



**South Gloucestershire**

**Landscape Character**

**Assessment**

Supplementary Planning Document

**South Gloucestershire Council**

**Draft report**

Prepared by LUC

November 2023

# Contents

## **Appendix A.2: Shallow Ridge LCT** **5**

Shallow Ridge LCT	6
LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale	9
LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley	42

## **References** **74**

## **Table of Tables**

**No table of figures entries found.**

## **Table of Figures**

Figure 2.1: Location of Shallow Ridge LCT	6
Photo 1: Pastoral fields with varied field boundaries, with the Cotswold Scarp and Somerset Monument in the background of the view	10
Figure 2.2: Location and Landscape Setting of LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale	12
Figure 2.3: Development and Heritage context of LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale	13
Figure 2.4: Ecology and Biodiversity context of LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale	14
Photo 2: Mixed farmland with partially wooded field boundaries	19
Photo 3: View south-west from Sodbury Common towards the Chipping Sodbury	25

**Contents**

Photo 4: Undulating fields with pockets of woodland, and the rising Cotswold Scarp in the background 29

Photo 1: View across undulating pastoral fields towards the wooded Cotswold Scarp 43

Figure 2.5: Location and Landscape Setting of LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley 45

Figure 2.6: Development and Heritage context of LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley 46

Figure 2.7: Ecology and Biodiversity context of LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley 47

Photo 2: Gently undulating pastoral fields in the south of the LCA, divided by a mix of mature and clipped hedgerows with occasional woodland 52

Photo 3: Medieval core of the Pucklechurch Conservation Area 57

Photo 4: Gently undulating landform with a relatively open character, with distant views to the Cotswold Scarp 61

# Appendix A.2: Shallow Ridge LCT

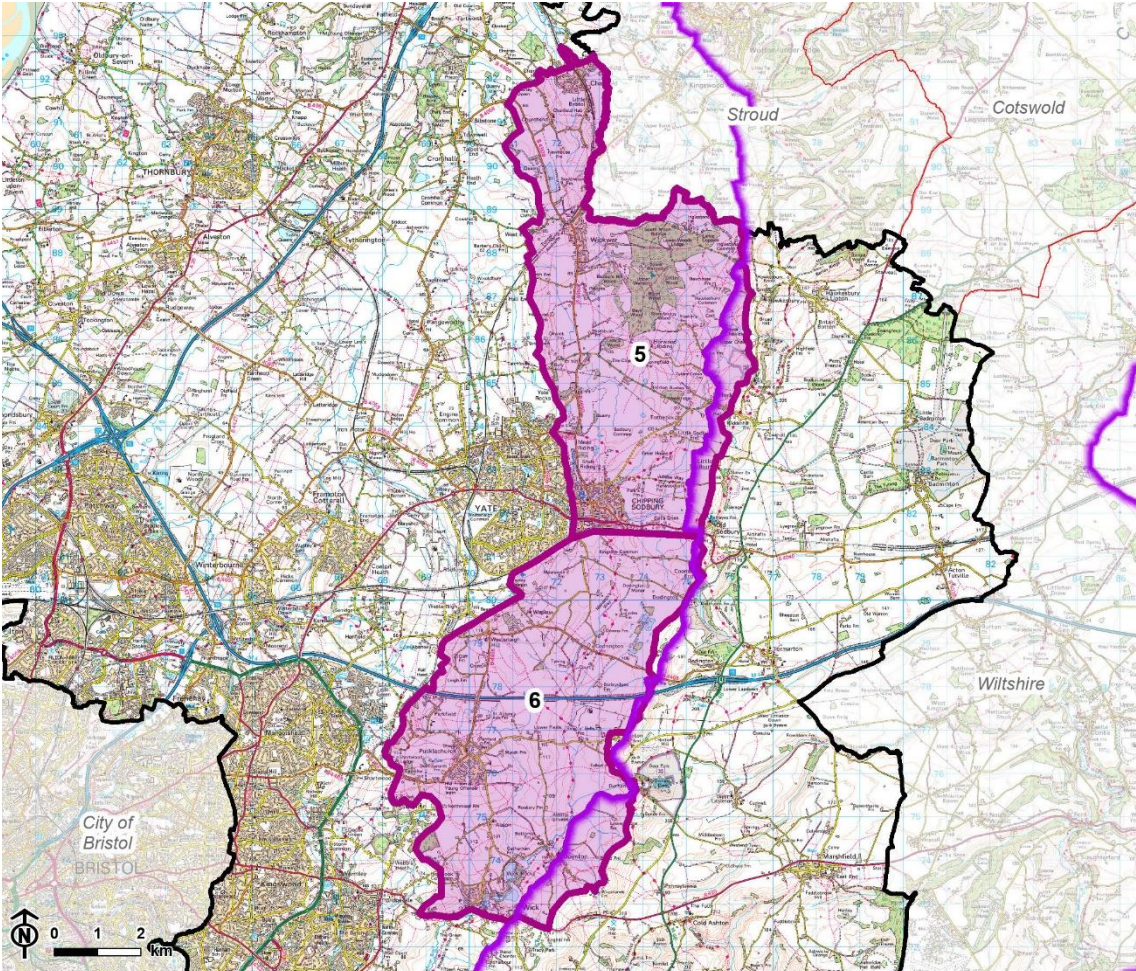
LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale

LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley









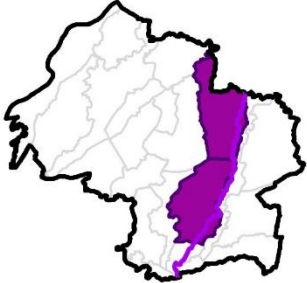
# Shallow Ridge LCT

Figure 2.1: Location of Shallow Ridge LCT



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-  Shallow Ridge LCT
-  Council boundary
-  Neighbouring local authority
-  Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
- LCAs within Shallow Ridge LCT:**
-  LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale
-  LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley



# Description

The Shallow Ridge Landscape Character Type (LCT) is located to the west of the plateau and scarp. The LCT is defined by a shallow and undulating ridge that runs north to south across the eastern half of South Gloucestershire, from approximately Wickwar, past Pucklechurch, to Bitton (within the Enclosed Valleys LCT).

## Key Characteristics

- A large-scale undulating valley landscape which sits below and west of the Cotswolds scarp.
- A shallow ridge provides containment to the lower vale landscape and the conurbation of Bristol to the west.
- The topography of the ridge varies from a simple, undulating landform to a more complex topography.
- Mixed land cover includes unenclosed common, heathland, woodland (including the extensive Lower Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)), mixed pasture and arable fields.
- Varied field boundaries comprise a mix of clipped or overgrown hedges, linear bands of trees and fencing.
- Quarries are associated with the ridgeline in the west.
- A network of lanes, minor roads and public rights of way cross the landscape, including sections of The Jubilee Way, Monarch's Way, Frome Valley Walkway and the Circular Rides.
- Numerous villages and small towns all with historic cores, are well-integrated with the surrounding rural landscape, such as Charfield, Wickwar, Pucklechurch and Wick.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

# Landscape Character Areas

The Shallow Ridge LCT is subdivided into two landscape character areas (LCAs):

- LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge & Vale
- LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley

## LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale

The Wickwar Ridge and Vale landscape character area (LCA) is a diverse undulating landscape characterised by a mix of farmland, woodland and common.



**Shallow Ridge LCT**

**Photo 1: Pastoral fields with varied field boundaries, with the Cotswold Scarp and Somerset Monument in the background of the view**



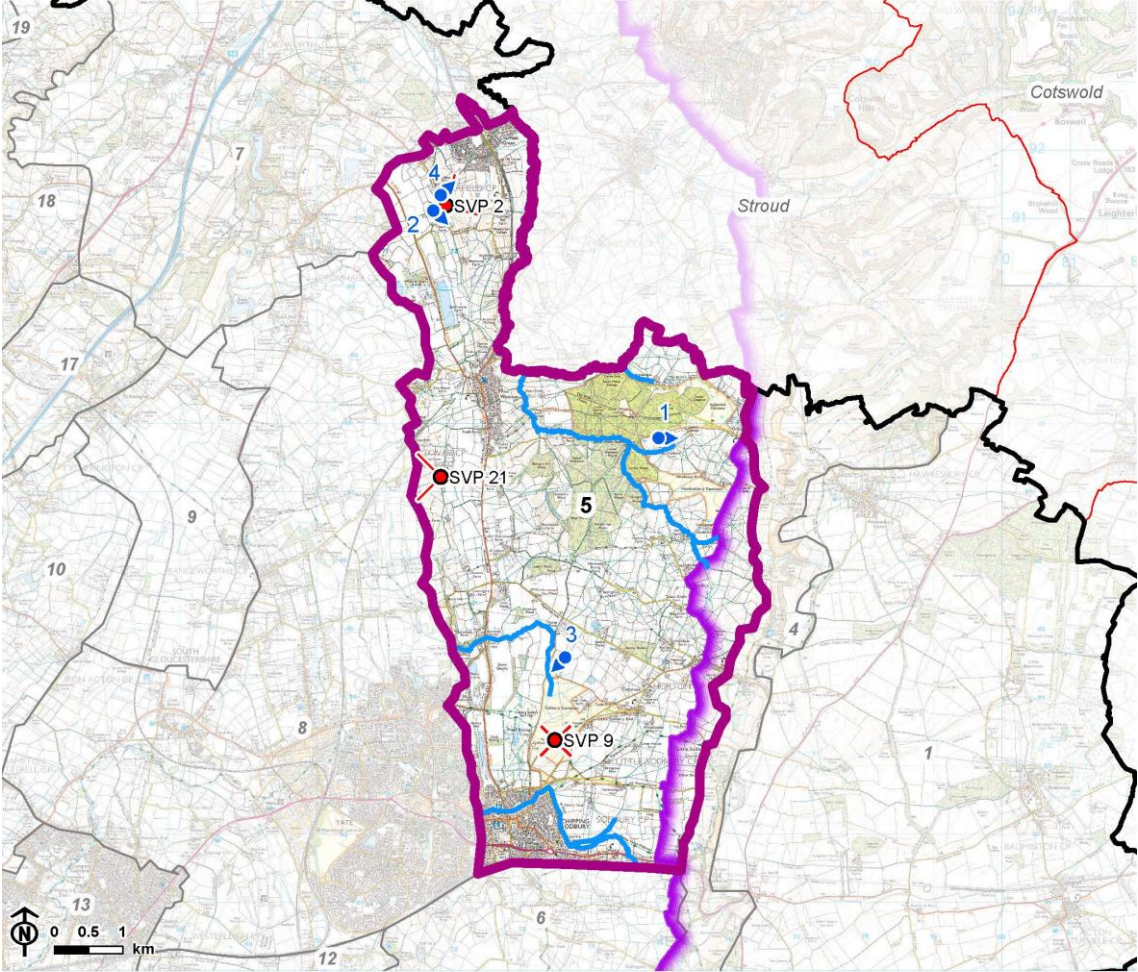
## Shallow Ridge LCT

### Location

The Wickwar Ridge and Vale LCA is located in the north-east of South Gloucestershire. The northern boundary of the LCA follows the settlement edge of Charfield and the South Gloucestershire Authority boundary. The eastern boundary follows the approximate toe of the Cotswold Scarp. The southern boundary follows the railway line cutting and southern settlement edge of Chipping Sodbury. To the west there is a subtle transition in topography, with the boundary approximately following the toe of the Wickwar Ridge and the division between Yate and Chipping Sodbury.

