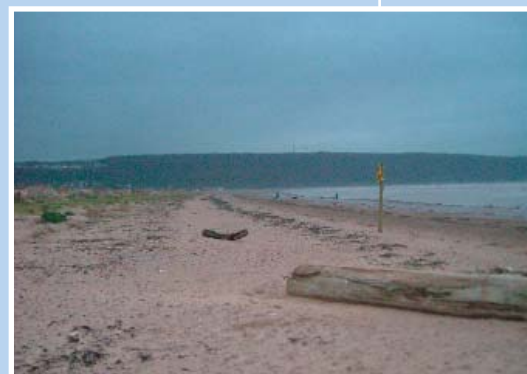


December 2005

North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT



Prepared on behalf of
North Somerset Council
By Land Use Consultants



Adopted December 2005

NORTH SOMERSET
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT

SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING DOCUMENT

December 2005

Adopted December 2005

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The study has been steered by officers from North Somerset Council; Rachel Lewis, Kay Crowe, Gareth Withers, Kevin Carlton and Allan Davies with further advice and information on the archaeology of the area provided by Vince Russett.

The text of this final version of the Supplementary Planning Document includes changes that have been made following consultation on a draft version of the document.

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. North Somerset is located in the south west of England with the shores of the Severn Estuary forming its western boundary and Bristol lying immediately to the north east. The area, administered by North Somerset Council, covers 38,960 hectares and has a population of approximately 200,000 people, concentrated in the urban centres of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea and also in the many villages such as Banwell and Claverham. The location and context of the study area are shown in **Figure 1**.
- 1.2. The landscape of North Somerset is highly varied, containing within it sections of four of the Countryside Agency/English Nature's National Character Areas: *Areas 118: Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges; 106: Severn and Avon Vales; 141 Mendip Hills and 142/3: Somerset Levels and Moors/Mid Somerset Hills*. The location of these areas is shown in **Figure 2**. The National Character Areas provide a broad indication of the diversity of the district's landscapes, which range from the Carboniferous Limestone uplands of the Mendip to the level, wet pasturelands of the moors. The significance of the landscape of the Mendip Hills is acknowledged by their designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. **Figure 3** shows the character areas determined by the existing assessment, *The Mendip Hills Landscape* (1998).

NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 1.3. Landscape character assessment is a technique that has been developed to facilitate systematic analysis, description and classification of the landscape. It involves identification of those features or combinations of elements that contribute to the character of the landscape, thereby enabling the special character and qualities of a particular area to be understood. This information allows reasoned consideration of those issues affecting the landscape, which can be used as a basis for the development of appropriate recommendations for future landscape conservation and management.
- 1.4. The main purpose of this assessment is to document the current status of the North Somerset landscape, furthering the understanding of the landscape resource available in the area and giving an indication of areas in need of enhancement and of conservation. This will enable better-informed decisions to be made on the future management of the landscape and provide an objective basis for the preparation of Village Design Statements and other future studies.
- 1.5. The need for conservation and enhancement of the North Somerset landscape is made clear by a recent research project led by the Countryside Agency, *Countryside Quality Counts, Tracking Change in the English Countryside* (2004). This investigated change in the countryside over the period 1990 to 1998 and assessed the type of changes within each National Character Area. Of the four Areas that fall partially within North Somerset two showed marked changes inconsistent with character (Somerset Levels and Moors and Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges) and two showed some changes inconsistent with character (Mendip Hills and Severn and Avon Vales). The landscape character assessment of North Somerset provides an audit of the landscape in 2003 and sets out a positive direction for its future management to ensure that valued elements and features are protected, conserved and enhanced.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 1.6. The method for undertaking the landscape character assessment follows the current accepted method promoted by the Countryside Agency as set out in the document *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* (2002).

- I.7. The District-wide assessment has been prepared within the framework of the Countryside Agency and English Nature's Countryside Character Initiative as shown on the *Character of England Map* and it also considers the context provided by the Agency's *National Landscape Typology* and the *Mendip Hills Landscape Assessment* (Chris Blandford 1998). The assessment also builds upon the Local Authority scale assessments of the adjacent districts of Bath and North East Somerset, Mendip and Sedgemoor.
- I.8. A detailed description of the assessment methodology is given in **Appendix 3**.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- I.9. The structure of this report is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction: Introduces the landscape of North Somerset and the landscape assessment context of the area.

Chapter 2: Physical Influences: Establishes the physical factors that have influenced the character of the area, including geology, topography, hydrology and soils.









