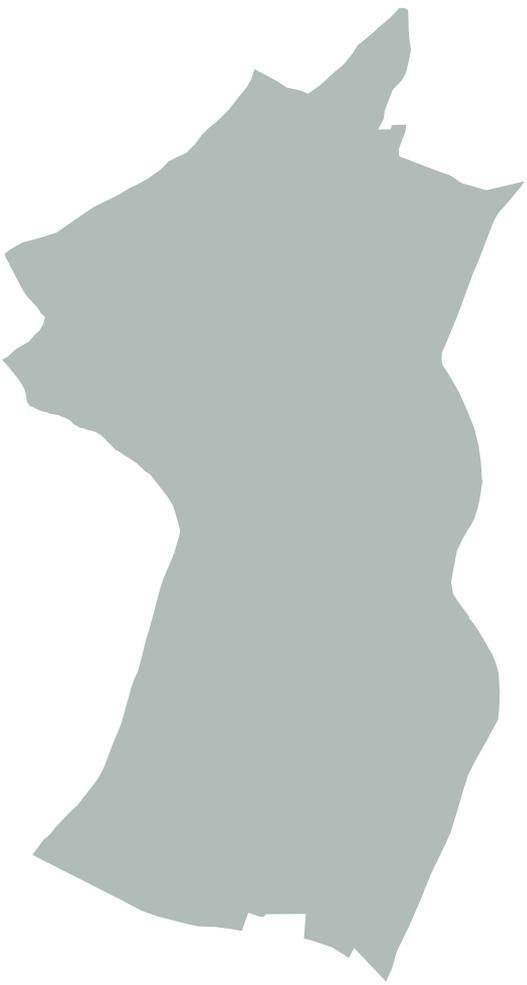




# Area 9

## Tytherington Plain



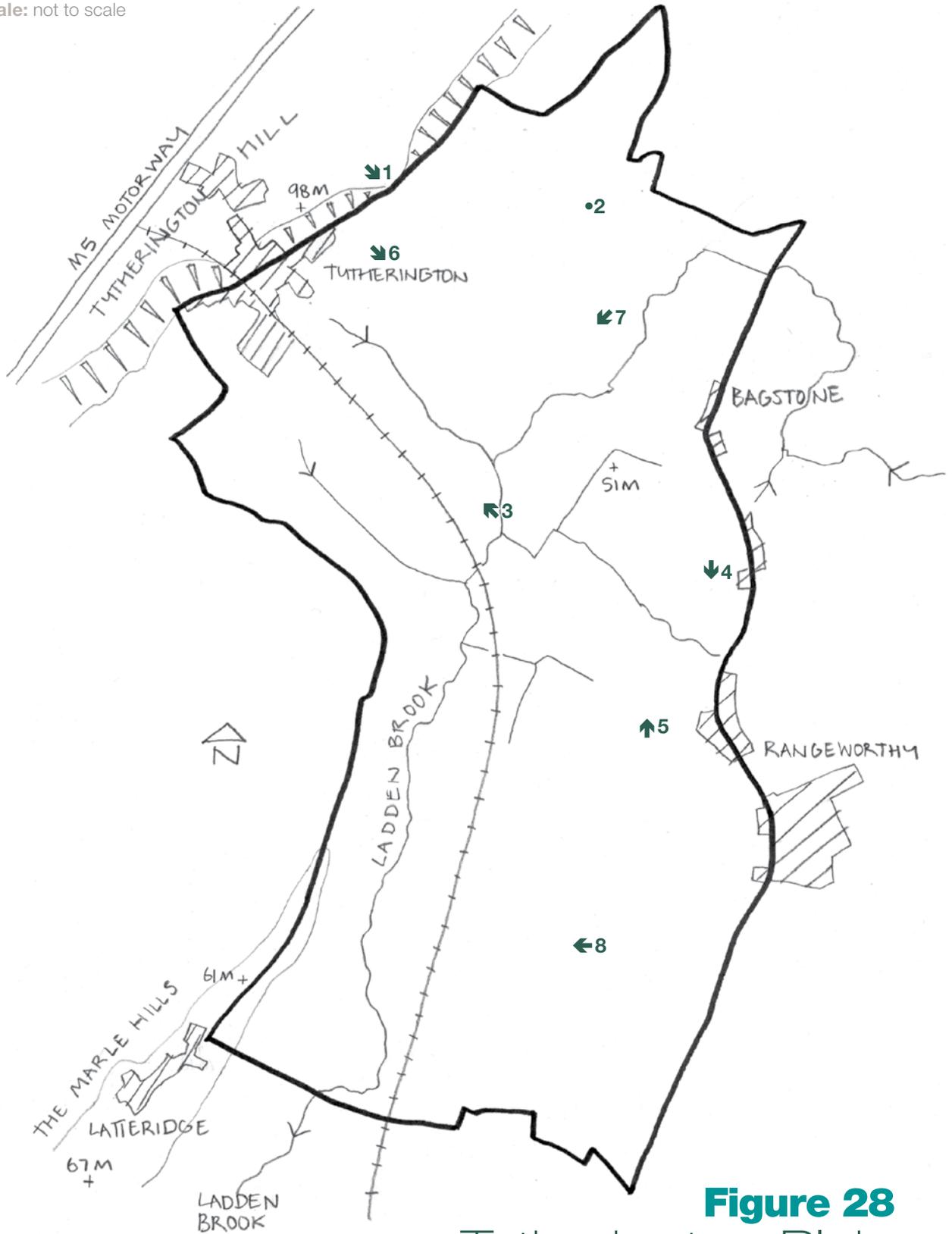
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### Key