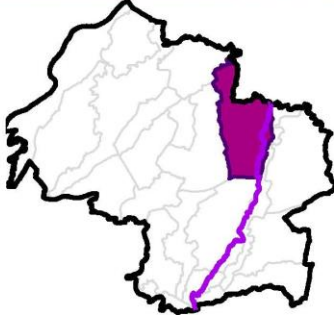
Shallow Ridge LCT

Figure 2.2: Location and Landscape Setting of LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale



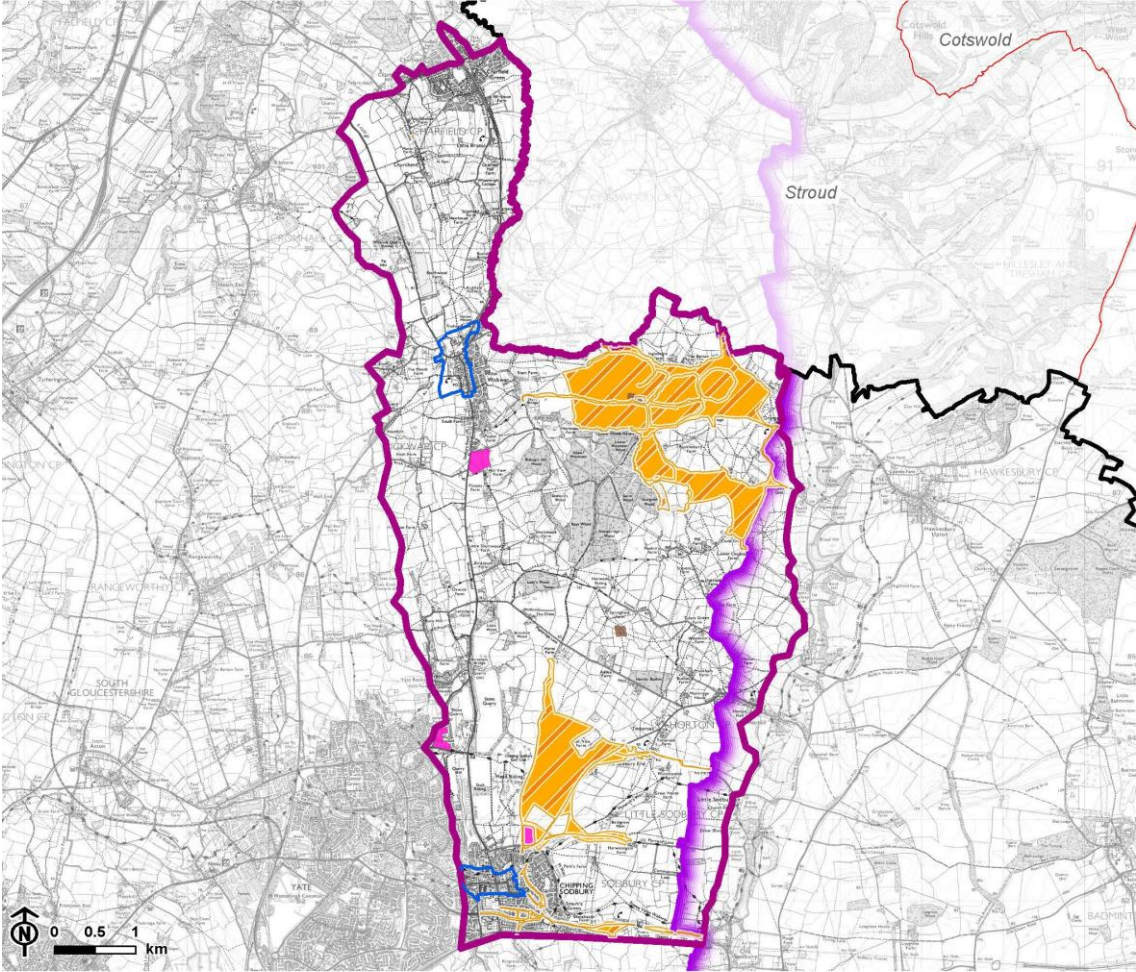
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- LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale
- Neighbouring LCA
- Council boundary
- Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
- River
- Photograph location and direction
- Strategic viewpoint and angle



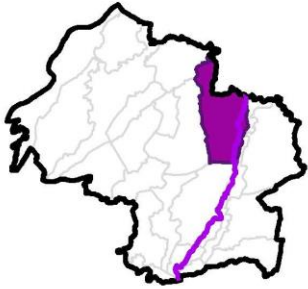
Shallow Ridge LCT

Figure 2.3: Development and Heritage context of LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale



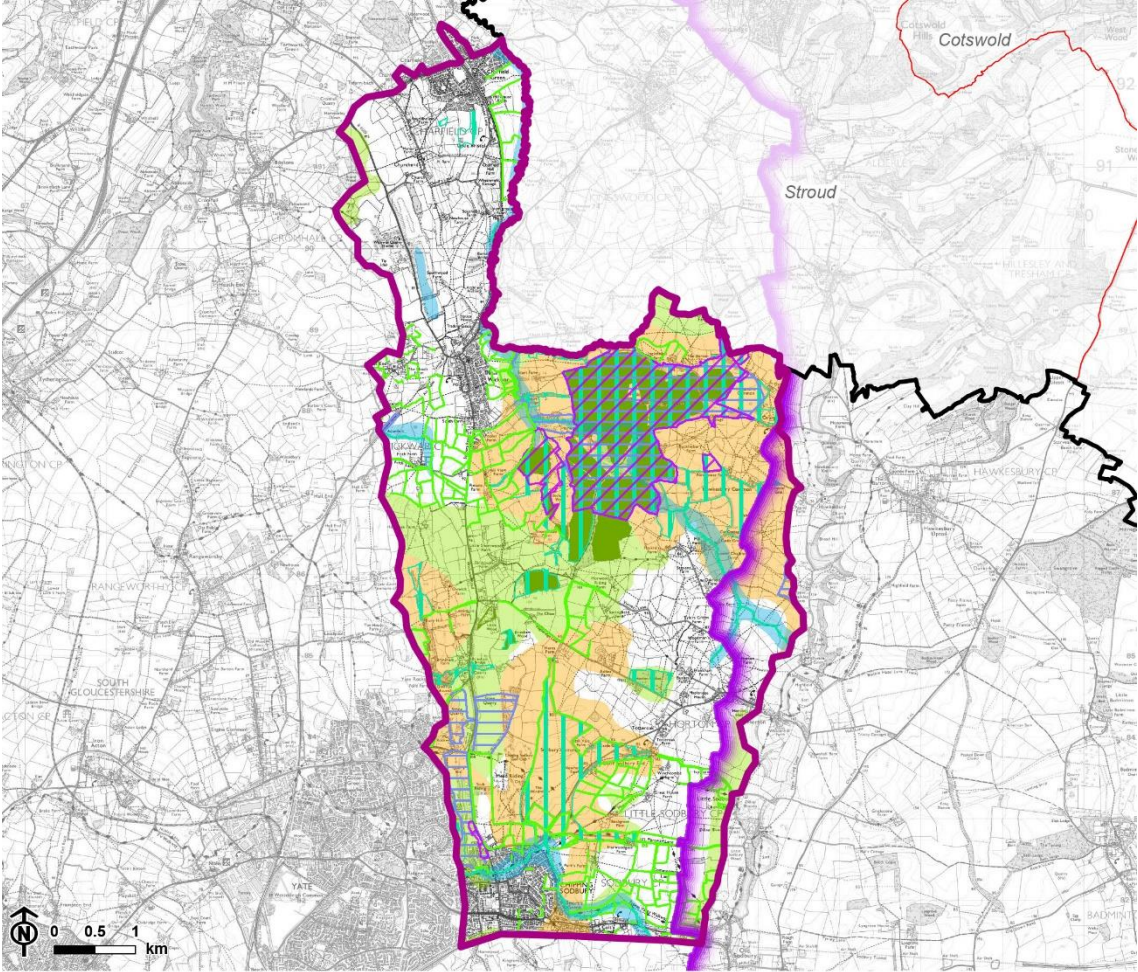
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- LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale
- Council boundary
- Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
- CRoW Common Land
- CRoW Open Access Land
- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area
- Recent development (since 2014)



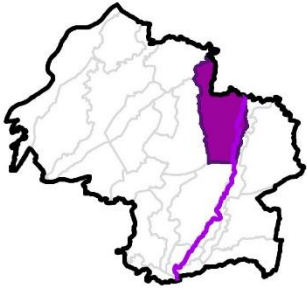
Shallow Ridge LCT

Figure 2.4: Ecology and Biodiversity context of LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale



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- LCA 5: Wickwar Ridge and Vale
- Council boundary
- Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest
- Ancient woodland
- Regionally Important Geological Site
- Grassland Strategic Network
- Wetland Strategic Network
- Woodland Strategic Network
- Important hedgerow



## Landscape Description

### Key Characteristics

- A large-scale undulating landscape characterises much of the LCA, with the small to medium-scale Little Avon River valley in the north.
- The LCA is enclosed by the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp to the east, which forms a significant backcloth and provides extensive views over the area.
- The Wickwar Ridge in the west forms a distinctive landscape feature, particularly in views from LCA 8: Yate Vale and provides expansive westward views across the landscape north of Yate.
- The varied rural landscape is characterised by irregular, small to medium mixed pasture and arable fields defined by hedgerows, with trees and small areas of woodland interspersed with commons.
- Rural tranquillity and dark night skies are strongly experienced, particularly in the north and north-east of the LCA.
- The extensive Lower Woods complex forms one of the largest areas of ancient woodland in the south-west of England and has a close interrelationship with the adjoining common land.
- Commons of varying sizes, characterised by rough grassland and scrub, contribute to the distinctiveness of the landscape.
- An extensive mosaic of calcareous grassland is present across the LCA, supporting a diverse range of flora and species-rich grassland.
- Watercourses and associated tributaries of Little Avon River, River Frome and Ladden Brook form sinuous and wooded small-scale features within the LCA.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

- The limited settlement pattern is concentrated in one historic small town (Chipping Sodbury), the historic village of Wickwar and the village of Charfield, and is scattered elsewhere.
- Views are expansive, particularly from commons, more elevated locations and the edges of Churchend and Charfield. Elsewhere, views are largely contained by landform, woodland and hedgerows.
- Tranquillity and dark night skies are experienced across much of the LCA, particularly in the north and north-east.
- Two quarries, two golf courses, 'B' roads, small settlements, a railway line and powerlines have a local influence on landscape character.

## Natural Influences

### Geology, Landform and Hydrology

The underlying geology is mostly Jurassic Inferior Oolite Limestone, combined with Alluvium, Carboniferous Limestone and Llandovery Shales. This creates an undulating landform, comprising the broad low-lying Wickwar Ridge to the west, (ranging between approximately 80 metres and 100 metres AOD) and a central sloping vale. The visually dominant Cotswold Scarp defines the eastern edge of the LCA and the Churchend Ridge runs on a north-south alignment in the north.

To the north, between Wickwar and Charfield, lies the Little Avon River valley, with land falling from approximately 80 metres AOD along the Wickwar Ridge to 30 metres AOD within the valley. The Little Avon River flows northwards along a tightly meandering course. The valley is small-scale and steep sided, enclosed by the Churchend Ridge to the west with concave lower slopes and convex upper slopes, becoming more open and broader to the north. The eastern valley slopes lie beyond the South Gloucestershire boundary.

Around Lower Woods, a series of steep, 'V'-shaped, narrow tributary valleys of the Little Avon cut through the area. Further south, the landform evens out into

## Shallow Ridge LCT

gently undulating ground and relatively flat vale in the area of Sodbury Common. From this area the ground rises gently eastwards to the LCA boundary before rising steeply, forming the Cotswold Scarp.

In the south of the LCA, tributaries of the Ladden Brook flow northwards across Sodbury Common, before turning westwards out of the LCA. To the south-east, tributaries of the River Frome flow generally westwards out of the LCA. There is a scattering of small ponds around Charfield and Wickwar.

## Land Cover

The Wickwar Ridge and Vale LCA includes a diverse mix of land cover. Woodland is a predominant feature, particularly in the north of the LCA, with the large area of Lower Woods, east of Wickwar. Copses and smaller areas of woodland are also scattered throughout the rest of the LCA.

Lower Woods is an extensive area of ancient woodland (280 hectares) comprising 23 woods and coppices separated by ancient grassy 'trenches' and tracks. Its boundaries have remained unchanged for several centuries, and it is a unique feature, both within this LCA and South Gloucestershire as a whole. The woodland includes a complex pattern of clearings, comprising unimproved common land and 'trenches' (linear clearings providing route-ways through woodland).

Field pattern is variable, with predominantly irregular, small to medium sized arable and pastoral fields, typically bound by clipped, thick or intermittent hedges and fences. In the south-west of the LCA the fields tend to be more regular and generally small to medium in size. Hedgerow trees are mature, intermittent or in linear belts.

Intermixed with the farmland are large commons of open rough grassland, including Inglestone and Hawkesbury in the east and Sodbury Common near the southern boundary. These open areas include patches of scrub, but are largely devoid of tree cover except along their boundaries. Much of the field



## Shallow Ridge LCT

pattern on the edges of these commons resulted from the process of assarting, where woodland was removed by small-scale enclosure and felling. Remaining trees may either predate the field formation or are successor trees. Colts Green Common, comprising a single field of wildflower meadow, lies to the east of Chipping Sodbury, sandwiched between the A432 and the railway.