Chapter 3: Ecological Character: Provides an overview of ecological characteristics across the area that relate to their underlying physical environment.

Chapter 4: Human Influences: Establishes the human factors that have influenced the character of North Somerset.

Chapter 5: The Landscape Character of North Somerset: This is the main body of the report and contains an introduction to each landscape type followed by descriptions for each character area and evaluations of the areas including identification of forces for change and a broad landscape strategy leading on to management guidelines.

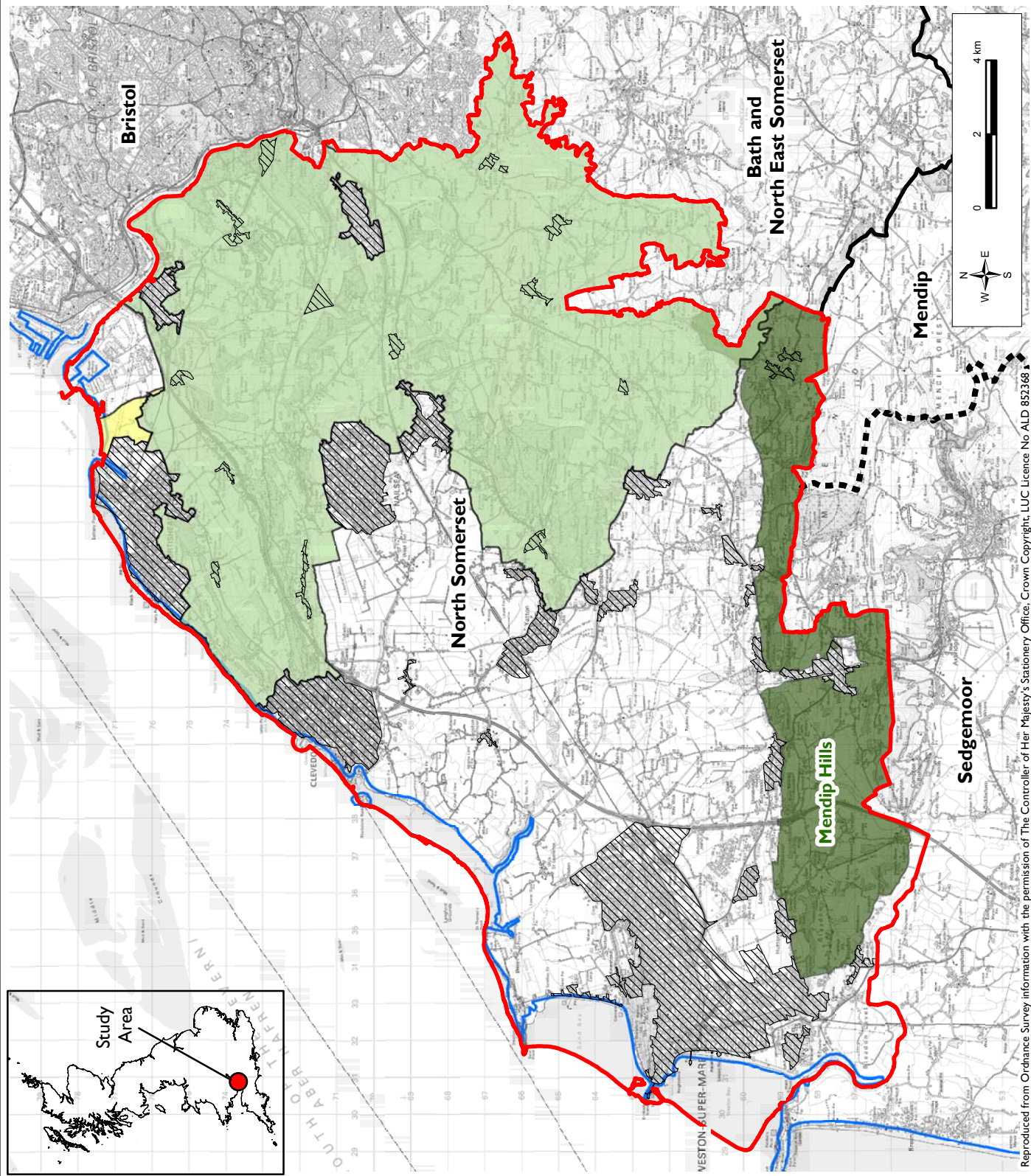
NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Figure 1:
Location and Context**

- Key**
-  North Somerset Boundary
 -  County Boundary
 -  District Boundary
 -  Coastline
 -  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 -  Green Belt
 -  Proposed Green Belt Extension
 -  Settlement