↖8 Photograph viewpoints

Scale: not to scale



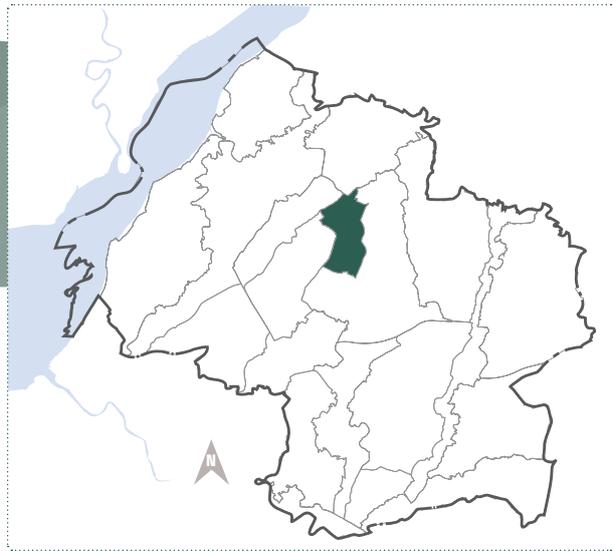
**Figure 28**  
Tytherington Plain

Sketch Map

## Area 9

### Tytherington Plain

**The Tytherington Plain landscape character area is a flat open area of agricultural land, rising gently at the boundaries, divided by a regular framework of hedges and ditches, influenced by a number of powerlines.**



## Key Characteristics

- Simple, flat open plain to the north, with regular pattern of drainage ditches, very gently sloping valley to the south, partly contained by gently rising land to the east, north west and south west. A large area of the plain is seasonally affected by flooding.
- The water courses and associated bankside vegetation of the Laddon Brook, its tributaries and connecting ditches provide wildlife corridors and habitat for a diverse range of species.
- Predominantly arable land with some pasture. Fields are medium sized, defined by a regular pattern of drainage ditches within the northern plain, elsewhere contained by a regular pattern of low clipped hedges, some overgrown, with intermittent mature trees and copses that provide habitat for notable species including European Protected Species
- Areas of neutral grassland support a diverse range of flora including areas of species rich grassland, while arable fields provide nesting opportunities in the spring and winter stubble provides a valuable foraging resource.
- Tree structure is generally more frequent towards the boundaries of the area and in the south.
- The minerals railway line, bordered by trees and scrub, physically bisects the area north to south and forms a visual barrier within some views.
- Settlement and road infrastructure is very limited. Isolated properties, farms, some linear settlement and the small village of Tytherington line minor roads that skirt the edges of the area.
- A number of powerlines cross and dominate the open landscape, converging on a sub-station within the adjacent area to the southwest.