Sodbury Common includes a golf course amongst the rough grassland. Chipping Sodbury Golf Course (north of Chipping Sodbury and just west of the common) in contrast, includes highly maintained fairways, greens and dense ornamental tree groups.

Some areas of horse keeping near settlement edges has led to subdivision of fields and the proliferation of small buildings, sheds and stables.

There are a number of limestone quarries in the area, both active and disused. The Chipping Sodbury Quarry, located along the south-western boundary of the LCA, is an extensive active site. The linear and flooded Barnhill Quarry lies to the south. Part of the quarry is a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), while other areas were redeveloped for retail and housing development. Mature planting along the B4060 screens the existing working areas, including the plant site at Southfields, and active and expanding workings at the Hampstead Farm site. Wickwar Quarry lies on the north-western boundary of the LCA, to the north-west of Wickwar. The disused quarry area and plant to the west has an active landfill scheme which will lead to restoration for agriculture. Active quarrying takes place to the east of the B4509, and there is a consented proposal for an extension of the quarry northwards.

Small-scale overgrown and wooded quarried outcrops are located along the Wickwar Ridge at Yate Rocks and Bury Hill.

### Photo 2: Mixed farmland with partially wooded field boundaries



## Biodiversity

This LCA includes an important mosaic of grassland, both neutral and calcareous, woodland (including significant areas of ancient woodland), arable and pastoral farmland dissected by watercourses and with scattered ponds. These habitats are generally well-connected by wildlife corridors including hedgerows. They combine to form an important range of habitats for diverse species.

The eastern edge of the Wickwar Ridge and Vale LCA runs along the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) which is of national importance for habitats such as calcareous grassland and ancient woodlands. This LCA also includes approximately 280 hectares of ancient woodland, which is mainly located within Lower Woods, although smaller scattered copses are also present. Lower Woods is of significant nature conservation value, designated an SSSI, a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and a Gloucestershire

## Shallow Ridge LCT

Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve. At 300 hectares, Lower Woods is one of the largest areas of ancient woodland in the south-west, and there is also a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) within the woodland area. The interrelated woodland and grazed common land comprise priority habitat deciduous woodland, lowland meadows and good-quality semi-improved grassland.

The SNClS within this LCA, some of which are designated as SSSIs, comprise a mosaic of habitats including grassland, broadleaved woodland (including large areas of the ancient woodland) and flowing open water represented by the Little Avon River and the River Frome. Key species associated with the ancient 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). Good connectivity exists for species such as these between the wooded areas and other habitats via hedgerows and scattered trees.

There are nine sites within the Wickwar Ridge and Valley LCA designated as SNClS for calcareous and neutral grassland, including 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.

There are many watercourses and associated tributaries which dissect the landscape through this area. Three watercourses are designated as SNClS for the flowing water and bankside vegetation; the Little Avon River, the River Frome and a tributary of Ladden Brook. These watercourses support a diverse range of species from aquatic macro-invertebrates to fish and water voles. Ponds and pools within the area support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species) which are vulnerable to any loss of habitat including the ponds and surrounding terrestrial habitat.

There are extensive areas of arable farmland, an ideal habitat for many species of ground nesting farmland birds including birds listed on the Red List of Threatened Species. Winter stubble provides a valuable winter time foraging resource for many farmland birds.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

There are disused and working quarries and mines across this area which can provide an ideal habitat for many species of bat including European Protected Species.

A number of Strategic Green and Blue-Green Infrastructure Corridors pass within the LCA. Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridor D: Wickwar-Westerleigh-Bitton (*Westerleigh Vale/Oldland Ridge/East Fringe*) covers most of the LCA and Corridor B: Charfield-Alveston-Hallen (*Western Scarp/Severn Ridges*) crosses into the north of the LCA. A small area of the Strategic Blue-Green Infrastructure Corridor G: Wickwar-Iron Acton (*Ladden Valley*) crosses into the west of the LCA (along a tributary of Ladden Brook), Corridor I: Huntingford-Charfield-Wickwar (*Little Avon River Corridor*) passes along the north-eastern boundary of the LCA (along the Little Avon River) and Corridor C: Winterbourne-Kendleshire-Yate (*River Frome Corridor*) crosses the south of the LCA (along the River Frome).

## Cultural Influences

### Land Use and Time Depth

Land use across the Wickwar Ridge and Valley LCA is primarily associated with agricultural practices (a mix of pastoral and arable). This is interspersed with woodlands and some quarry operations.

Lower Woods comprises a medieval landscape of individual woodlands including traditionally coppiced woodlands surrounded by ancient woodbanks. These are separated by fingers of grazed common land and old grassy pathways known as 'trenches' (linear clearings providing route-ways through woodland).

Areas of unenclosed commons are scattered throughout the LCA between woodland and enclosed agricultural fields, with the boundaries of some derived from the process of assarting, where woodland was removed by small-scale

## Shallow Ridge LCT

enclosure and felling. Many of these commons are remnants of a more extensive network of commons fields which were in use from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Remnants of the Roman occupation of the area include earthworks associated with the remains of a Roman villa and bathhouse located in Lower Woods and the remains of a further Roman villa near Springfield Farm (both designated as Scheduled Monuments).

The Chipping Sodbury and Wickwar Conservation Areas, with their concentration of listed buildings, add further time depth to the landscape. The Chipping Sodbury Conservation Area is unique within South Gloucestershire and of national importance for its well-preserved medieval town plan and the rich variety of its historic buildings. Houses and buildings within the historic core of Chipping Sodbury Conservation Area are constructed of local limestone with some rendered buildings. The church forms a visible focal point when viewed from the wider landscape. Wickwar was the first village in the UK to be lit by electricity and a number of the original distribution poles survive. The Grade II\* listed Wickwar church, limestone boundary walls, mature trees to the north and west and archaeological remains (the medieval Horse Bridge to the west of the town is a Scheduled Monument) contribute to its historic character. Historic features within the wider landscape setting of the Wickwar Conservation Area also contribute to time depth, including the Grade II\* Frith Farm and Grade II\* Oxwick Farm & Coach House.

The landscape of the LCA also form the setting for many historic features located within and along its boundary. This includes views from/to the Grade I listed church of St James' at Churchend, the remains of Yate Court (within the LCA 8: Yate Vale); and the Grade II\* listed St John's at Old Sodbury (within LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp), including views across the fields east of St John's Way, and the historic deer park with the Grade II listed Park's Farm at its centre.

### Settlement and Infrastructure

The main settlements within this LCA comprise the small town of Chipping Sodbury and the villages of Wickwar and Charfield.

The settlement pattern of the medieval market town of Chipping Sodbury (designated as a Conservation Area) remains virtually unaltered since it was laid out in about 1179 AD. The village developed along a broad market street and grid pattern, with more recent infill housing extending beyond the historic core. The town is physically separated from Yate, being located on the higher ground of Wickwar Ridge. The eastern edge of the town of Yate defines part of the south-western boundary of the LCA.

The western edge of Wickwar, also designated as a Conservation Area, comprises a medieval planned town. Developed along a main trade route from Droitwich to Sodbury and Pucklechurch, it is focused along a broad market street.

Charfield, on the northern boundary of the LCA also has an historic core. The settlement initially developed at the hamlet of Churchend to the south-west, later expanding towards the railway station, which has a distinctive collection of station buildings.

Other small hamlets, farms and houses are scattered throughout the area, usually clustered around the network of minor roads and lanes.

The road network is limited within the area and includes 'B' roads and narrow country lanes. The principal roads are generally orientated north to south, including the B4060 between Chipping Sodbury and Wotton-under-Edge and the B4509 between Wickwar and Falfield. Near the Cotswold Scarp, country lanes are orientated north to south, connecting with a number of east-west routes, several of which end at isolated farms, with only two continuous routes linking to the wider road network. The A432 runs east-west along the southern margin of the LCA, linking Old Sodbury and Chipping Sodbury.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

The Bristol to Gloucester railway line passes through the LCA just north of Wickwar, also orientated north to south. It is in a short section of tunnel to the west and north of Wickwar with six stone airshafts following the tunnel alignment at regular intervals. The railway then runs in cutting (with one short section on embankment) before passing through the centre of Charfield, heading northwards. The London to South Wales railway line defines the southern boundary of the LCA.

This transport network is supplemented by several promoted recreational routes that cross the south-east of the LCA. The Jubilee Way, Frome Valley Walkway and Monarch's Way cross the south of the LCA, all broadly passing on a west-east alignment towards the Cotswold Way (within LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp). Two of the series of Circular Rides cross a more extensive area. One route (which forms part of the Avon Cycleway) travels around Lower Woods, linking Horton and Wickwar and passing beyond both the western and eastern LCA boundaries. The other links the edge of Chipping Sodbury with Hawkesbury and Old Sodbury, crossing both Sodbury and Hawkesbury Common.

There is a particularly dense and intricate network of public footpaths to the east and south-east of Lower Woods. Paths, tracks and bridleways also follow rides and clearings within Lower Woods. The remainder of the LCA has a more dispersed pattern of paths.

Two powerlines cross the area, one east to west, south of Lower Woods and one north to south, west of Wickwar.

**Photo 3: View south-west from Sodbury Common towards the Chipping Sodbury**



## Perceptual Influences

### Visual Character

A diverse large-scale landscape, the LCA has an undulating and varied landform covered with a mix of arable and pastoral fields, commons, two golf courses and large tracts of woodland, as well as smaller, scattered woodlands.

The Wickwar Ridge forms a low ridgeline backdrop in views from the adjacent Yate Vale (LCA 8). Panoramic views of the Yate Vale, the Tytherington Ridge, the Severn Ridges and the hills of South Wales are afforded from the Wickwar Ridge. Relatively open views are afforded looking across the central broad vale within the LCA, which is also visible from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp. Small 'V'-



## Shallow Ridge LCT

shaped valleys of the Little Avon River are relatively enclosed in character, becoming broader near Charfield where the valleys are visible from local vantages and upper slopes.

In the north-east of the LCA, a single extensive area with several isolated blocks of deciduous woodland and strong hedgerow boundaries provides the dominant structure. This results in a sense of enclosure and a remote, tranquil character. Lower Woods, an extensive ancient woodland intermixed with common land, is the most distinctive component of this part of the LCA and is widely visible from the Cotswold Scarp.

To the south and north, woodland cover is less dominant. The landscape becomes more open, with views available over the mixed farmland which is divided by clipped, laid or intermittent hedgerows dotted with specimen trees and often supplemented with post and wire fencing.

The rough grassland and unenclosed commons distributed throughout the east and south of the area are particularly open in character, offering extensive views of the area and the adjacent Cotswold Scarp from the unenclosed roads which cross them. The floriferous meadows are a particularly distinct characteristic of this LCA.

Recreational uses have impacted the visual character of the landscape to varying degrees. The character of the two golf courses contrasts with adjacent areas. The informal course on Sodbury Common has little more than flags to demarcate greens within grazed common land. This contrasts with the intensely managed Chipping Sodbury Golf Course, with a more typical combination of mown greens, fairways and enclosure from ornamental trees. The former has very little visual influence upon the landscape and the latter has little influence beyond its boundary. The extension of horse keeping around Chipping Sodbury and extending towards Wickwar has impacted the rural character of the locality.

Set within this mixed landscape and enclosed by a combination of woodland, hedges and gently undulating topography, the smaller settlements, roads and lanes have little direct visual impact on the surrounding landscape character.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

The centre of Chipping Sodbury has a unique, enclosed, historic village character, with distant views eastwards towards the Cotswold Scarp obtained along the High Street. Outside of the historic core, later phases of development are distinctly different in character, due to the form and pattern of buildings and the use of reconstituted stone, brick or render finishes. The settlement edge of Chipping Sodbury is generally well-integrated by the diverse vegetation structure north and east of the town, partly associated with the River Frome corridor, as well as by the adjacent undulating landform. However, white rendered houses along the settlement edge are more prominent in views from the adjacent rural landscape.

More recent residential, commercial and business developments on the north-east edge of Yate (within the adjacent Yate Vale (LCA 8)) are typically more exposed, with few hedgerows and trees along the settlement edge to integrate it with the adjoining landscape. This extensive urban development around Yate is particularly evident in views from the Wickwar Ridge, with Bristol, Purdown ridge and Wales forming distant features on the skyline. The rising slopes and crest of Wickwar Ridge also form an important visual backdrop to the lower-lying Yate Vale (LCA 8) to the west.