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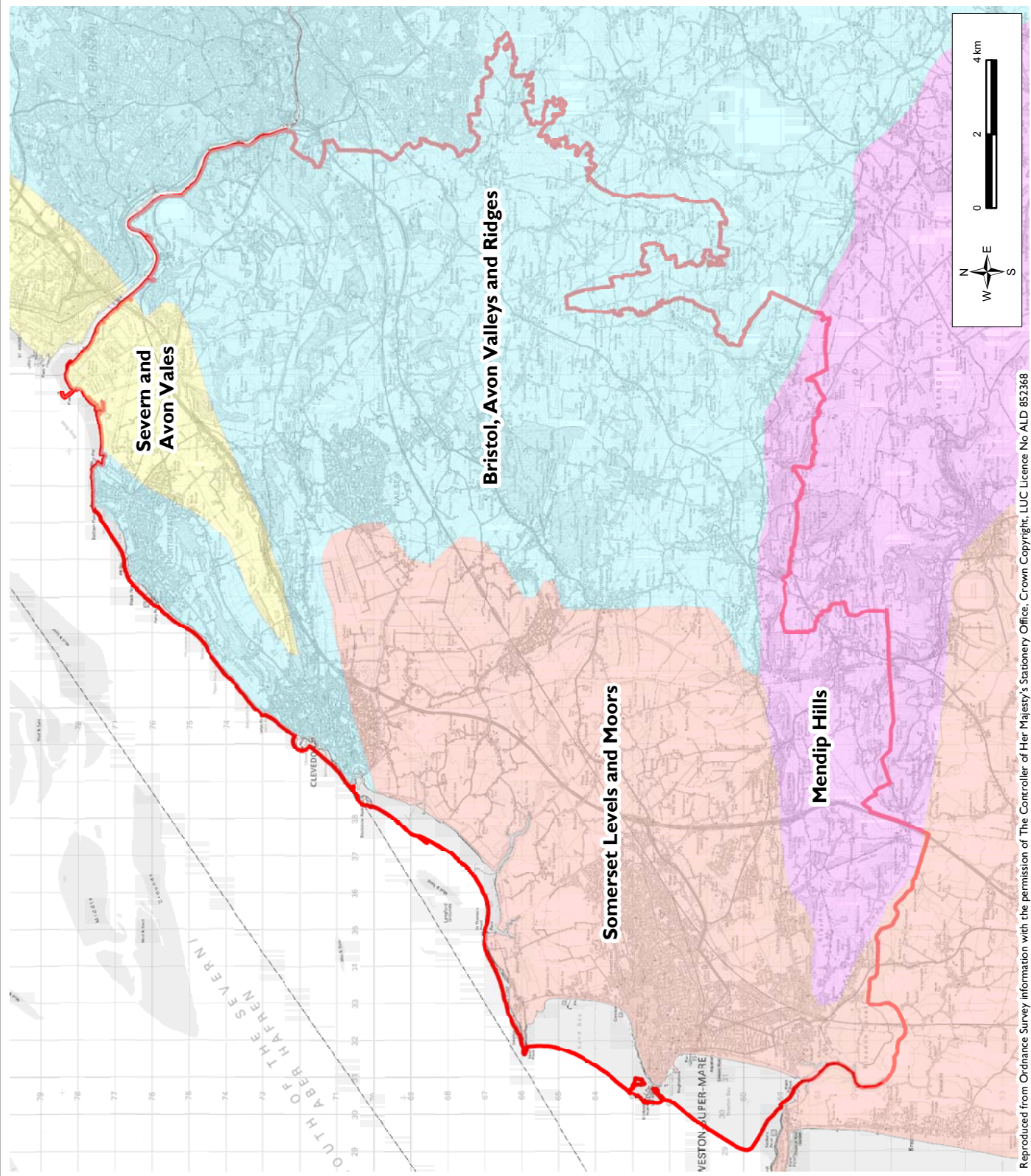



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NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Figure 2:
National Character Area Context**

- Key**
- North Somerset Boundary
 - Joint Character Areas
 - Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges
 - Mendip Hills
 - Severn and Avon Valles
 - Somerset Levels and Moors



Source:
JCA - English Nature and Countryside Agency
Mendip LCA -

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









NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Figure 3:
Local Character Area Context**