## Location

The Tytherington Plain landscape character area is located in central South Gloucestershire, north of Bristol and north west of Yate.

The area's boundary follows subtle landform features and, in places, marks a transition in vegetation cover between this open landscape and the more enclosed adjoining character areas.

The eastern boundary follows the B4058 as it runs along a low ridge and the north western boundary marks a transition between this area and the adjacent gently rising Rudgeway and Tytherington Ridge. Part of the central western boundary marks a transition between this area's limited tree cover and the adjacent area's more dense pattern of hedgerow trees.

The south western boundary follows the slightly higher ground of The Marle Hills at Latteridge, which partly contains the southern area. The southern boundary marks an area of transition within the Ladden Brook valley and partly follows the B4059. The north eastern boundary marks a transition in land cover and forms a buffer to small clusters of settlement within the adjacent character area. (See Figure 25).

## Physical Influences

The Tytherington Plain landscape character area largely consists of Carboniferous Westphalian rock and Coal Measures with some limestone along the northern boundary. The soils are dominated by a mix of Gleys, Stagnogleys and Brown Earth.

The topography of this area is generally fairly flat, around 50 metres a.o.d. rising slightly at its fringes. It forms a very shallow basin within an overall broad vale landscape which includes the adjacent Earthcott Vale to the west and Yate Vale to the south and east.

Within this context, the minerals railway line, with one section on embankment south east of Tytherington, forms a significant landform feature.

The Ladden Brook is the principal watercourse, which flows southwards through this fairly level landscape. The plain is extensively dissected by drainage ditches which influence the regular field pattern. This regular pattern and straightened sections of the Ladden Brook are the result of deliberate drainage measures to improve marsh and heathland for agricultural purposes. The plain however still floods seasonally after continuous heavy rain, covering a significant area (Photo 1). The land rises in the north west towards the Tytherington Ridge, in the south west, at Latteridge (up to 61 metres a.o.d.), and to the east along the B4058 (up to 67 metres a.o.d.), defining the very shallow Ladden Brook valley. This valley continues southwards and joins the more dominant River Frome in the adjacent Yate Vale area.

## Land Cover

The Tytherington Plain area typically consists of medium sized, regular shaped fields of predominantly arable land with limited pasture. Smaller field patterns are present clustered around scattered properties and farms. These comprise ordered, narrow, rectangular shaped fields to the north. Field boundaries principally comprise clipped hedges, often intermittent, some removed within the central area and occasionally replaced with fencing (Photo 6).

The area's drainage ditches and streams physically contain fields in many locations and are variously lined by hedgerows, or lack field boundaries, particularly within the central plain (Photo 3).

There is little or no tree cover within the plain (Photo 1); what there is, is confined to scattered mature hedgerow trees, isolated trees remaining from removed hedgerows, occasional copses or clumps of trees and some trees and scrub, along the railway line. Tree cover is more evenly distributed on higher ground towards the area's boundaries and to the south (Photo 8). Remnants of small orchards are present around the edge of Tytherington.

Local variations in land cover occur within the area. Rangeworthy Court, west of Rangeworthy, comprises a parkland of mature tree specimens within grassland (Photo 5); the adjacent remains of medieval fishponds comprise enclosed tree cover with rough grass; and a former deer park which extends into the southern area, associated with Acton Lodge.

Stidcot Plat Common, north east of Tytherington, comprises a small isolated area of neutral unimproved pasture, fringed by trees and clipped hedgerows (Photo 2).

Through the centre of the area, the Ladden Brook and its tributaries are generally open, straight channels, flanked by agricultural fields and post and wire fences (Photo 3).