Charfield, largely nestled within the Little Avon River valley, is relatively hidden in views from the east, set beneath the rising Churchend Ridge. Relatively recent development on the southern edge of Charfield has extended over agricultural fields, the new settlement edge defined by the form of the existing hedgerow field pattern. The settlement edge in the north-east and south-west is quite harsh due its regular shape and limited integration provided by the clipped hedgerows with few hedgerow trees. However, recent development to the south-east and north-west of the village is better integrated by retained wooded field boundaries. Within the village itself, infill development has occurred although areas of open space contribute to the character of the village and provide amenity and play space.

The more elevated parts of Charfield offer expansive views north-eastwards to Wotton-under-Edge and the Cotswold Scarp (both beyond the LCA). Relatively open views north-east are also afforded more widely from the Churchend Ridge, overlooking the Little Avon Valley with skyline features at Wotton-under-

## Shallow Ridge LCT

Edge and the Cotswold Scarp (both beyond the LCA) seen beyond. Although the surrounding hedgerow structure and wooded scarp slopes provide some containment, parts of the settlement edge are visually prominent, due to the limited screening and elevated location on the skyline.

Wickwar is prominent on the upper slopes of the Little Avon River valley, where both building facades and rooflines are clearly visible against the skyline in local views. This is due to the exposed setting, low clipped hedges and very limited tree cover.

The linear quarries at Chipping Sodbury are well screened, with only a few glimpsed views possible from the B4060 along their eastern boundaries. The works buildings are also generally well screened by linear tree belts on bunds in views from the east. However, the crusher building is visible in longer views from the south and east, due to its scale and height which rises above the adjacent vegetation. The linear pattern of vegetation along the edges of roads is of a bold and regular form, which contrasts with the adjacent, irregular rural field pattern. From within the LCA, Wickwar Quarry is visible only within glimpsed views from the adjacent roads which border the site. The exposed quarry face of the disused section is however evident from beyond the area in the vicinity of Heath End, to the west.

Two powerlines cross the area to the south and west of Lower Woods and are generally prominent within local views, but are also evident within more distant views from the Cotswold Scarp. Wind turbines, located to the east and west of the LCA, are evident in outward views from the Wickwar Ridge. An existing wind turbine at Oxwick Farm is evident in views locally.

**Shallow Ridge LCT**

**Photo 4: Undulating fields with pockets of woodland, and the rising Cotswold Scarp in the background**



### Tranquillity and Dark Skies

The combination of woodland and strong hedgerow boundaries along fields and lanes creates a sense of enclosure in the north of the LCA, and the rural landscape has a relatively remote and tranquil character.

Whilst the active quarries in the west of the LCA are relatively well-screened, dynamic and noise-creating activities associated with their works influence tranquillity locally. These include frequent blasting operations, lorry movements along the road network (particularly the B4060 and B4509) and tailings mounds formed on adjacent land. Despite the size of the quarry the effects on the landscape are generally localised.

Traffic volumes along the A432 have a visible and audible local effect within the area eroding its rural character.

The Bristol to Gloucester railway line is largely in tunnel, cutting, or enclosed by vegetation and/or topography, with only a short section on embankment. It is generally well-integrated by mature vegetation, although has an audible effect upon local character and influences the sense of rural tranquillity within localised parts of the LCA.

Much of the LCA has a good experience of dark skies with low levels of light pollution, particularly in the north-east. There is some light pollution associated with settlements in the west of the LCA, notably Chipping Sodbury/Yate along the south-western boundary, as well as Charfield and Wickwar.

The scenic and perceptual qualities of the eastern part of the LCA, along the Cotswold Scarp, is reflected in its inclusion within the Cotswolds National Landscape.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

### Visually Important Hillsides

The Churchend Ridge and Wickwar Ridge Visually Important Hillsides (VIH) are located within this LCA. The eastern edge of the LCA is also flanked by the Cotswold Scarp VIH (located within LCA 4). Key characteristics of each VIH include the following:

- Churchend Ridge VIH: a linear steep ridge with an exposed setting that is visible from the surrounding area, emphasised by the low-lying landscape to the west. The Churchend Ridge VIH forms part of the rural setting of the Wickwar Conservation Area which sits above the Little Avon River.
- Wickwar Ridge VIH: a linear steep ridge that is relatively narrow in width, which extends into the town of Yate. The Wickwar Ridge forms a distinctive landscape feature in views, emphasised by the lower-lying vale landscape to the west.
- Cotswold Scarp VIH: a long and distinctive stretch of escarpment and series of hillsides, which defines the edge of the CNL and a marked change in landscape character. The Cotswold Scarp VIH is prominent in views from across the majority of South Gloucestershire and influences a number of Conservation Areas and RPGs.

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

### Strategic Viewpoints

Three Strategic Viewpoint (SVP) are located within this LCA at Churchend (SVP 2), at Sodbury Common (SVP 9) and near the Wickwar Ridge south-west of Wickwar (SVP 21). SVP 2: Churchend allows an appreciation of the CNL and provides a broad view of the Little Avon Valley and Cotswold Scarp, and the landmark features of St James' Church and Wotton-under-Edge BT Tower. SVP 9: Sodbury Common allows an appreciation of the CNL and provides a panoramic view that takes in the notable landscape features of the shallow ridge landscape and Cotswold Scarp, and the landmark features of the Parish Church of St John, the Somerset Monument and the Tyndale Monument. SVP

## Shallow Ridge LCT

21: View across Yate Vale and Rangeworthy provides a panoramic view that takes in the notable landscape features of the Yate Vale, the Tytherington Ridge, the Severn Ridges, the hills of South Wales, and the landmark feature of the Purdown BT Tower.

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

## Evaluation

### Key Sensitivities and Valued Features

- The varied landform that provides visual interest and a sense of place both within the LCA and in views from surrounding areas. This includes extensive views west over the central vale from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp and the backdrop formed by the Wickwar Ridge in views east from the Yate Vale (LCA 8).
- The interconnected and diverse pattern of woodland, irregular small to medium-scale pasture and arable fields, hedgerows, scattered mature trees and open commons that contributes to the mixed visual character and habitat connectivity.
- The extensive Lower Woods complex (designated as SSSI, SNCI and a Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve) that forms part of the wider network of ancient and deciduous woodland (priority habitat) and provides habitat for a range of notable species including European Protected Species.
- The extensive mosaic of calcareous grassland (including areas of species-rich grassland) that supports a diverse range of flora and contributes to biodiversity, with some areas designated as SNCIs.
- The flowing water and bankside vegetation of watercourses and associated tributaries that provides habitat for a range of notable species and contributes to biodiversity, with some areas designated as SNCIs.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

- The historic town of Chipping Sodbury (designated as a Conservation Area), with its elevated position, unaltered medieval layout and use of local limestone, that contributes to time depth and sense of place.
- The historic village of Wickwar (designated as a Conservation Area), with its limestone boundary walls, mature trees, and archaeological remains that contributes to time depth and sense of place.
- Relatively dispersed settlement pattern outside of villages and limited road infrastructure, that contributes to the sense of rurality.
- Extensive views across the wider LCA and towards the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp from unenclosed commons in the east and south of the LCA that contribute to the distinctive sense of place and visual character.
- The network of public footpaths (including the Jubilee Way, Monarch's Way, Frome Valley Walkway, two Circular Rides and the Avon Cycleway, in addition to public footpaths within Lower Woods) that provide recreational opportunities across the landscape.
- The sense of tranquillity, particularly within the north and north-east of the LCA, and the experience of dark night skies across much of the area.

## The Changing Landscape

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

### Climate Change

- Climate change and changing land management practices may lead to potential changes in woodland and tree species composition. Increases in severe gales could result in wind damage to woodland edges. Ancient woodlands, including the Lower Woods, may be particularly susceptible to damage from storms and drought.



## Shallow Ridge LCT

- Climate change and changing land management practices may lead to potential changes in flora and an increase in pests and diseases. Ash die back is currently creating changes in the landscape. Dutch elm disease continues to be, evident in some hedgerows, with the cycle of tree growth, elm disease producing die back, followed eventually by regeneration influences the condition, integrity and appearance of the landscape framework in the locality.
- The mature tree and woodland structure has few juvenile trees present to sustain succession and hence this landscape framework and biodiversity network in future decades. Cumulative erosion of these rural features would reduce the integrity and intactness of the landscape structure.
- 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 the Little Avon River, River Frome and Ladden Brook SNCIs).
- Increase in frequency and severity of seasonal flooding as a result of climate change, particularly in the south of the LCA along tributaries of the River Frome. Associated pressures to build flood management engineering works which are not sympathetic to local landscape character and sensitive habitats.

## Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery

- Large extents of the area are overlooked from the Cotswold Scarp and to a lesser extent from Wotton-under-Edge, beyond the LCA to the east and north. Coupled with the general open nature of this area, any change may be visible and could introduce a discordant element into the distinctive character of the area. Potential pressure for wind turbines and associated electricity infrastructure on the Wickwar Ridge has the potential for significant impact on the character of the wider landscape.
- 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

## Shallow Ridge LCT

part of the West of England's Nature Recovery Network [\[See reference 1\]](#). This may include the establishment of new native woodlands within the 'Lower Woods Gap' between Lower Woods and the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp as set out in the Forest of Avon's Tree and Woodland 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

- The LCA's landscape features and its habitats are in varying condition and state of management and subject to varying degrees of pressure for change, particularly in the south and central parts of the LCA. In the west of the LCA, new neighbourhoods will result in a northerly extension of the urban influence of Yate and, to a lesser extent, Chipping Sodbury. This will be likely to increase recreational pressures on the Wickwar Ridge area in particular.
- Lower Woods is owned by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and managed as a Nature Reserve, with the woodland and commons subject to management agreements, formulated with statutory and local agencies. The unique interrelationship of woodland and common land has created complex management issues, which need to find a balance between nature conservation and traditional land use practices. The ongoing management of this Nature Reserve, which will ensure its conservation and habitat value, including operations such as thinning, coppicing and scrub clearance can result in a degree of visible change, of varying scale, but will be appropriate to the woodland retaining its essential character and ecological value.
- The intricate network of footpaths and promoted recreational routes provides an important recreational resource along the base of the Cotswold Scarp in particular. Pressure from vehicle and pedestrian access has caused localised erosion in places.
- The large commons of Inglestone, Hawkesbury and Sodbury are distinct areas within their locality. Their open character allows extensive views both within these areas, of the adjacent landscape framework and to the Cotswold Scarp. They are therefore sensitive to change both within and

## Shallow Ridge LCT

beyond these areas. The erosion of roadside verges is particularly evident. These areas are also prone to informal recreational pressures.

- The Hawkesbury, Inglestone, Assley and Hareley Commons will be managed under the Higher Tier, Countryside Stewardship [See reference 2] scheme until 2030. Management will focus on the restoration of grassland, ponds, hedges, wood pasture and parkland. This will conserve the traditional open character, on balance with enhancing the biodiversity value of the commons.
- Some of the existing hedgerow and tree framework of the Wickwar Ridge and Vale LCA is in poor condition. Many of the hedgerows have been replaced by stock fencing, particularly in the south.

## Development

- The distinctive character of the area has already been eroded in some locations. Areas of large-scale land use and built development of a regular pattern or bold linear form is visually discordant within the irregular rural framework. This is evident along the LCA's western boundary, where large-scale quarrying follows the line of the Wickwar Ridge. Associated linear tree screens have little relationship with local field patterns.
- The northern settlement edge of Yate (visible beyond this LCA) has little vegetation or landform structure to provide physical or visual integration with the adjacent rural area.
- The exposed, regular settlement edge of Wickwar and the north-east and south-west of Charfield, perched on the skyline above the Little Avon Valley, is stark and intrusive.
- The extension of horse keeping across the landscapes around Chipping Sodbury and up to Wickwar results in the subdivision of fields and the proliferation of small buildings, sheds, stables, access points and fencing, while floodlighting can erode tranquillity and disrupt wildlife.
- Relatively recent residential development north of Chipping Sodbury has extended the influence of settlement further north into the countryside, though retained woodland and field boundaries minimise influence. The

## Shallow Ridge LCT

disused area of Barnhill Quarry was partially infilled at the southern end to facilitate retail and housing development, which is well-integrated by woodland to the west.