Key

 North Somerset Boundary

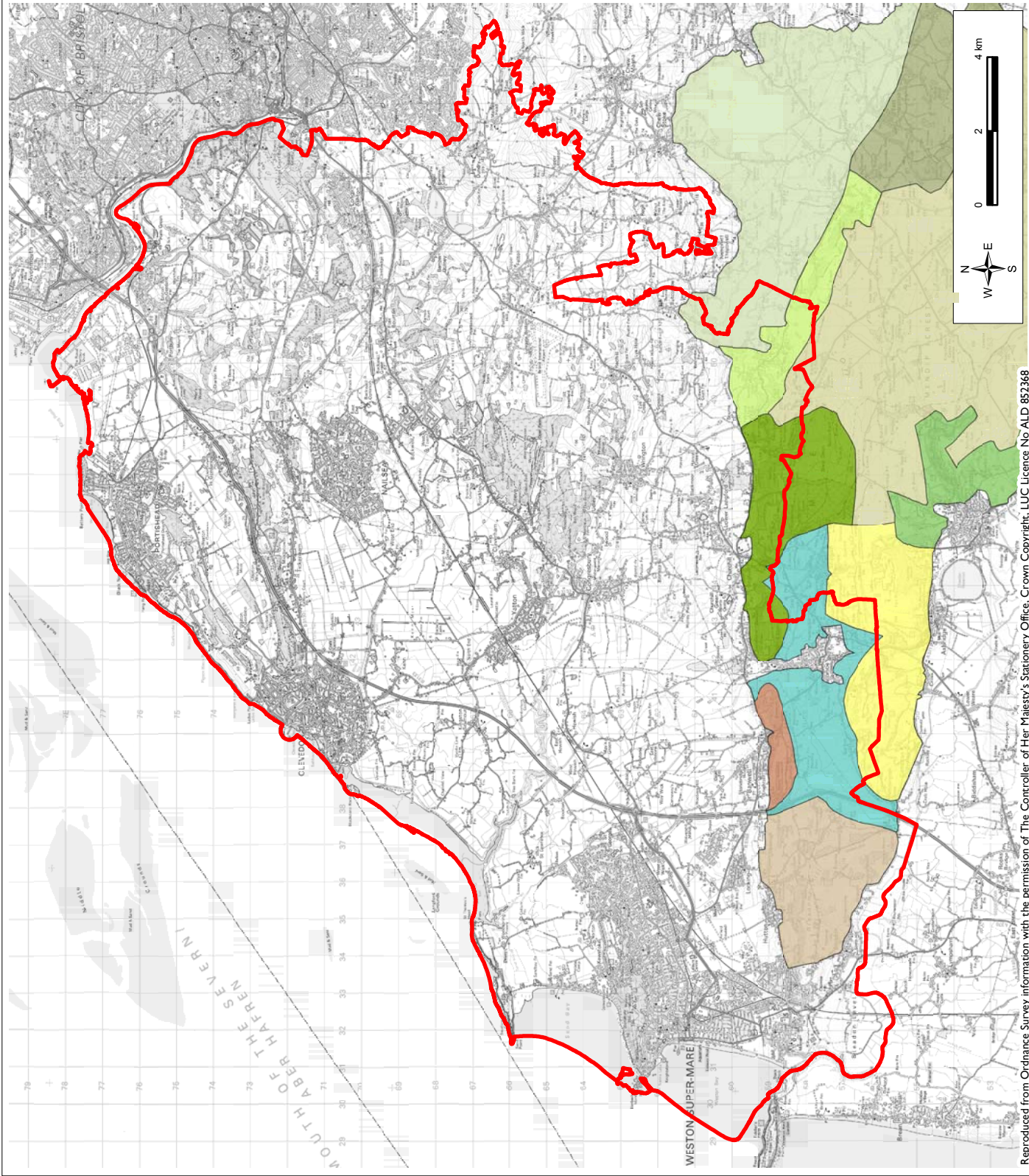
Mendip Hills Landscape Character Assessment

-  Banwell Hill to Towerhead
-  Bleadon Hills
-  Crook Peak to Callow Hill
-  The Blagdon-Compton Martin Slopes
-  The Chew Lowlands
-  The Harptree-Chewton Edge
-  The Lox Yeo Valley and Winscombe Vale
-  The Northern Slopes
-  The Plateau
-  The South Western Slopes

Source:
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2. PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

- 2.1. The landscape of North Somerset is a product of the multitude of physical and human influences that have acted upon it. In order to understand how and why the varied character of the modern landscape has arisen it is necessary to explore those conditions which have affected its form, patterns of land use and ecological character, ranging from the basic underlying geological characteristics of the land and the natural processes which have acted upon it to historical and more recent activities of humans.

GEOLGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.2. The basic structure of landscape is formed by its underlying geology. Over time the action of weathering, erosion and deposition change the form of the landscape, drainage and soils in turn creating the patterns of vegetation and land use. North Somerset is a dramatically varied landscape ranging from the flat lowlands of the levels and moors to the steep slopes of the Mendip Hills. It lies alongside the Bristol Channel with the Mendip at its southern boundary and the River Avon to the north east. **Figure 4** is a map showing the simplified geology of the area and **Figure 5** is a map illustrating the topography.

Geology and Landform

- 2.3. Rock types are represented in North Somerset from 400 million years of earth history. Horizontally laid sediments of the Devonian and Carboniferous periods were compressed by the Variscan Earth movements about 290 million years ago to create a series of parallel folds making a mountain belt across the district. These mountains were then eroded under semi-arid conditions during the Permo-Triassic period, during which the crests of the mountains were removed exposing the Devonian rocks.
- 2.4. Towards the end of the Permo-Triassic period the area sank beneath the sea and during the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods remained under water with hundreds of metres of strata laid over the submerged desert landscape.
- 2.5. At the end of the Cretaceous period earth movements lifted the area above the sea and since then the Permo-Triassic landscape has been gradually exposed by the ongoing erosion of the covering strata.
- 2.6. The summits of this largely buried landscape now form most of the high ground of the district: the Portishead and Tickenham Ridges to the north east, the domed mass of Broadfield Down covering much of the east of the area and, to the south, the undulating plateau of the Mendip. In contrast Dundry Hill at the eastern edge of the area is a remnant of the Jurassic land cover.
- 2.7. This high ground (largely between 100 and 200 metres above sea level) contrasts with the extensive area of alluvial flats to the west creating the distinctive topography of the district.

Devonian Period (408-362 million years BP)

- 2.8. The **Old Red Sandstone** of the Devonian Period are the oldest rocks present in the district. They out crop in the Portishead and Tickenham ridges and in the Winscombe Valley to the south. During the Devonian period Britain was covered by wide river deltas flowing southwards from a desert land mass to the north. Insights into the nature of this ancient landscape have been provided by studies of the Old Red Sandstone sea cliffs at Portishead.

Carboniferous Period (362 – 290 million years BP)

- 2.9. The Carboniferous rocks present in North Somerset are divided into three groups; the Carboniferous Limestone Series, the Quartzitic Sandstone Group and the Coal Measures.
- 2.10. The oldest of these rocks, the **Carboniferous Limestone** (along with the Old Red Sandstone) forms all the hills of the area apart from Dundry. At the base of these rocks there are soft shales up to 500 metres thick in the Mendip Hills, laid down in a muddy sea which invaded the Devonian deltas. Overlying the shales are the more typical hard grey limestones which were laid in clear shallow seas rich in corals, fish, brachiopods and sea lilies. The Carboniferous Limestone thickens to the south west from 450-500m in the Avon Gorge to 900-930m in West Mendip. It creates much of the characteristic rugged scenery and geological interest of the area with its cliffs, gorges, combs and caves with Worlebury and the Avon Gorge providing particularly dramatic examples. It has also been quarried for building stone, as well as other uses such as roadstone and concrete aggregate and active quarrying is still carried out for instance at Failand, near Portishead and at Backwell Hill.
- 2.11. The Quartzitic Sandstone Group, caused by an uplift and increased erosion giving sandy deltas in the limestone seas, is largely concealed by later strata in this area apart from around Winford and in the Tickenham Ridge.
- 2.12. The combination of sandy deltas and equatorial swamp forest created the **Coal Measures**. These underlie much of the district in the down folds between the hills but are largely concealed by later strata so that they outcrop only at Nailsea, Portishead and Clapton. Coal has been mined around Nailsea, Clapton and Long Ashton. However coal seams form a small proportion of the total thickness of the Coal Measures with most of the formation consisting of the Pennant Sandstone and this stone has been used for walls, paving, tiling and tombstones.

