particularly where motorway widening, lighting and gantry infrastructure has been implemented.

Larger-scale buildings associated with commercial, industrial and employment uses are prominent throughout the LCA, occasionally forming part of the LCA boundary. This includes retail development at Cribbs Causeway, extensive concentration of industrial sheds and hangars associated with the airfield, Rolls-Royce and British Aerospace, the RAC control tower, the tower at the University of the West of England, the Abbey Wood Ministry of Defence (MOD) offices and the rotunda building at AXA Sun Life.

Green spaces and landscape structure within the LCA are diverse in form, content, and character. The character of these spaces varies from enclosed, naturalistic rural pockets to stark open playing fields. There are also areas of

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derelict land including within the railway junction. Tree belts are a frequent feature along the boundaries between recreational open spaces and industrial or commercial areas, with some poplars forming prominent features. All contribute greatly to punctuating the urban fabric, especially from slightly elevated viewpoints. Many open space areas are overlooked by adjacent housing, providing distinctive local character, and forming a physical break within the urban fabric.

Areas of woodland, where present, are prominent features with a significant influence on local character and are often located on the edge of former agricultural land or are now partly contained by development. Long Wood and Hermitage Wood are the largest remaining areas of woodland in the area and are visible on the skyline in southerly views from Filton. Splatts Abbey Wood is a small remnant woodland, following part of its removal during the construction of the MOD offices and forms an important physical feature, segregating the MOD and Hewlett Packard sites. A small area of woodland on the hillside at Filton Airfield partly reduces the visual prominence of adjacent buildings, including woodland along the southern boundary of recent development at Charlton Hayes. Savage's Wood, Webb's Wood and Sherbourne's Brake are prominent from within the Patchway Brook and Stoke Brook valleys. Here they combine with the open, small-scale valley landscapes to provide visual enclosure and screening of adjacent residential development, often maintaining strong rural characteristics and seclusion within these spaces.

Areas of relatively recent development are evident, including development to the north of the airfield. Though some of the existing perimeter landscape framework has been retained, views remain relatively stark.

The extensive area of fields at Cribbs Farm is being redeveloped, which will alter the open character of this area. The visual connection between the large-scale wooded ridgeline at Haw Wood to the west, beyond this area, and the pastoral landscape, openness and green fringes of the airfield and adjacent agricultural land, result in a wide and open corridor with rural characteristics, visible from and in strong contrast to its adjacent urban edge although this will change as development proceeds.

The rising open hillside covered by Filton Golf Course to the south forms a smaller-scale break within the urban fabric. It is prominent within long views

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from the north-west and east and visually reduces the coalescence and dominance of built forms. The elevated location of the golf course often gives open views of the airfield and wider urban area.

Bradley Stoke includes strategic open space, comprising small pockets of open space amongst housing and more natural vegetated corridors, with small woodlands, along the Patchway and Stoke Brooks. Near the convergence of the brooks large-scale earthworks have formed an unnatural steep sided valley to the Bradley Brook and a large open plateau of poor grass cover. Peripheral scrub development and local areas of woodland provide better integration in places. These landscape elements are visible from the M4 and adjacent area of new housing development.

The large railway junction, although not prominent within the urban fabric, is a visually significant urban fringe landscape seen on rail journeys to Wales and the South-west. Although forming a break in the surrounding urban fabric, the segmented site contains a disturbed landscape with areas of natural scrub, woodland, rough grassland and earthworks, mounds, large-scale re-grading works and ballast storage. A rail depot has been developed in the north-east quadrant.

The extensive rolling grassland of Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden in the south-east of the LCA includes peripheral woodland, visually dominant Dower House, and associated features within the parkland. Although largely located within Bristol, the Registered Park and Garden contributes significantly to the character and amenity of the more recent housing development that is structured around it.

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Photo 4: Ongoing residential development dominates the south-western part of the LCA including at Cribbs Farm. The wooded ridgeline of Haw Wood is just visible on the skyline.



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Tranquillity and Dark Skies

The presence of dense settlement, busy roads including the M4, M5, A38 and A4174, and the railway influences the sense of tranquillity experienced within the Kingswood LCA.

Dense settlement, and associated light pollution, influences the experience of dark night skies throughout the LCA. Light pollution is particularly high near Aztec West and Almondsbury Business Park, retail development at Cribbs Causeway and industrial development north-east of the airfield.

Visually Important Hillsides

There are no Visually Important Hillsides (VIH) located within this LCA. The Severn Ridges VIH forms part of the north-western boundary of the LCA. This VIH comprises a complex area of ridges punctuated by a series of hills, which marks as distinctive change in landscape character. The VIH is visually prominent when viewed from the west, including within long-distance views from South Wales and the Forest of Dean, and provides a green backdrop and setting to several Conservation Areas.

Further details are provided in **Annex I: Visually Important Hillsides**.