- The ridgeline and lower slopes of the Wickwar Ridge make an important visual contribution to views from the edge of Yate, particularly from slightly elevated open ground within Yate, such as at Tyler's Field and from the Yate Vale (LCA 8) generally. This landform is sensitive to change, especially built forms along its slopes or crest, where these have the potential to be visually prominent, break the skyline, or physically limit views from the ridgeline over lower areas to the west.
- Conversely, relatively recent development located within the landscape to the north of Yate is open to view from the adjacent Wickwar Ridge.
- The use of barns for non-agricultural uses and the storage of caravans north and north-east of Chipping Sodbury influences the rural character locally.
- The addition of modern buildings and structures within farmsteads and rural areas, where prominent, would potentially be visually intrusive. This can influence the character of the area and views overlooking the area from higher ground outside the LCA.
- Noise and visual activity, associated with the ongoing and future use of quarries, principal roads and railway within the area, locally erode the perception of tranquillity within this LCA.
- Chipping Sodbury Quarry has recently extended to the north. This has resulted in a localised loss of field pattern, field boundaries and trees.
- Quarrying of the western site could potentially result in the removal of existing farm buildings at Brinsham Farm and the excavation of a small hill at Wickwar Ridge. The final restoration of the quarries to water will significantly alter the character of the ridge.
- Wickwar Quarry has recently expanded further north along the eastern side of the B4509 towards Churchend. Proposals for the progressive restoration of sections of the Wickwar quarry are coming forward.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

- The Wickwar Ridge currently forms a natural, largely undeveloped landform and visible backdrop to views from the adjacent LCA 8: Yate Vale. The impact of quarrying therefore has the potential to be visually prominent locally and physically erode the natural skyline of the ridge and existing strong woodland 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 3], as well as the overarching management strategy objectives set out in Chapter 4.

## Landscape Strategy

### Landscape Management

- Protect and manage areas that are within the CNL in line with the CNL Management Plan [See reference 4] to conserve the highly valued visual and perceptual qualities of the landscape.
- New hedgerow trees, small, wooded copses, and natural regeneration should be encouraged within the historic field framework and be designed to respect its intrinsic character.
- Address potential for flooding issues with the implementation of natural flood management schemes in the south of the LCA, in line with the aims of the River Frome Reconnected project.
- Consider changes to the management of highway verges in suitable areas including the A432 in the south of the LCA, contributing to the Highway Verges for Nature programme to improve and connect habitat for nature, and climate change adaptation and resilience.
- Preserve and enhance the landscape setting of Wickwar and Chipping Sodbury Conservation Areas, together with key views towards them and looking out from them; including the distinctive landscape setting of Grade II\* Wickwar church, Grade II\* Frith Farm and Grade II\* Oxwick Farm & Coach House.
- Preserve and enhance the landscape setting of the Scheduled Monument of Wickwar Small Roman Town, Grade I listed church of St

James' at Churchend and the wider setting of other historic features outside of the LCA, including the remains of Yate Court; and views from/towards the Grade II\* listed St John's at Old Sodbury.

### Ecology/Biodiversity Management

- Protect the remaining areas of tranquillity in the north and north-east of the LCA (including Wickwar Ridge, Lower Woods SSSI and Wetmoor Complex, and the commons at Inglestone, Hawkesbury and Sodbury) from disturbance that would harm landscape character and biodiversity including through the control of lighting to retain dark skies and avoiding the introduction of sources of noise.
- Create woodland linkages between Lower Woods and the Cotswold Scarp habitat mosaic, on balance with retaining important views towards landscape and historic features, in line with the aims of the Forest of Avon Tree and Woodland Strategy [\[See reference 5\]](#).
- Protect and enhance ancient woodland, including encouraging natural regeneration of appropriate sites; for example, Lower Woods.
- Preserve interrelated areas of lowland meadow and good quality semi-improved grassland priority habitat between the commons and Cotswold Scarp habitat mosaic, in line with the aims of the Forest of Avon Tree and Woodland Strategy [\[See reference 6\]](#).
- Encourage the management of commons by grazing to maintain their open character and distinctive species diversity.
- Protect and improve the riparian habitat of the River Frome, and Little Avon River (including protection of its water quality) and seek opportunities to naturalise sections currently impacted by engineering structures (except heritage features), together with enhancement of appropriate recreational access.
- Enhance water vole habitat along the River Frome.
- Encourage restoration of buffer strips along watercourses and field ponds to minimise run off to maintain the biodiversity of wetland features, in line with the aims of the River Frome Reconnected project.

- Support the planting of new wildflower habitats along B-lines within the south and east of the LCA (identified by Buglife), that will contribute to the national pollinator network.

## Development Management

- Protect key views towards the Cotswold Scarp, in addition to outward views west from the Cotswold National Landscape across the wider lower-lying landscape context.
- Any significant vertical features on the skylines of the Cotswolds Scarp and Wickwar Ridge should be carefully sited to ensure that the inherent sense of scale, rural character and remoteness of this character area are not compromised.
- Retain and enhance publicly accessible open spaces within settlements such as Charfield to improve their amenity, their contribution to the character of the settlement and biodiversity.
- Ensure that future quarrying, landfill, and restoration proposals take account of the need to protect the landscape character, amenity, distinctiveness, and biodiversity of the area. Quarrying should avoid breaching the slopes of the Wickwar Ridge and Churchend Ridge.



## **LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley Valley**

The Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley landscape character area (LCA) is a diverse rural landscape of undulating mixed farmland.

**Shallow Ridge LCT**

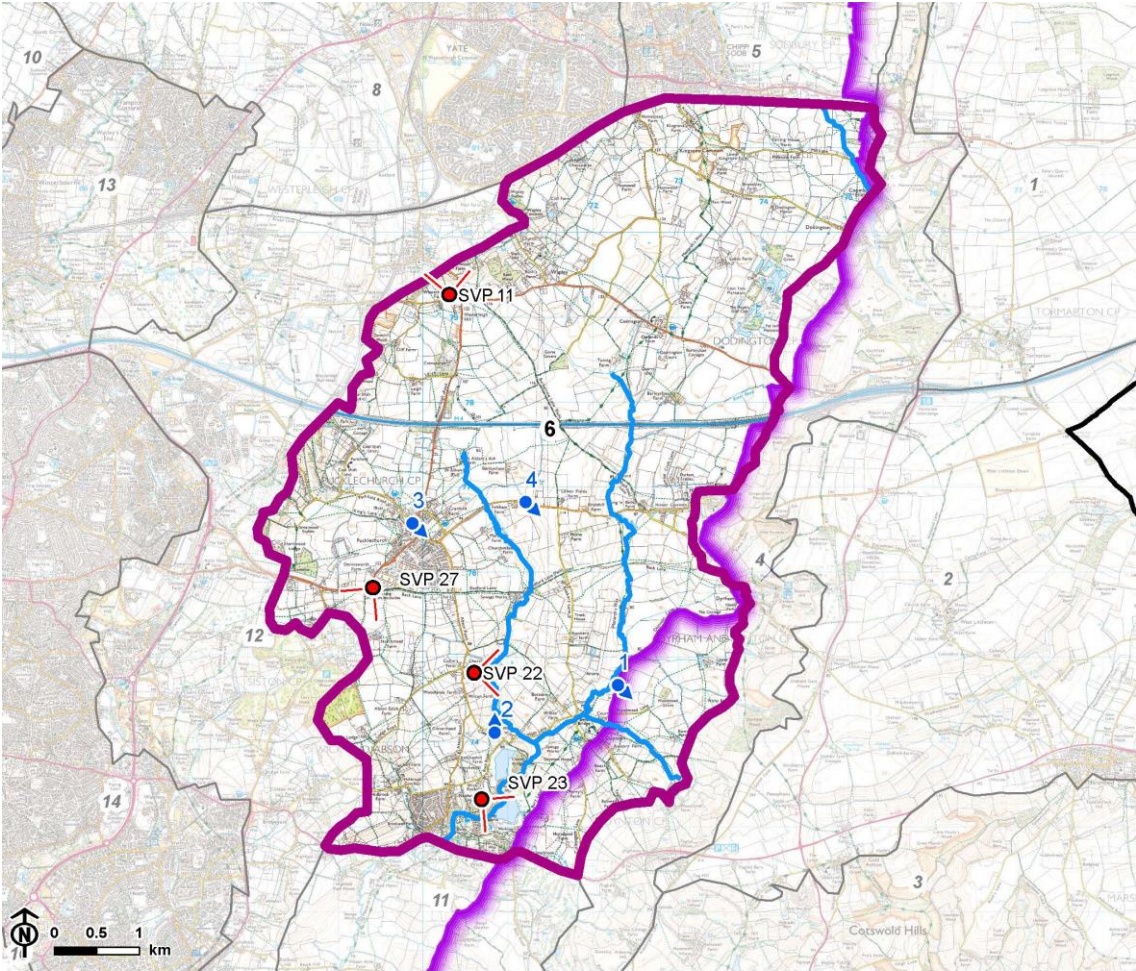
**Photo 1: View across undulating pastoral fields towards the wooded Cotswold Scarp**



### Location

The Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley LCA is located in the east of South Gloucestershire. The northern boundary of this LCA follows the railway and southern settlement edge of Yate and Chipping Sodbury. The eastern boundary follows the base of the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp. The southern boundary follows the A420. The western boundary follows the toe of the Pucklechurch scarp in the north, and south of the B4465 follows the approximate transition between the higher Pucklechurch plateau to the east and the lower area of commons at Holbrook and Siston to the west (within LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge).

**Figure 2.5: Location and Landscape Setting of LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley**



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-  LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley
-  Neighbouring LCA
-  Council boundary
-  Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
-  River
-  Photograph location and direction
-  Strategic viewpoint and angle

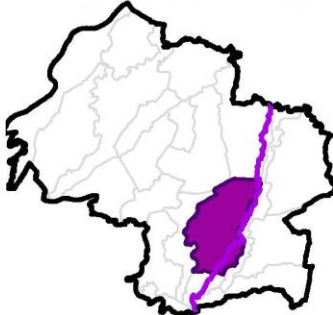
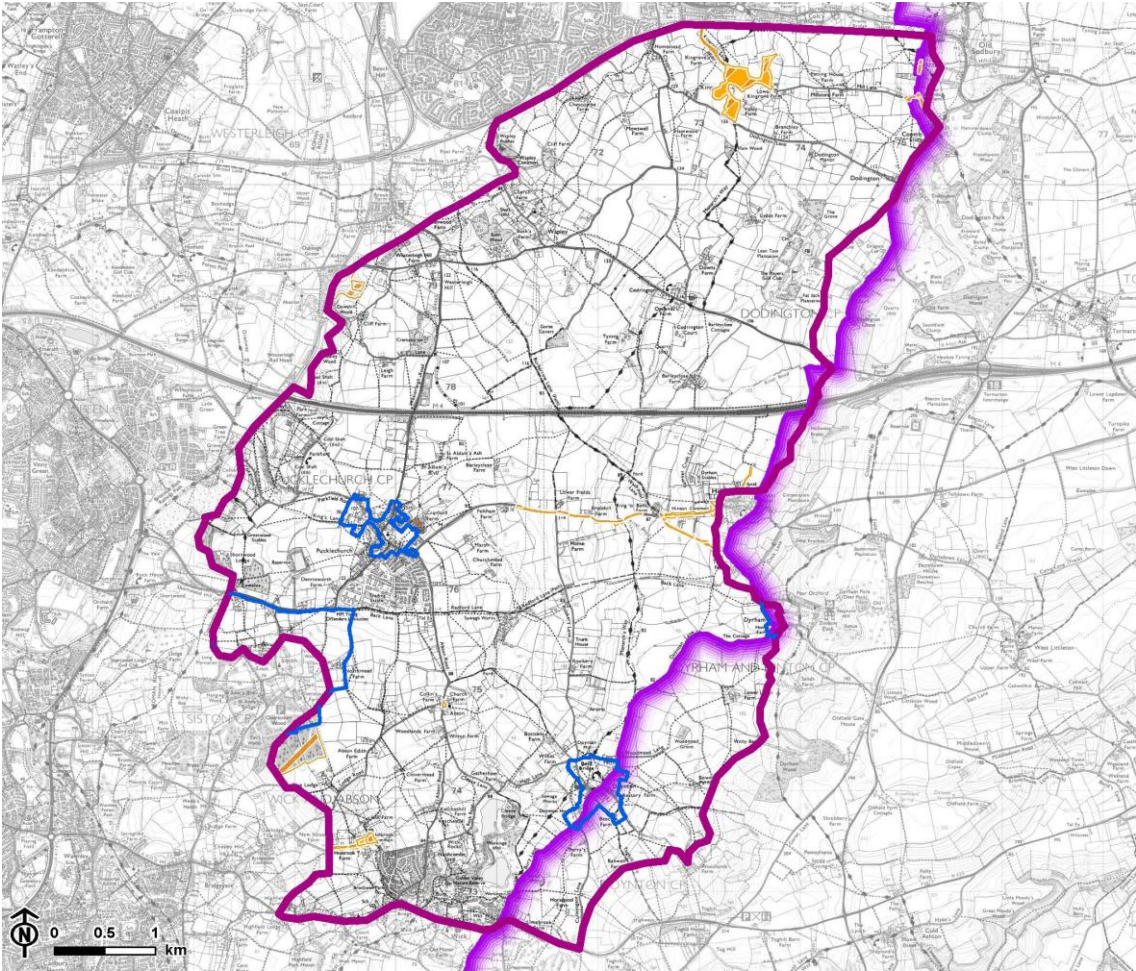