The Permo-Triassic Period (290 – 208 million years BP)

- 2.13. During this period the area was semi-arid with the landscape possibly resembling parts of present day Arizona. The **Mercia Mudstone Group** is the result of erosion of the Variscan Mountains. It consists of alternating layers of Dolomitic Conglomerate and Mercia Mudstone. The former is a hard yellowish or reddish rock deriving from coarse rock-waste while the softer Mercia Mudstone was formed by fine wind-blown material that settled in shallow lakes in between the mountains.
- 2.14. The Mercia Mudstone group outcrops over large areas of the district around the hills forming their lower slopes and the gently rolling areas between the uplands to the east. Dolomitic Conglomerate was quarried for building stone and a famous exposure of this stone is in the cliffs between Clevedon and Portishead.
- 2.15. Towards the end of the Permo-Triassic period the area sank beneath the sea and the Penarth Group, overlaying the Mercia Mudstone, marks this change. These rocks consist of layers of shales, pale marls and thin limestones overlain by the White Lias, all laid down in the lakes, lagoons and seas surrounding the islands of the Mendip Hills and Broadfield Down.

The Jurassic Period (208 – 145 million years BP)

- 2.16. During the Jurassic period two groups of rocks were laid down in the area, the **Lias** and **Inferior Oolite**.
- 2.17. The marine transgression at the end of the Triassic period was followed by establishment of open sea across the area and layers of mudstones, shales and clays were deposited interspersed between beds of clayey limestone called Blue Lias. The name of this rock was taken from the old West Country quarrymen's term 'lias' for thin, compact limestone beds.

- 2.18. Blue Lias outcrops around a number of hills in the area, including at Locking, Banwell, Kewstoke, Dundry and on the top of Broadfield Down. The later, middle and upper parts of the Lias are present only at Dundry where a thickness of 175m of this rock has been recorded. Broadfield Down was a domed area of sea bed, creating shallower water in which coarser shelly and conglomerate rocks collected contrasting with the finer sediments elsewhere. This shallow water Lias has been quarried for building stone while the Blue Lias has been used for walling and tombstones. A connection with a mediterranean sea, early in the period, lead to an influx of ammonites, and their fossil remains along with many other creatures are found in the Lias.
- 2.19. The Inferior Oolite overlies the Lias and occurs in the area only at Dundry, where it forms the distinctive cap of Dundry Hill. The rock group is characterised by sandy ferruginous beds and hard 'iron-shot' oolitic limestones laid down in shallow shelf seas and is 15m deep at Dundry. Fossils are common in all but the upper beds, particularly ammonites, gastropods and bivalves, and the Inferior Oolite strata that can be seen at Dundry Main Road South Quarry is counted as one of the world's most fossiliferous exposures. The upper part of the stone, which is not fossiliferous, was prized as building stone and quarried underground as well as on the surface.

The Quaternary: Pleistocene (*1.64 million to 10,000 years BP*)

- 2.20. The Pleistocene saw dramatic changes of climate. The district was glaciated at least twice, and the sea level fell as water became locked up as ice leading to the exhumation of the Permo-Triassic relief. Evidence of glaciation includes valley cut by melt water from glaciers such as the East Clevedon gap and the Rickford Combe. In inter-glacial periods dry combes and gorges were created by snow melting in springtime with the water draining through the permeable rock. At the edges of the hills are fans of rock debris in a sandy matrix transported from the higher ground by sludge and meltwater. Sea level in this period was higher than the present day as indicated by river borne gravels at Pill and Abbots Leigh 30m above the present flood plain of the Avon. Changes in sea level have created wave cut platforms at Middle Hope and Spring Cove, the former with a 'raised beach' deposit that is one of the most fossil rich known. These and other features in the area indicate a complex series of changes with at least three episodes of high sea level.
- 2.21. The district is rich in caves and most of these were formed in the Pleistocene mainly by solution in the Carboniferous Limestone. Stalagmites and other deposits can be dated giving information on the caves themselves and the exposure of the Permo-Triassic landscape. Some of the caves are rich in animal bones, including elephants, hyena, lions, reindeer, wolverine and lemmings.

The Quaternary: Holocene (*10,000 years ago to the present*)

- 2.22. At the close of glaciation around 10,000 years ago sea levels rose and the sea flowed into the low lying areas of North Somerset depositing **marine sediments** over the gently rolling landscape and valleys of the Pleistocene era and forming the flat landform of the moors. Regressions of the sea lead to the build up of **peat** beds in the inland sections of the moors including the Gordano Valley and during this period thick deposits of **Blown Sand** accumulated at Weston and Sand Bays.

HYDROLOGY

See **Figure 6: Simplified Hydrology**.

- 2.23. The Severn Estuary forms the western edge of the District with extensive areas of inter-tidal mudflats, sometimes with low cliffs, at the coastal edge. The Severn dominated the hydrology of the area with four main rivers flowing east to west across the District to join it.