### Biodiversity

The general lack of woodland within this character area means that the hedgerows and any hedgerow trees are likely to be important features for a range of species, including as roosting features for many species including bats and dormice both of which are present across the District and are UK priority species with associated Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP). The hedgerows will also be a major food source and provide commuting routes across the area.

The few SNClS within this character area are varied and scattered, two being designated for features including the neutral grassland that supports a range of invertebrates which in turn provide a food source for mammals including bats. Ant hills are also a regular feature.

The Ladden Brook also includes an SNCl. This is the main watercourse within this area with tributaries in the form of drainage ditches created as irrigation for the arable farmland which dominates this area. The water courses support a diverse range of species from aquatic macro-invertebrates to fish and water voles. In addition scattered ponds and pools within the area will support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species).

Agricultural land use within this area is dominated by arable with some areas of pastoral farmland. The arable farmland in particular is an ideal habitat for many species of ground nesting farmland birds including birds which are listed as Globally Threatened Red listed species, while the winter stubble provides a valuable foraging resource.

### Settlement and Infrastructure

Settlement is minimal within the low lying plain. Only the hamlet of Stidcot and a few isolated farms to the north and south east lie within the lower ground. Elsewhere, settlement is located on slightly raised ground on the periphery of the area: the village of Tytherington lies partly within this area on higher ground; similarly the linear settlements of Rangeworthy and Bagstone are located on a slight ridge along the B4058, on the eastern boundary of the area.

Rangeworthy is a linear settlement of well spaced houses, consisting of a mix of Pennant sandstone and rendered properties. Stone walls extend along the B4058, sometimes intermittently, between Iron Acton to the south and Bagstone. Stone walls also define the extent of Rangeworthy Court, extending into the agricultural landscape (Photo 5).

Tytherington is located at a confluence of roads on the lower slopes of Tytherington Hill, partly extending into this area. A Conservation Area covers the central part of the village, which includes key properties and a framework of tall boundary walls, all constructed of Pennant sandstone. The church and public house, located at the heart of the village (and on the area's boundary), are prominent in the locality. More recent brick housing has developed out from the village centre, either concentrated in a small close or located in a regular, but low density, linear pattern along lanes.

Some farms include large modern agricultural buildings, are constructed of timber with sheet metal roofing, which is in contrast to the stone farm houses and original farm complex (Photo 4).

Only one minor road crosses the northern low lying plain at Stidcot. Minor roads and lanes elsewhere are limited to the area's boundaries. These include the B4058 from Iron Acton to Heath End, passing along the upper slopes of the low ridge defining the Ladden Valley; the B4059 to the south from Iron Acton through Latteridge, passing across the Ladden Brook valley; and the angular pattern of lanes around Tytherington, which parallel the rising landform with occasional acute bends.

The Jubilee Way and one of a series of Circular Rides are major recreational routes that cross the area. The footpath network within the area is otherwise very limited.

The Jubilee Way passes south eastwards from Tytherington to Rangeworthy, over the central plain area and the Circular Ride just enters the area, following lanes through Tytherington.

A minerals railway line, formerly the main line from Thornbury, runs north west to south east through the central plain and Ladden Brook valley, linking the quarries at Tytherington to Yate, via Iron Acton.

A number of powerlines cross the plain, radiating out from the large Iron Acton electricity sub-station located to the west (Photo 7), within the adjacent well treed Earthcott Vale landscape area.

### Landscape Character

Tytherington Plain comprises a flat open plain to the north and very gently sloping valley of the Ladden Brook to the south. The area is contained by gently rising slopes to the east, south west, west (although less evident) and the more prominent wooded ridgeline at Tytherington Hill to the north west. The pattern and location of settlement and built features (with the exception of the minerals railway) is limited to higher ground above the floodplain.

The open plain is a large scale and simple landscape, emphasised by the flat landform,

the limited framework provided by the open straight ditches, clipped sometimes intermittent hedges and scattered mature trees. The mature specimen trees provide important, though infrequent, vertical visual features. Wide open skies are a key feature.