Strategic Viewpoints

There are no Strategic Viewpoints (SVP) located within this LCA. Further details are provided in **Annex II: Strategic Viewpoints**.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Valued Features

- Areas of open space which break up the dense urban pattern, provide recreational opportunities and enhance biodiversity.
- Wooded corridors of Hortham, Patchway and Stoke Brooks within the Three Brooks LNR, which provide habitat opportunities and enhance biodiversity.
- The former airfield and associated hangar buildings that contribute to time depth.
- Distinct boundary feature formed by the M4/M5 to the settlement edge, with a more rural landscape located beyond.
- The Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden, which forms a key feature in views in the south-east of the LCA, contributing to sense of place and time depth.

The Changing Landscape

The following section sets out the changes and pressures to the Patchway, Filton and the Stokes LCA.

Climate Change

- Climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of seasonal flooding in lower-lying valleys, particularly the Henbury Trym in the west and Stoke Brook in the east of the LCA. Associated pressures to build flood management works that are unsympathetic to local landscape character and sensitive habitats.

Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery

- An increase in tree planting is required to contribute towards South Gloucestershire's objective of doubling tree cover by 2030, and in accordance with the proposed woodland strategic network which forms part of the West of England's Nature Recovery Network. This may include the planting of individual and groups of trees, and small woodlands linking the Three Brooks LNR in broad corridors to woodlands and green space north of the M5 and in Filton. This will increase habitat connectivity and further soften the settlement edge.

Land Use and Cover

- The landscape framework within the LCA is typically in a poor condition. Many boundaries subdividing landholdings and non-agricultural use are overgrown hedgerows, some containing dead elm trees, or hedgerows have been removed and replaced by fencing.
- The lack of active management of hedgerows has contributed to their decline, whilst the continued encroachment of the urban edge has eroded the margins of the remaining agricultural landscape, reducing the extent of the buffer between developed areas.
- The remaining areas or pockets of remnant agricultural areas on the fringes of recent urban development and also now enclosed within the expanded urban area, are in a state of flux. Many of these areas are either recently developed, proposed for development or no longer actively managed. Resultant overgrown hedgerows and long, rough grass are signs of a landscape in transition and the erosion of rural/ agricultural characteristics.
- The retention of landscape features and habitats within urban development can do much to enhance the character and biodiversity value of new settlement as well as providing connectivity of habitat, as seen along the courses of the Stoke Brook and Patchway Brook. These features require sufficient space within the development and long-term management to ensure their longevity.
- Woodland cover is relatively rare, typically found near the LCA's boundaries, although some is retained within development. Some retained

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areas are ancient woodland, a nationally limited natural resource that is of ecological importance. These woodlands can be threatened from enclosure within new urban development resulting from increased pressure from recreational use and limited active management of their long-term structure. This resource is sensitive to change, particularly fragmentation and isolation from existing green space links, which would potentially affect local distinctiveness and their biodiversity values.

- The lack of active management of landscape and vegetation features would eventually contribute to their decline or loss, with implications upon visual amenity, biodiversity and character of open spaces and urban streetscape. With the exception of new development schemes, where appropriate planting measures are required as part of the approved scheme, there is little evidence of new planting to provide some succession or sustain this structure in the long term.
- Where active management has taken place, such as hedge laying along the boundary of a public open space adjacent to the A4174 in Filton, this has made a positive contribution to both local character and its longevity. Improvement of open spaces in terms of both planting and management seen at Patchway has enhanced both the landscape structure and ecological diversity of the sites. A community garden is being developed at Elm Park, Filton.
- Open space pockets within the area are also sensitive to change. Due to the extent of urban development, all open spaces provide valuable visual, biodiversity and recreational amenity and create physical breaks within the urban fabric, contributing to the distinctive character of the locality or wider area.

Development

- Development at Bradley Stoke, comprising housing adjacent to the M4 and Bradley Stoke School and within Stoke Gifford at Hillside Farm, has created abrupt urban/rural boundaries.
- Development to the west of the Filton Airfield will alter the landscape structure and open character of this part of the LCA, which previously provided visual connectivity with Haw Wood to the west of the LCA boundary.