Figure 2.6: Development and Heritage context of LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley



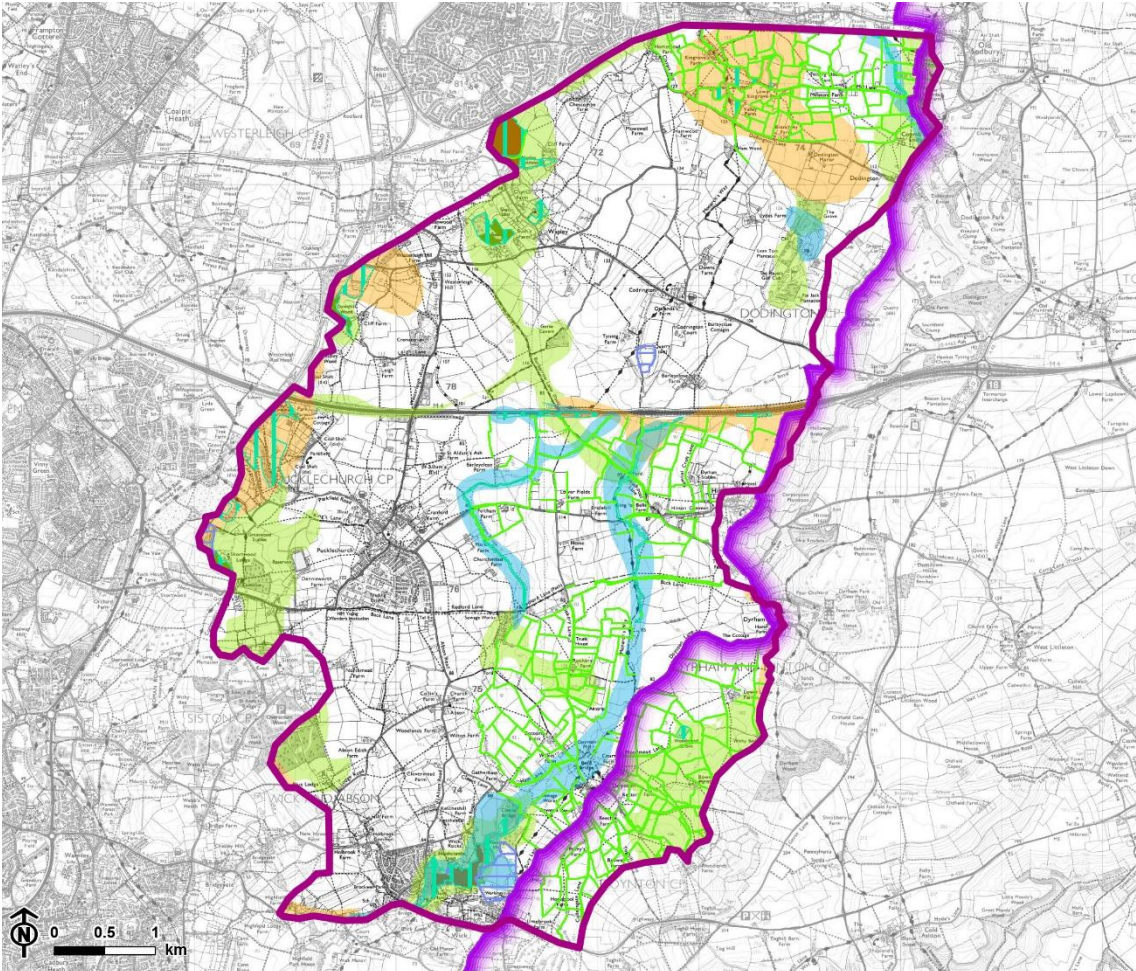
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- LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley
- Council boundary
- Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
- CRoW Common Land
- CRoW Open Access Land
- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area
- Registered Parks and Gardens



Shallow Ridge LCT

Figure 2.7: Ecology and Biodiversity context of LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley



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- LCA 6: Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley
- Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest
- Ancient woodland
- Regionally Important Geological Site
- Local Nature Reserve
- Grassland Strategic Network
- Wetland Strategic Network
- Woodland Strategic Network
- Important hedgerow



## Landscape Description

### Key Characteristics

- The large-scale, generally undulating plateau and vale landscape is enclosed by the Pucklechurch Ridge to the north-west and west, and the Cotswolds Scarp to the east.
- The gently rolling hills enclosing the River Boyd valley to the south form a contrast to the adjacent ridges.
- The prominent backdrop and skyline formed by the Cotswold Scarp, dominates and encloses views to the east of the LCA. Internal long-distance views are available over the rolling landscape and across the LCA from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp.
- The Pucklechurch Ridge with its distinctive landform and textured land cover, forms a prominent backdrop and skyline to adjacent westerly character areas (LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge and LCA 14: Kingswood).
- Land cover consists of medium sized pasture and arable fields, with some larger fields within the plateau, and some smaller fields located on steeper ground.
- Farmland is mixed with distinct areas of commons and infrequent small broadleaved woodlands, some of which is ancient in the north and west of the LCA.
- Areas of calcareous and neutral grassland across the LCA support a diverse range of flora and areas of species-rich grassland.
- Field boundaries comprise predominantly clipped hedges, with limited hedgerow trees and some post and wire fences. Thick, more overgrown hedges and more frequent hedgerow trees are located in the south and south-west.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

- Watercourses and associated tributaries of Feltham Brook, River Boyd and River Frome form sinuous and wooded small-scale features within the LCA.
- Settlement is concentrated at Pucklechurch and Wick with several small historic villages/hamlets dispersed throughout the LCA.
- Active and disused quarries, with claypits and coal industry relics, are located along the toe of the Pucklechurch Ridge (along the western boundary of the LCA).
- The M4 motorway cuts across the area and influences rural character, with relatively open views across the landscape towards sections of the motorway. Numerous narrow lanes also cross the area, some with wide grass verges.
- Relatively dark night skies are concentrated in the east of the LCA.

## Natural Influences

### Geology, Landform and Hydrology

The geology consists largely of Inferior Oolite Limestone in common with the Cotswold Scarp.

The landform of the area comprises a scarp to the north and west, which rises to a small plateau and a large-scale, undulating eastern vale, with the south and south-west comprising low, gently rolling hills and the River Boyd valley. The Cotswold Scarp rises beyond the LCA to the east, forming a prominent large-scale ridgeline.

The Pucklechurch Ridge is a pronounced, medium-scale landform rising eastwards from the Westerleigh Vale (LCA 12). The ridge has a prominent scarp edge which varies little in height along its length, at approximately 100-110 metres AOD. However, the northern scarp is more prominent, as the scarp



## Shallow Ridge LCT

toe varies from 80 metres AOD in the south to 65 metres AOD in the north. Throughout its length the landform is folded with occasional, small-scale valley incisions fed by springs and tributaries of the Folly Brook, flowing generally north-westwards. The scarp peters out to the south of Shortwood Hill, forming gently rising ground and a curving ridgeline, which defines the Siston Brook valley.

The plateau landscape to the east of the ridge rises slightly southwards, but is more prominent in the area of Pucklechurch itself, forming a broad dome at around 130 metres AOD. The broad open vale further east includes tributaries of the River Boyd, which drain southwards past Wick, through LCA 11: Golden Valley and eventually into the River Avon. East of Wick, the River Boyd follows a more defined, sinuous, small-scale and steep sided valley, at around 50 metres AOD, rising to around 75 metres AOD on the upper valley slopes.

The broadly curving form of the LCA's south-western boundary is partially formed by the upper reaches of the Siston Brook valley. There was an increase in manmade ponds and lakes associated with development at Westerleigh, Dodington and Doynton.

## Land Cover

Land cover comprises a roughly equal proportion of arable and pasture land, in medium and some large, regular shaped fields. Field boundaries are predominately clipped hedges or timber post and wire fencing, with limited tree cover and infrequent woodland copses. However, subtle differences occur within the LCA.

Large regular shaped arable fields, defined by low, clipped hedges and fences, are associated with the plateau and very gentle landform, and are scattered roughly north-east/south-west through the centre of the area. Surrounding the central vale, along the western boundary and to the south towards Doynton, medium, regular shaped pasture fields dominate, divided by a mix of thick, clipped and intermittent hedges. Thick, overgrown hedges with intermittent trees

## Shallow Ridge LCT

lie mainly along the south and south-western boundary. Small, irregular shaped fields are widespread around Hinton, Abson, Doynton and Wick, as well as on parts of the Pucklechurch Ridge, within the river valleys (including parts of the Boyd Valley) and on some slopes rising to the foot of the Cotswold Scarp.

On the scarp face of the Pucklechurch Ridge, medium, regular shaped fields of rough grassland and scrub are interspersed with copses or small areas of woodland. Clipped and overgrown hedgerows, with some intermittent hedgerow trees run along the contours and down the slope, emphasising the profile of the scarp.

Woodland cover is relatively sparse. There are however small woodlands scattered across the northern area and also associated with steeper landforms along the Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley in the south. There was an increase in small woodlands as a result of the Community Forest initiative [[See reference 7](#)] which are starting to contribute to the wider landscape.

Areas of common land are present in a few locations. In the north, on gentle slopes near the Pucklechurch Ridge is Kingrove Common, a small, irregular shaped area of unimproved grassland and scrub contained by overgrown hedgerows. Wapley Common is also located in the north of the LCA and comprises a small area of open parkland, unimproved grassland and scrub, edged by woodland. The linear Hinton Common to the west of the village comprises broad, roadside grass verges. Near the southern LCA boundary to the north-west of Wick, Holbrook Common comprises a small area with an ordered, regular pattern of broad, roadside verges and open grass fields between scattered properties.

The golf course north-east of Codrington includes highly maintained fairways, greens and dense ornamental tree groups. However, the development is fairly well-integrated into the wider landscape due to the retention of hedgerows along the boundaries of the golf course.

There are also a number of quarries and areas of mineral workings. The disused Codrington Quarry is located north of the M4 and the Wick Quarry is

### Shallow Ridge LCT

located near the southern LCA boundary. The Shortwood Claypit and former Brickworks (now in landfill/progressive restoration) is situated immediately to the west of the LCA (within LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge), but with an earlier tip site now covered by vegetation on the lower slopes of the Pucklechurch Ridge within this LCA. The former Parkfield Colliery, comprising a north and south site, is located along the toe of the ridge. The northern site largely occupies a section of the lower slopes of the ridge within this LCA, near the M4.

**Photo 2: Gently undulating pastoral fields in the south of the LCA, divided by a mix of mature and clipped hedgerows with occasional woodland**



## Shallow Ridge LCT

### Biodiversity

This LCA is located adjacent to and partially within the western edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) which contains a range of important habitats including calcareous grassland and ancient woodlands.

The LCA comprises a mosaic of grassland, woodland, arable and pastoral farmland with scattered ponds and is dissected by watercourses. Wildlife corridors, such as hedgerows, provide important habitats for a diverse range of species.

Key species likely to be associated with the ancient 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). Hedgerows and scattered trees provide good connectivity between the wooded areas and other habitats for species such as these.

There are nine sites within the LCA designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) for their calcareous and neutral grassland, including areas of species-rich grassland. This diverse habitat supports a range of invertebrates and ant hills are a regular feature. The invertebrates also provide a food source for mammals including bats.