The minerals railway line, edged with trees and scrub, forms a low key built element, but forms a visually significant linear feature, containing some views across the open plain to east and west.

The clipped and intermittent hedgerows provide little visual containment. However, along the limited network of lanes and roads, where the hedgerows are typically more dense and often overgrown, views are contained. In some areas stone walls form characteristic features, particularly associated with roads and settlement.

Tytherington and the wooded ridgeline of the Rudgey and Tytherington Ridge to the west, feature in some distant views from the road network and public footpaths.

Further south, within the more defined Ladden Valley and on rising ground towards the boundaries of the area, the landscape is more contained and structured by an irregular pattern of copses, tree clumps, isolated and frequent hedgerow trees, which provide both open and enclosed views.

Containing only a scattering of isolated properties and farms, settlement does not have a major impact or influence over this area.

The linear settlements on the periphery of the area are generally well integrated by the surrounding hedgerow and tree vegetation. Although occasional views are possible between and through surrounding hedgerows, these built features are not prominent. The extent of Tytherington village is generally well integrated, set against a wooded ridgeline. The church tower forms a focal point in views from the wider landscape. The village extension eastwards, is however locally more prominent, due to the very limited vegetation structure along this section

of the settlement edge, the open landscape context and its different layout. The regular shaped settlement pattern visually extends the village towards the open plain, diluting the original clustered settlement pattern associated with the Tytherington Ridge.

Large farm sheds within the character area are also locally prominent, with limited integration, due to their scale, massing and materials, with buildings often taller than the surrounding vegetation framework, or located within an open landscape setting (Photo 3 & 4).

The hedgerow and tree structure reduces the impact of the minor roads and railway that run with the grain of the landform and either skirt or bisect the area. Although the railway runs through the northern area, where there is less vegetation framework, the infrastructure is low key and it is not particularly evident except within very local views. The passage of trains is however more evident in this open landscape.

The powerlines and pylons that cross the area are prominent horizontal and vertical elements and dominate many local views, due to the openness of the landscape. The Iron Acton sub-station to the west is not visible, contained within a strong structure of mature trees beyond this area. However, the convergence of powerlines and towers towards the sub-station is highly prominent.

### The Changing Landscape

The open character area is significantly affected by the number of powerlines that radiate out from the Iron Acton sub-station north of Latteridge across the landscape in all directions. In an otherwise relatively tranquil and undeveloped area with very little settlement or tree cover, powerlines and towers are prominent features in many views, eroding the rural character of the area.

Modern agricultural buildings are also, in places, prominent structures in this open landscape, contrasting with earlier farm and settlement patterns, which due to their scale, stone

construction and traditional form are generally well integrated within the landscape. As a result, these modern agricultural buildings can also contribute to a loss of local character.

The removal of hedgerows and resultant open character, particularly within the northern plain, is the result of land drainage and a change in land use to arable. The visual openness makes the area sensitive to change which would be evident from both within the area and higher ground to the east and west. The habitat value of the remaining hedgerows and ditches is increased due to their relative scarcity.

Any loss of or disturbance to the scattered pools and ponds, including to their surrounding terrestrial habitat would result in loss or degradation of habitat.

There has been some increase in horsekeep in this character area, leading to some erosion of the rural character. Agriculture diversification in this area has included growing biofuels, which results in a change to the texture and openness of the landscape.

The tree and hedgerow structure, where evident within or towards the edge of the open plain, forms a particularly important landscape and habitat feature. As remnants of a former more divided and enclosed landscape, these trees and hedgerows provide visual texture and diversity within an otherwise open and simple landscape. Deterioration or further loss of these features would increase the extent of open plain and visual sensitivity of the landscape and lead to further loss of habitat and connectivity.

The denser pattern of hedgerows and tree cover towards the periphery of the area results in a landscape less sensitive to change. However, the mature tree structure contains few juvenile trees to maintain succession. In the future this could result in a further decline in tree cover, with a landscape change to a more open and sensitive area. Similarly, hedgerow removal or lack of management has the potential to erode this key framework and biodiversity feature.