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- In densely developed areas, particularly Bradley Stoke and Stoke Gifford, the regular pattern and continuity of housing, lack of boundary planting to provide integration, relatively limited provision of formal open space and street trees, tends to create a continuous roofscape and abrupt built edge. This is visually prominent locally, and in places from the wider countryside beyond this area.
- Relatively recent development at Charlton Hayes has resulted in a significant change in landscape character to the north-eastern corner of the airfield, north of the existing runway. As a high-density development of formal character and with relatively modest open space provision within much of the urban fabric, street trees and robust landscape schemes associated with new development is increasingly important to provide visual relief to the dense built form. Sections of the existing landscape and Filton Wood are incorporated into the development. As a result of the development the character of local views is changing significantly.
- Redevelopment of the Filton airfield will result in significant further change in the character of the locality including in views from the adjacent road network, existing residential properties, and elevated views from Filton Golf Course.
- Relatively recent residential development at Wallscourt Farm occupies land between the MOD and Hewlett Packard sites, and largely retains the strong vegetation structure that was associated with the former agricultural landscape. A small area of unmanaged remnant pastoral land is located to the north-east of this development. Hermitage Wood forms a soft boundary to the east of this development and prevents coalescence between residential and employment development. This area is sensitive to infill development.
- The wooded ridgeline at Stoke Park and, to a lesser extent the upper slopes of the Filton Golf Course, are the only remaining landscape skylines within this area not interrupted by built development. These sites are therefore sensitive to change, particularly from the encroachment of built features.
- Infill development affects parts of the LCA that historically had larger gardens and open spaces, often impacting on visual amenity and physical breaks within the urban fabric, as well as softening the urban form. Loss of such spaces may therefore reduce the openness within the area, increasing the density of the built environment. In addition, it may also

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introduce a variation in architectural style, form, massing, and colour, which could affect the distinctiveness of the locality. However, policies are included in the Local Plan which seek to ensure that any development proposals take account of the need to protect the character, amenity and distinctiveness of the locality and wider landscape.

- High traffic levels along the intensive road network are a prominent influence. Road connections east to west are generally poor, with traffic congestion typical, adding to the visual intrusion resulting from the road network. Continuing development within this area is likely to increase traffic levels on the road network. This is further compounded by the widening of roads and the introduction of lighting and gantries that often squeeze or eliminate the planting that previously screened or integrated the transport infrastructure with its surroundings.
- Recently completed and under construction development at UWE will result in further loss of trees and open space within the campus.

Guidance

These guidelines recommend how the landscape can be managed to ensure future change respects the local character and should be read in conjunction with the objectives of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Landscape Strategy and Guidelines [See reference 6], so as to avoid adverse indirect effects on the setting of the CNL, as well as the overarching management strategy objectives set out in Chapter 4.

Landscape Strategy

Landscape Management

- Protect skylines formed by Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden and Filton Golf course. Frame key views that contribute to the distinctive character of the locality, whether within this LCA or adjacent character areas.

- Seek a stronger and more cohesive tree framework both within the existing settlement area and within new development sites in this area to meet South Gloucestershire’s current target of 15% increase in tree cover.
- Ensure a cohesive approach to the landscape structure of different neighbourhoods and developments within the LCA, for example extending the ‘urban forest’ character imparted by street trees and other tree cover within the urban fabric of the adjacent landscape character area, and as is emerging at Charlton Hayes.
- Secure the enhancement and management of existing open spaces to improve their natural beauty, recreational function, sustainability and biodiversity value, and their resilience to the pressures of increased use. Recognise the particular importance that residential gardens can contribute to the character and biodiversity value of an area.

Ecology/Biodiversity Management

- Protect and improve the riparian habitat of the Henbury Trym and Bradley Brook and seek opportunities to naturalise sections currently impacted by engineering structures (except heritage features), together with opportunities for enhance recreational access along Bradley Brook.
- Protect and prioritise connections between deciduous woodland within the LCA and ancient woodland areas in adjacent LCAs, for example between Splatts Abbey Wood SNCI and Stoke Park SNCI/Registered Park and Garden in the south of the LCA, together with Haw Wood SNCI and Blackhorse Wood SNCI in adjacent Severn Ridges LCA.
- Protect, enhance, and manage the Three Brooks LNR for biodiversity and recreational access.
- Manage recreational pressures on habitat areas and semi-natural open space.

Development Management

- Ensure that retained landscape features within development areas are set within adequate space to ensure effective protection and management.

Dense Urban Land

- Within the areas of dense development, careful planning of any new developments is particularly important to avoid damage to existing retained trees and ensuring the succession of proposed new landscape schemes.
- Where opportunities become available, increase planting to provide an effective buffer between the motorways and adjacent development and landscapes, and contribute towards the creation of wildlife links.
- Carefully control boundary treatments and surfacing including road facing gardens to protect the character of place, biodiversity, and quality of the public realm within both urban and rural environments.
- Avoid encroachment of dense settlement into the surrounding rural landscape.

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Report produced by LUC

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Bristol

12th Floor, Colston Tower, Colston Street, Bristol BS1 4XE

0117 929 1997

bristol@landuse.co.uk

Cardiff

16A, 15th Floor, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Rd, Cardiff CF24 0EB

0292 032 9006

cardiff@landuse.co.uk

Edinburgh

Atholl Exchange, 6 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG

0131 202 1616

edinburgh@landuse.co.uk

Glasgow

37 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JJ

0141 334 9595

glasgow@landuse.co.uk

London

250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD

020 7383 5784

london@landuse.co.uk

Manchester

6th Floor, 55 King Street, Manchester M2 4LQ

0161 537 5960

manchester@landuse.co.uk

landuse.co.uk

Landscape Design / Strategic Planning & Assessment

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