Forming the boundaries of the area to the far north and south respectively are the River Avon, carried to the Severn through its dramatic limestone gorge, and the River Axe, which meanders through the moors and levels to the south. In between these two watercourses are the Rivers Kenn and Yeo and the secondary Rivers Banwell and Land Yeo all of which join the Severn Estuary at Woodspring Bay.

- 2.24. The Rivers Land Yeo, Kenn and Yeo all flow through the valleys between the limestone ridges then over the level moors areas to the Severn. As they progress through the valleys they generally have a natural river form sometimes with adjacent wetlands. As they reach the moors the channels are often more engineered and sometimes embanked, forming part of the system of numerous drainage ditches used to control the water levels on the wetlands of the Moors.
- 2.25. At the east of the District are the River Chew and Colliter's Brook which flows north to join the River Avon. Blagdon Lake, at the far south east of the area, acts as a reservoir controlling the flow of water taken from the Mendip Hills to the south and east.

SOILS AND AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITY

See **Figure 7: Agricultural Land Classification**

- 2.26. Soils types and condition reflect the underlying geology of the area, and the effects of hydrology such as seasonal water logging. The soil type affects land use type and intensity, in particular the use of the land for different forms of agriculture at various periods in human history. In turn the interaction between the soil and land use affects the ability of the area to support different assemblages of natural vegetation.
- 2.27. There are four basic soil groups which cover most of North Somerset and these relate loosely to the underlying geology:

Lithomorphic soils: these are found on the Carboniferous Limestone uplands and plateaus throughout the District including Broadfield Down, Bleadon Hill, Middle Hope and Worlebury Hill in the form of brown rankers, very shallow, loamy soils which are mostly humose and sometimes calcareous. While at Dundry Hill, where the underlying geology is Jurassic Lias and Oolite, there are brown rendzinas, shallow well drained brashy calcareous clayey soils. These soils are mainly given a grade 3 or 4 agricultural land classification and in North Somerset are used mainly for pastoral grassland and broadleaf woodland, with some arable at Dundry.

Brown soils: these soils are found over much of the land at intermediate height in the District, in particular in the river valleys (away from the flood plain) and the lower slopes of the Limestone Ridges. On the Carboniferous Pennant Sandstone south of Nailsea and Old Red Sandstone around Failand there are typical brown earths, non-alluvial well drained loamy soils. Most of the river valleys and the lower slopes of the ridges have stagnogleyic argillic brown earths, reddish fine loamy over clayey soils with permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Around Felton there are typical paleo argillic brown earths, well drained fine silty soils over clayey soils. These soils are generally classified grade 1 or 2 with some areas of grade 3 in the agricultural land classification and are used primarily for pasture.

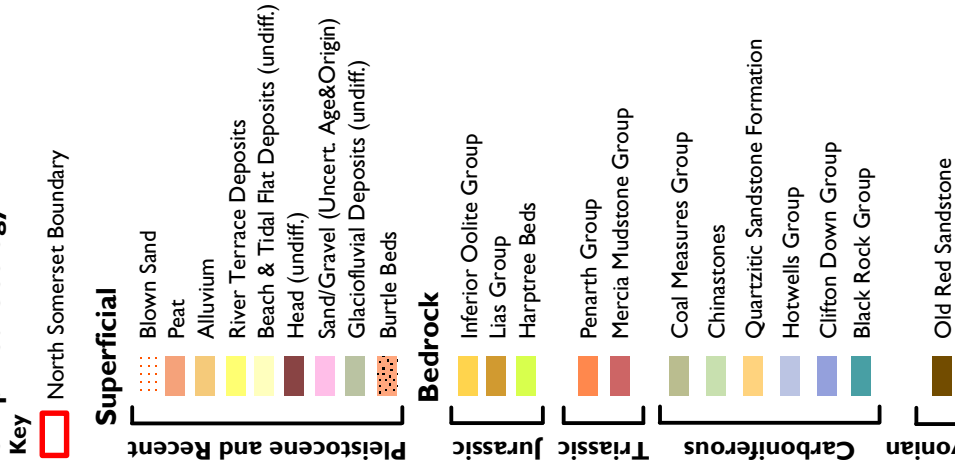
Ground-water gley soils: these soils are found throughout the level lowland moors areas to the west of the District and in the floodplains of the Rivers Lox Yeo, Yeo and Kenn. Soils over the moors are pelo-calcareous alluvial gley soils, deep stoneless mainly calcareous clayey soils while the floodplains have more mostly stoneless reddish clayey soils. These soils are affected by periodic waterlogging by a fluctuating groundwater table which is controlled to some extent by drainage ditches and pumps. These areas are predominantly grade 3 in

the agricultural land classification and are generally permanent grasslands used mainly for cattle pasture.