The distinctive linear settlements along the area's boundary are likely to be particularly sensitive to pressures for change, especially from infill development, with the potential resultant loss of the characteristic mosaic and spatial arrangement of buildings, vegetation and open space. The loss of vegetation within and along settlement edges has the potential to reduce their integration within the adjacent, generally open landscape.

The eastern settlement edge of Tytherington is also sensitive to change, being slightly elevated above the central plain and visible within open views from the east.

Construction of the consented wind farm to the south in Earthcott Vale will be visible from this character area, seen in the context of existing pylon lines.

Stone walls along the B4058 are in variable condition, with some sections in need of repair, this is detrimental to the character of this locally important route.

The roads of this character area are under pressure from increasing traffic that can erode verges, in addition safety improvements can result in the loss of characteristic landscape features.

The mothballing of the Tytherington Quarry during the economic downturn means that at the time of writing the minerals line is not used. However it is understood that the line will continue to be maintained and future use can be expected.

## Landscape Strategy

- Active long term management of the landscape structure and maintaining connectivity of habitat, including hedgerows, succession planting of hedgerow trees and the broadleaf tree structure generally. To help to ensure the conservation of these key features for the long term, while maintaining the distinctive open character.
  - Maintenance and reinforcement of the tree and hedgerow structure at settlement edges to help to ensure the continued integration of settlement and buildings within the wider landscape.
  - Conservation and management of the mosaic of grasslands and farmland features including roadside verges and avoiding the further loss of connectivity of habitat.
  - Maintenance and restoration of the remaining traditional stone walls associated with some roads and settlement to prevent further deterioration of these features.
  - Any new built development within settlements should ensure that it respects the particular and distinctive mosaic of vegetation and open space that gives them their particular character.
  - Any new development outside the settlements should respect the landscape structure and characteristic openness of the locality, and should incorporate robust landscape proposals and carefully consider the colour and texture of finishes to maximise integration with the landscape.
  - Ensure that road improvements protect and/or reinstate characteristic landscape features of the locality.
- The impact of any vertical elements in this open landscape should be mitigated through on and/or off site planting to provide a buffer, foil or screening of key views while still maintaining the open character of the plain.
  - Protect the characteristic tranquillity of the area, including to protect wildlife.
  - Any new development in the vale should be designed and landscaped to ensure that it does not impact on the visual inter relationship with higher land to the east and west.

## Landscape Character Areas



1 Ladden Brook in flood, viewed from Tytherington Hill. Two farms to the right with old and new buildings.



2 Stidcot Plat Common. Neutral unimproved pasture. Roadside site of wildlife importance. Three commoners have rights to graze. Now under management plan for sustained conservation.



3 View north west along Ladden Brook to Tytherington and wooded ridge on skyline.



4 View south to Bagstone Court Farm - modern agricultural buildings replace the old cattle yard. These buildings are evident in views from the M5.



5 View north to Rangeworthy Court Farm and Church. The village of Rangeworthy is along the B4058 following the top of a stoney ridge, above the Yate Vale.



6 View south east from near Tytherington over the plain. Pasture land, with some intermittent hedgerows and few trees. The line of the railway is evident to the right, lined by tall vegetation.