The Feltham Brook, River Boyd and River Frome are designated as SNCIs for the flowing water and bankside vegetation, which support a diverse range of species from aquatic macro-invertebrates to fish and water voles. There are also ponds and pools within the area which support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species). The Golden Valley Local Nature Reserve (LNR) covers part of the Wick Rocks and River Boyd SNCI in the south of the LCA.

Small areas of arable farmland provide habitat for a variety of ground nesting farmland birds, including those on the Red List of Threatened Species. Winter stubble also provides a foraging resource.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

The disused and working quarries across this area provide ideal habitat for many bat species, including European Protected Species.

A number of Strategic Green and Blue-Green Infrastructure Corridors pass within the LCA. The Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridor D: Wickwar-Westerleigh-Bitton (*Westerleigh Vale/Oldland Ridge/East Fringe*) cross the north of the LCA and Corridor E: Hawkesbury-Upton Cheyney-Ashwicke (*Cotswold Scarp and Ashwicke Ridges*) passes along the eastern boundary of the LCA. The Strategic Blue-Green Infrastructure Corridor H: Hinton-Doynton-Bitton (*Boyd Valley*) passes through the centre and south of the LCA, while a small area of Corridor C: Winterbourne-Kendleshire-Yate (*River Frome Corridor*) passes within the north-east of the LCA.

## Cultural Influences

### Land Use and Time Depth

Land use across the Wickwar Ridge and Valley LCA is associated with agricultural practices (a mix of pastoral and arable), and quarry operations. Areas of unenclosed commons are scattered throughout the LCA, many remnants of a more extensive network of commons which were in use from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The Pucklechurch, Siston and Doynton Conservation Areas, with their concentration of listed buildings, historic layout and use of local stone, add further time depth. The Pucklechurch Conservation Area covers the medieval core of the historic settlement, based around the church and manor at Moat House Farm. It is characterised by wide roads, stone houses and boundaries, with the church forming the main focal point. The settlement is situated on an historic trade route from Oxford and London to Bristol, routes which have been significant since Saxon times. Partially evident earthworks associated with an Iron Age enclosed settlement north-east of the Pucklechurch settlement edge contributes to the setting of the Conservation Area. This Scheduled Monument

## Shallow Ridge LCT

also encompasses the presumed site of the Saxon manor house where King Edward was martyred in 946 AD, although the structure no longer remains.

The distinctive Elizabethan Siston court lies to the south-west of Pucklechurch, adjacent to the LCA boundary, set above the Siston Brook valley. The building is situated within open land containing elements of a designed 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape park, which is locally designated.

Relics of the coal mining industry and brickworks remain immediately adjacent to the foot of the scarp, north of Shortwood. The brickworks and Brandy Bottom Colliery (Scheduled Monument) lie in the adjacent Westerleigh Vale (LCA 12), though they are evident from the Pucklechurch Ridge. The brick chimney of the disused Parkfield Colliery North is located adjacent to the M4.

Extensive use of Cotswold stone is distinctive within the small-scale historic settlements and hamlets within the Boyd Valley. Copper slag coping stones and quoins (a by-product from the Warmley Brassworks within the Kingswood area) are a feature of the limestone wall of St James' Church at Abson and an adjacent barn. Similar coping stones are also evident within short sections of stone walling to a residential property along the A420, west of Wick and in Doynton. The use of this copper slag material is often quite limited within individual buildings, although examples are scattered widely throughout the rural areas of South Gloucestershire, as far as the Severn Ridges (LCA 18) and Oldbury Levels (LCA 19).

Parts of the LCA also form the setting for historic features within the Cotswolds National Landscape, including Dyrham Park (Registered Park and Garden), Hinton Hill Fort (Scheduled Monument) and Dodington House (Registered Park and Garden).

## Settlement and Infrastructure

Settlement within the area includes large nucleated villages and dispersed hamlets. Farmsteads are sparsely but evenly distributed throughout the LCA.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

Pucklechurch is a large village, located on raised ground just south of the M4. The medieval core of the settlement is a Conservation Area, however more recent housing expansion makes up a significant proportion of the village. A large trading estate in the south of the settlement is centred around a series of WWII balloon sheds. A prison complex is also located on high ground on the southern fringes of the settlement.

Wick is a large village in the south of the LCA with both a linear and more recent nucleated development pattern. It is situated both within and on the upper slopes of the River Boyd valley and is partly located along the A420. Bury Manor, a large house on an elevated knoll, and Wick Quarry and associated buildings are located immediately to the east.

A scattering of small historic villages and hamlets are located within and adjacent to this LCA, including Wapley, Codrington, Parkfield, Abson and Doynton. Dodington, Hinton and Dyrham are spring-line settlements associated with the toe of the Cotswold Scarp, and are partially located on the rising ground of the adjacent character area (LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp). Settlement locations are generally related to roads, junctions and, in places, churches. Parkfield Rank, associated with the disused coal mines along the toe of the scarp, comprises a terrace of properties set along the upper edge of the Pucklechurch scarp.

The LCA is crossed by numerous roads. The M4 is the main route through the LCA and runs centrally east to west across the Boyd Valley on embankment and cutting through the Pucklechurch Ridge. The A420 follows the grain of the landscape along the southern boundary, crossing the contours at grade and runs east to west. The B4465 forms a 'dog leg' running east to west either side of Pucklechurch, but north-south between Pucklechurch and Westerleigh. Narrow and often winding lanes are numerous throughout the LCA, generally contained by hedges, some with wide asymmetric grass verges.

Only one significant powerline is present, descending from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp to pass over the M4 and then runs north-westwards towards Yate.

### Shallow Ridge LCT

There are several promoted recreational routes across the area. One of a series of Circular Rides comprises a circuit within the north-east of the area, taking in Hinton, Codrington and Kingrove Common, before passing into the adjacent LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp at Old Sodbury. The Community Forest Path passes very briefly along the western boundary, north of Shortwood Hill above the Pucklechurch scarp, before descending into the Westerleigh Vale (LCA 12). The Monarch's Way provides a continuous north-south route through the east of the LCA, entering from Chipping Sodbury, crossing Kingrove Common before following the River Boyd valley south, through Codrington, Doynton and Wick.

The wider public rights of way network includes extensive linear routes which criss-cross the area, with a denser radiating pattern emanating from Pucklechurch and Doynton. Cycle Route 17 also passes between Pucklechurch and Dyrham.

**Photo 3: Medieval core of the Pucklechurch Conservation Area**





# Perceptual Influences

## Visual Character

The Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley LCA forms an open plateau, which is a simple, undulating to rolling area with the prominent Pucklechurch scarp edge to the west. The intricacies of the enclosed Boyd Valley at Wick and steep profile of the Pucklechurch scarp provide contrast, within an otherwise largely exposed, large-scale area.

The Cotswold Scarp forms a prominent backcloth and skyline to the east. Extensive open views of this significant landform are possible from a large extent of the LCA, and greatly influence its character. Panoramic views over the LCA are available from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp. This LCA is therefore important in providing the setting for the western edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL).

The Pucklechurch Ridge, with its section of scarp, forms a visually prominent backcloth and containment to views from the Westerleigh Vale (LCA 12), the urban edge of Kingswood (LCA 14) and those areas of settlement elevated on rising ground. The two chimneys of the Parkfield Colliery (North and South sites) form local landmarks and are visible against the backdrop of the slope from LCA 12. Panoramic views over the adjacent Westerleigh Vale (LCA 12) are possible, particularly from residential properties located along Parkfield Rank, Shortwood Hill, Westerleigh Hill and footpaths along the scarp edge. These views are focused across the rural landscape, scattered with industrial relics (now largely absorbed within a framework of naturally regenerating vegetation), road and rail infrastructure, an oil terminal and abattoir building. More distant features such as the Severn Ridges (including Baden Hill) and the hills of South Wales are seen beyond the Westerleigh Vale (LCA 12) and Bristol conurbation in these views.

The settlement edge and urban area of Emerson's Green/Lyde Green and Kingswood, and large-scale warehouses at Emerald Park are very prominent

## Shallow Ridge LCT

within views from the western edge of the LCA, though maturing landscape provides some absorption.

Above the Pucklechurch Ridge, the mixed agricultural landscape is largely comprised of a patchwork of medium to large, regular shaped fields over a rolling, undulating landform. Hedgerow trees and woodland are generally intermittent, contributing to an open character. A few copses are scattered to the north of the M4, and small woodlands are located along the Pucklechurch scarp, which lead to a semi-enclosed character in these areas.

A dense pattern of hedgerow trees and woodland to the south, around Wick and within the curvilinear Boyd Valley, limits views into and out of this part of the LCA. This medium-scale semi-enclosed landscape is diverse and distinctive in appearance. Commons at Kingrove, Wapley, Hinton and Holbrook are visually distinct local areas.

The scattered, small-scale historic settlements and hamlets within the Boyd Valley and along the toe of the Cotswold Scarp generally nestle within the landscape. They are harmonious and well-integrated within the vegetation pattern and often large-scale landscape setting. The churches at Pucklechurch, Wick, Abson and Doynton and Bury Manor at Wick are focal points within the wider landscape. Outward panoramic views of the Feltham Brook valley, the Boyd Valley, the Cotswold Scarp and Doynton Conservation Area are available from St James' Church at Abson.

More recent built development at Pucklechurch and Wick, constructed from various materials including brick, render and reconstituted stone, is prominent within local views and from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp. The eastern and southern edges of Pucklechurch, which includes housing, a large modern prison and shed buildings associated with the trading estate, are prominent within local views. The lack of integration results from the slightly elevated location of the town, the limited vegetation framework/hedgerow trees along the eastern settlement edge, or within the adjacent agricultural landscape, and the large-scale of some developments. The maturing peripheral landscape scheme around the prison is providing some screening of the prison complex in views

## Shallow Ridge LCT

from the south. From the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp, the light-coloured roofs of the large-scale trading estate sheds are visually evident

Part of the village of Wick is well-integrated, situated within the wooded valley sides of the Boyd Valley. However, the dense housing pattern extending along the upper slopes is more prominent within local views, due to very limited tree cover within the settlement area or adjacent to the northern edge.

The settlement edge of Yate is visible to the north of the LCA, although the undulating topography and vegetation in the surrounding fields limits its visual impact on local views.

The buildings and quarry edge of the works at Wick Quarry are visually prominent from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp and A420 to the east, due to a lack of screening or vegetation.

The M4 and its associated traffic cuts through the centre of the LCA and is highly visible, particularly along the elevated section near Codrington. The open landform and limited vegetation emphasise its visual presence. Similarly, the single powerline which crosses the north of the LCA, is also a visible element within the area. Solar farms in the north-east of the LCA are visible locally and in longer views from the Cotswold Scarp. The existing wind turbine near Wapley can be seen in views across the north of the LCA, including from Pucklechurch and the Cotswold Scarp.

**Shallow Ridge LCT**

**Photo 4: Gently undulating landform with a relatively open character, with distant views to the Cotswold Scarp**



### Tranquillity and Dark Skies

Tranquillity is reduced within some areas of the LCA due to the presence of the M4, which is a source of noise in the centre of the LCA, and the settlements of Pucklechurch and Wick in the south-west. The proximity of the urban edge of Bristol, including the abattoir and oil terminal buildings to the west of the LCA boundary, and the settlement of Yate to the north of the LCA boundary, also disrupt tranquillity.

The east of the LCA has a relatively good experience of dark skies with low levels of light pollution. However, light pollution associated with the urban edge of Bristol, Yate, Pucklechurch and Wick influences the experience of dark skies in the west of the LCA.

The scenic and perceptual qualities of the south-eastern part of the LCA, along the Cotswold Scarp, is reflected in its inclusion within the Cotswolds National Landscape.

### Visually Important Hillside

The Pucklechurch Ridge Visually Important Hillside (VIH) is located within this LCA. However, the eastern edge of the LCA is also flanked by the Cotswold Scarp (located within LCA 4). 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.
- Cotswold Scarp VIH: a long and distinctive stretch of escarpment and series of hillsides, which defines the edge of the CNL and a marked

## Shallow Ridge LCT

change in landscape character. The Cotswold Scarp VIH is prominent in views from across the majority of South Gloucestershire and influences a number of Conservation Areas and RPGs.

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

## Strategic Viewpoints

Three Strategic Viewpoints (SVP) are located within this LCA at Westerleigh Hill (SVP 11), St James' Church at Abson (SVP 22) and the south-west edge of Pucklechurch at Shortwood Hill (SVP 27). SVP 11: Westerleigh Hill allows some appreciation of the CNL and provides a panoramic view of the vale, the Severn Ridges (including Baden Hill), the hills of South Wales, and the landmark features of St James' Church and St John's Church. SVP 22: St James' Church (Abson) allows an appreciation of the CNL and provides a panoramic view of the Feltham Brook valley, the Boyd Valley, the Cotswold Scarp and Doynton Conservation Area, and the landmark features of Doynton House and line of beech trees on Freezing Hill. SVP 27: Shortwood Hill (Pucklechurch) provides a panoramic view that takes in the notable landscape features of the shallow ridges, the Pucklechurch Ridge, Overscourt Wood, the Cotswold Scarp, and the landmark features of St Barnabas Church the line of beeches on Freezing Hill.

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

## Evaluation

### Key Sensitivities and Valued Features

- Varied landform that provides visual interest and sense of place both within the LCA and from surrounding areas, particularly the prominent backdrop provided by the enclosing ridges of the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp to the east and the Pucklechurch Ridge to the west.
- The relatively open nature of the landscape, resulting from few scattered woodlands and the patchwork of agricultural fields with open commons, which contribute to the landscape pattern.
- The far-reaching views that are available over this open landscape from the Cotswold Scarp and Pucklechurch Ridge and views towards the Cotswold Scarp contribute to the sense of place.
- The extensive mosaic of calcareous grassland (including areas of species-rich grassland) that supports a diverse range of flora and contributes to biodiversity, with some areas designated as SNCIs.
- The flowing water and bankside vegetation of watercourses and associated tributaries of Feltham Brook, River Boyd and River Frome, that provides habitat for a range of notable species and contributes to biodiversity, with some areas designated as SNCIs.
- Mature hedges in the south and south-west which provide habitat connectivity between wooded areas on the Pucklechurch Ridge and in the Boyd Valley.
- The historic villages at Pucklechurch, Doynton and Siston (including Siston Court), which are designated as Conservation Areas for their historic layout and stone buildings that contribute to time depth and sense of place.
- Relics of the industrial landscape located along the western boundary of the LCA that contribute to time depth.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

- The dispersed settlement pattern outside of Pucklechurch and Wick, which contributes to sense of rurality.
- The network of public footpaths and recreational routes, including the Community Forest Path, Monarch's Way, a Circular Ride and Cycle Route 17, that provide recreational opportunities across the landscape.
- The experience of dark night skies in the east of the LCA.

## The Changing Landscape

The following section sets out the changes and pressures to the Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd 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 the River Frome, River Boyd and Feltham Brook SNCIs).

### Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery

- Large parts of the area are overlooked from the Cotswold Scarp. The pressure for locating solar farms and wind turbines within the LCA could result in adverse effects on landscape character and on views overlooking the LCA from the Cotswold Scarp. Conversely potential pressure for wind turbines and associated electricity infrastructure on the Cotswold Scarp would have the potential for significant visual impact on the character of the LCA.
- Pressure for extending existing solar PV development to the south of the M4, which could result in adverse cumulative effects on landscape character and visual amenity.



## Shallow Ridge LCT

- 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 small native woodlands linking existing ones in a corridor based on the Boyd Valley between Wick and Doynton as set out in the Forest of Avon's Tree and Woodland 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

- The pastoral landscape in the south of the LCA, with its thick hedgerow structure, hedgerow trees and occasional copses, appears to be in good condition. However, mature hedgerow trees throughout the area typically have few juvenile replacements present to sustain this framework in future decades, although recent woodland planting between Pucklechurch and the M4 motorway will contribute to the landscape framework in future.
- The landscape framework is largely intact, although there are signs of erosion of its integrity, following the removal of features or deterioration through limited management. Hedgerows are in places sporadic and intermittent, replaced by stock fencing. There is subdivision of fields with varying boundary treatments resulting from horse keeping affecting a wide area. Hedgerow removal has been associated with arable land use, particularly in elevated flat areas, and as a result of quarrying, landfill and golf course development.
- The scattered ponds and pools are vulnerable to any loss of habitat including the terrestrial habitat around ponds as well as the ponds themselves.
- 'Horsiculture' has increased and is now widespread in this LCA, in particular between Pucklechurch and Abson. The cumulative effect of this and associated infrastructure can result in a marked change in landscape character as well as impact on biodiversity. Other uses such as caravan storage, a traveller site to the west of Pucklechurch and the introduction of

## Shallow Ridge LCT

manmade landforms and ornamental planting associated with golf courses are further eroding the traditional rural character of this LCA.

- The Pucklechurch Ridge provides an important backdrop and skyline feature to the adjacent LCA12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge and LCA 14: Kingswood to the west. Rough grassland and scrub are subject to future changes in grazing practices, which would affect the visual texture and openness of the scarp. Mature trees along the skyline and woodland copses on the slopes presently have no juvenile replacements. The loss of tree structure may reveal the dispersed farm buildings and residential properties, making them more prominent. Loss of mature trees would also harm biodiversity value.
- The Shortwood Claypit which is largely contained within the adjacent Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge (LCA 12) immediately to the west has a stockpile of clay that is currently being drawn on. However, the claypit itself is in progressive restoration with phased infilling of sections of the site. The final land raising is expected to result in a landform which is locally convex, rather than the typical concave slopes of the lower scarp. The restoration proposals for the whole site, including the adjacent claypit, will however reintroduce a hedgerow framework over the site, as well as a large area of new woodland. Both will contribute to the overall landscape structure and habitat value of the area, although the new woodland, in the long term, is likely to screen some of the views of the wider adjacent vale that are currently available.
- Wick Quarry is relatively prominent from the Cotswolds National Landscape. However, maturing planting along the eastern edge is improving its integration into the wider landscape.
- The central and eastern parts of this LCA are sensitive to change, due to their open nature and visibility from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp that are integral in providing the landscape setting to the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL).
- The steeper slopes, for example the valley sides and upper slopes of the Boyd Valley around Wick, are sensitive to change which might require landform remodelling, resulting in impact upon landscape form and vegetation framework.

### Development

- The terraced properties at Parkfield Rank form a distinctive and isolated landmark feature which intrudes upon the scarp face of the Pucklechurch Ridge, which otherwise has very few built features. The introduction of significant vertical structures on the ridge could alter the character and perceived scale of this visually prominent landform.
- The abattoir and oil terminal buildings near the scarp toe in the adjoining Westerleigh Vale (LCA 12) and M4 motorway are built forms which dilute the rural character, due to their massing, scale or linearity, which contrasts with the rural landscape and landform of the scarp.
- Relatively recent development at Emerson's Green East/Lyde Green covers an extensive area within the adjacent Westerleigh Vale (LCA 12) to the west and extends between the existing urban edge of Emerson's Green, to and along the toe of the Pucklechurch Ridge. This has resulted in significant landscape change and loss of rural character, and is prominent in views from the Pucklechurch Ridge. New development and structures within this area have affected the visibility, prominence and distinctiveness of the Pucklechurch Ridge, in views from the west and the M4. However, woodland planting along the eastern edge of the development, once mature, will buffer the impact on the adjoining countryside. Further development is proposed to the east of this recent expansion, and is located directly adjacent to the Pucklechurch Ridge.
- The M4 motorway and overhead powerlines are local detractors to landscape character. However, the undulating landform and layered effect of the hedgerows generally limits the impact of roads and other structures on the wider landscape. However, this infrastructure remains evident within elevated long-distance views from the LCA 4: Cotswold Scarp. Reduction or erosion of the hedgerow and tree structure would increase the impact of such elements.
- The lanes are a key characteristic of the landscape and are under pressure from increased traffic with damage to verges and hedges and pressure for highway improvements. Lack of maintenance of the wider grass verges is leading to the development of scrub.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

- Sections of the edge of Pucklechurch are sensitive to change, due to their visual prominence and influence upon local landscape character and views. Future change and particularly expansion of the settlement into the surrounding plateau will potentially increase the visual prominence of the town in this open landscape, especially where it results in loss to the already limited vegetation structure, eroding the rural character of this landscape.
- Maintenance works by Network Rail has resulted in the loss of significant swathes of woodland on both cut and embankment slopes in the north of the LCA. This has increased the visual prominence of the railway and trains and also increased the visibility and extended the urbanising influence of Yate in the wider landscape, and reduced wildlife habitat.

## 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 8], as well as the overarching management strategy objectives set out in Chapter 4.

### Landscape Strategy

#### Landscape Management

- Protect and manage areas that are within the CNL in line with the CNL Management Plan [See reference 9] to conserve the highly valued visual and perceptual qualities of the landscape.
- Enhancement of the landscape framework should be considered on balance with the open character of the landscape, retaining key views within, across and outward from the LCA. Encourage and focus larger scale woodland planting on lower-lying land.
- Encourage and support the management, restoration and enhancement of the relic industrial landscape and structures of the coal mining industry associated with Parkfield Colliery.
- Actively manage and strengthen hedgerows, trees and woodlands to ensure the conservation of these key features for the long term as well as conserving and enhancing habitat value and connectivity, in line with the aims of the Common Connections project.
- The loss of hedgerows or introduction of fences should be avoided, particularly for mature hedgerows in the south and south-west of the LCA.
- Address potential for flooding issues with the implementation of natural flood management schemes along the River Frome in the north of the

LCA, in line with the aims of the River Frome Reconnected project, and along the River Boyd in the centre and south of the LCA.

- Preserve and enhance the landscape setting of Pucklechurch, Doynton, and Siston Conservation Areas, together with key views towards them and looking out from them. In particular, consider views towards and from the Grade I listed Siston Court and its locally registered 18th century landscape park.

## Ecology/Biodiversity Management

- Conserve and enhance notable habitats (including priority habitat deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland and other areas of calcareous grassland), ensuring that there is no net loss of biodiversity.
- Enhance grassland connectivity through linking commons and through improved verge management and promote grassland creation.
- Protect, buffer and improve the riparian habitats of the River Frome and River Boyd, particularly the designated habitats at Wick Rocks and River Boyd SNCIs and Golden Valley LNR. Promote opportunities to enhance recreational access to the rivers. Seek opportunities to naturalise sections of the River Frome currently impacted by engineering structures (except heritage features).
- Encourage restoration of buffer strips along watercourses and field ponds to minimise run off to maintain the biodiversity of wetland features, in line with the aims of the River Frome Reconnected project.
- Support the planting of new wildflower habitats along B-lines within the east of the LCA (identified by Buglife), that will contribute to the national pollinator network.
- Consider opportunities for habitat connectivity of priority habitat deciduous woodland, particularly along the settlement edge of Wick and with the Wick Rocks and River Boyd SNCI, in line with the aims of the Forest of Avon's Tree and Woodland Strategy.

## Development Management

- Due to the strong visual interrelationship between the LCA and the Cotswold Scarp, development which would be prominent from or interrupt views to the scarp should be avoided in order to preserve the natural beauty of the CNL and its setting.
- Retain the character of key views from high grade heritage assets within the CNL such as Dyrham Park Registered Park and Garden, Hinton Hill Fort (Scheduled Monument) and Dodington House Registered Park and Garden.
- Any significant vertical features on the skylines of the Cotswolds Ridge (LCA 4) and the Pucklechurch Ridge should be carefully sited to ensure that the inherent sense of scale and rural character of this LCA, and key views to and from elevated areas, are not compromised.
- Retain the dispersed settlement pattern outside of Pucklechurch and Wick to ensure the sense of rurality is not compromised.
- Soften the southern and eastern settlement edge of Pucklechurch, particularly areas of large-scale development, with additional planting that is in keeping with the local landscape character. Retain key outward views towards the Cotswold Scarp from the settlement edge.
- Soften the settlement edge of Wick, particularly prominent development on upper slopes of the Boyd Valley, with additional planting that is in keeping with the local landscape character.
- Further proposals for horse-keeping should be avoided, given the cumulative impact of existing horsiculture. Other non-agricultural uses should be designed to ensure that the character of the wider landscape is conserved.
- Preserve and enhance woodland planting along the M4 to further reduce the influence of the road on the surrounding landscape.
- Protect the experience of dark night skies in the east of the LCA through the control of lighting.

## Shallow Ridge LCT

- The restoration of quarry sites should integrate these sites into the surrounding landscapes and enhance biodiversity value.



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