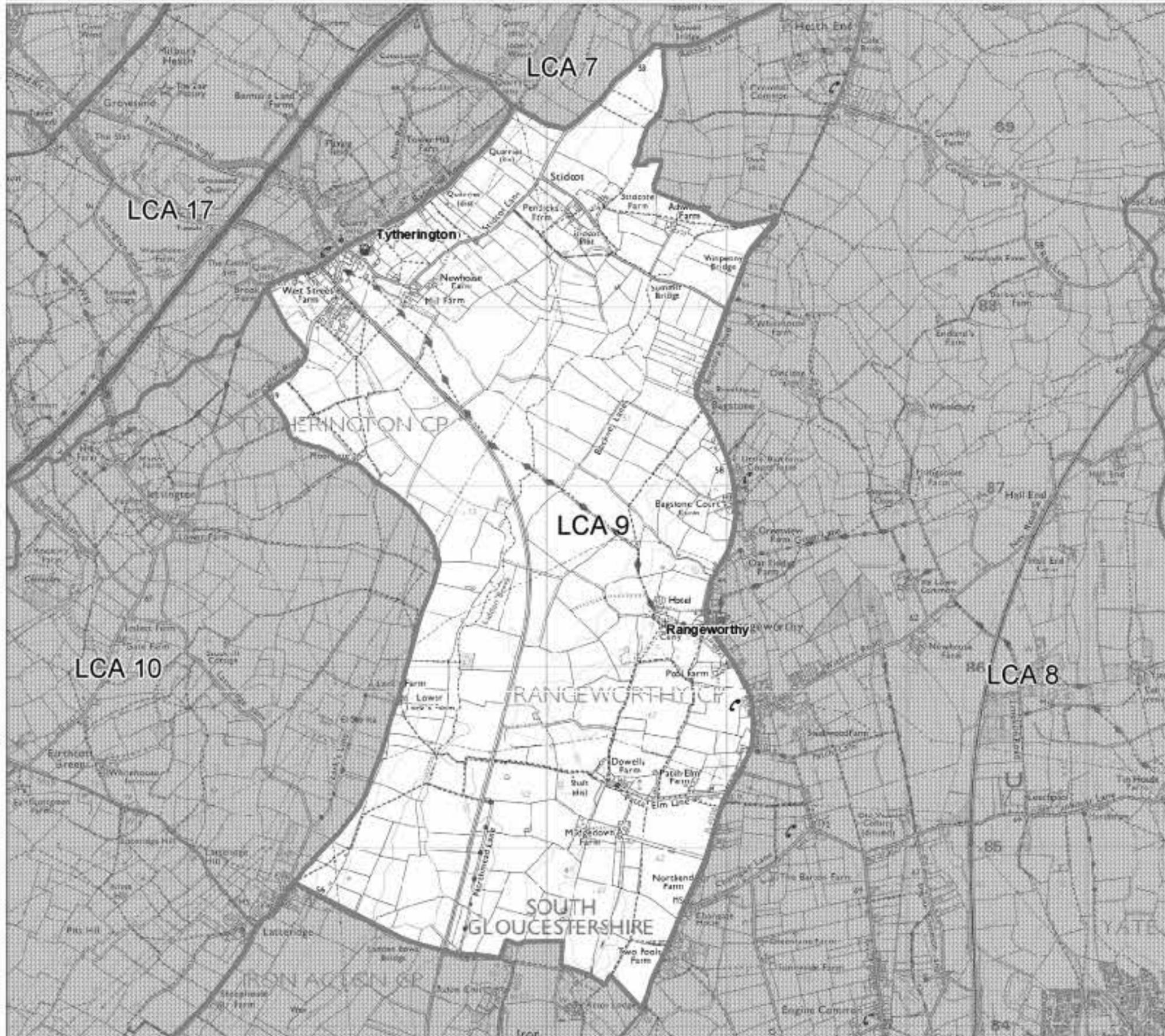
7 View south west, with pasture land and pylon corridor connecting to the Iron Acton electricity sub-station.



8 View westwards over Ladden Brook, towards the rising ground of the Marl Hills. The pylon towers converge on the Iron Acton electricity sub-station, to the right in the far distance.

**Figure 29 – Area 9**  
Tytherington Plain

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**



**Legend**

- South Gloucestershire Boundary
- Landscape Character Area

The Landscape Character Area boundary shown on this map is indicative, sometimes marking a distinct change, but more often representing a transition in character with adjacent areas.

Similar attributes may therefore be evident within adjacent areas. (For further information refer to Report Section 4.1)



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**Figure 30**  
Area 9  
Tytherington Plain