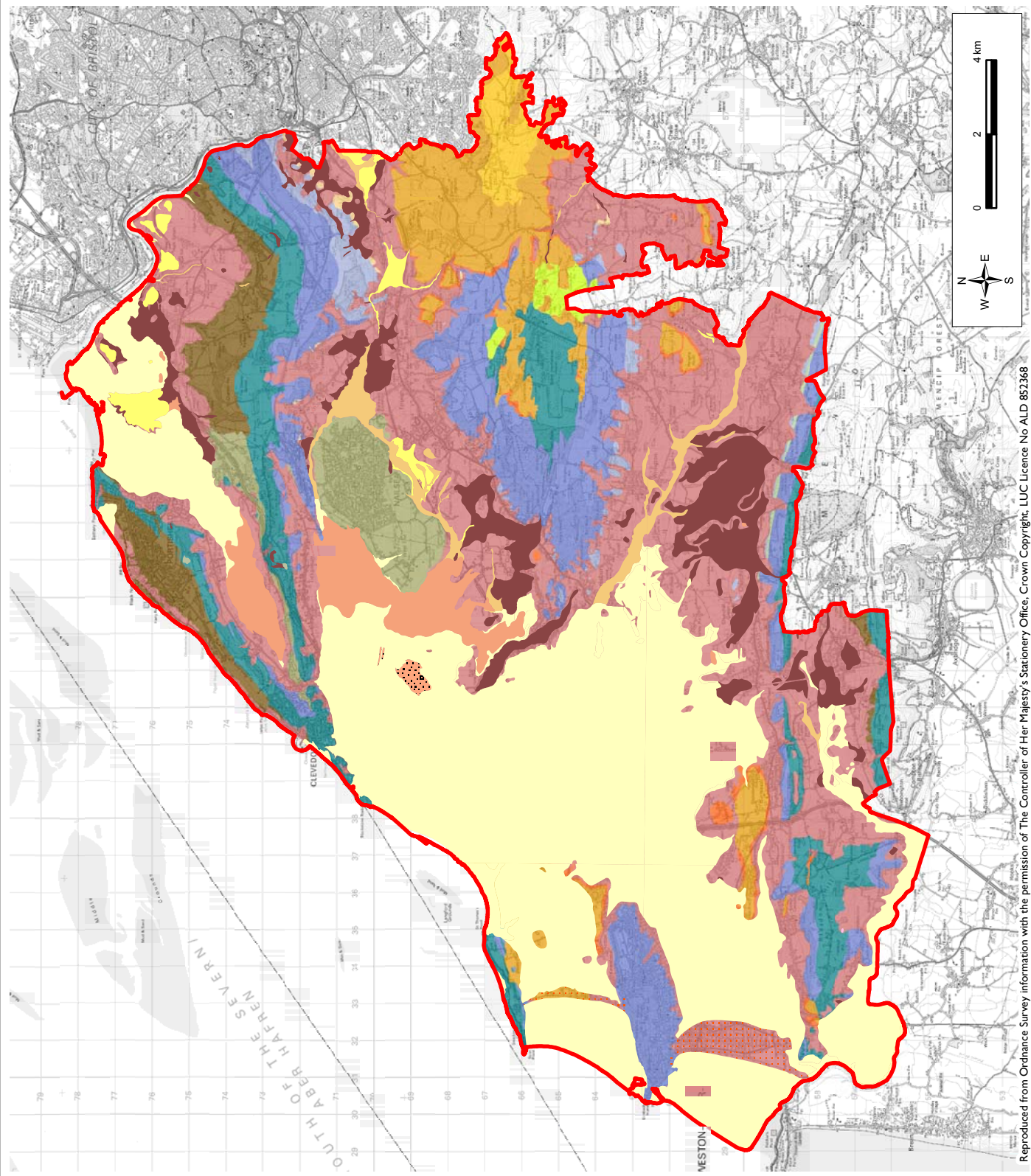
Peat soils: these are found on the inland areas of the moors particularly Nailsea and Kenn Moor and in the southern end of the Gordano Valley. These organic soils are derived from partially decomposed plant remains accumulated under waterlogged conditions and the ones found in North Somerset area deep peat soils with earthy topsoil. The groundwater is controlled by ditches and pumps. These soils are generally classified grade 2, 3 or 4 in the agricultural land classification and are used primarily for pasture with some woodland in the Gordano Valley.

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Figure 4:
Simplified Geology



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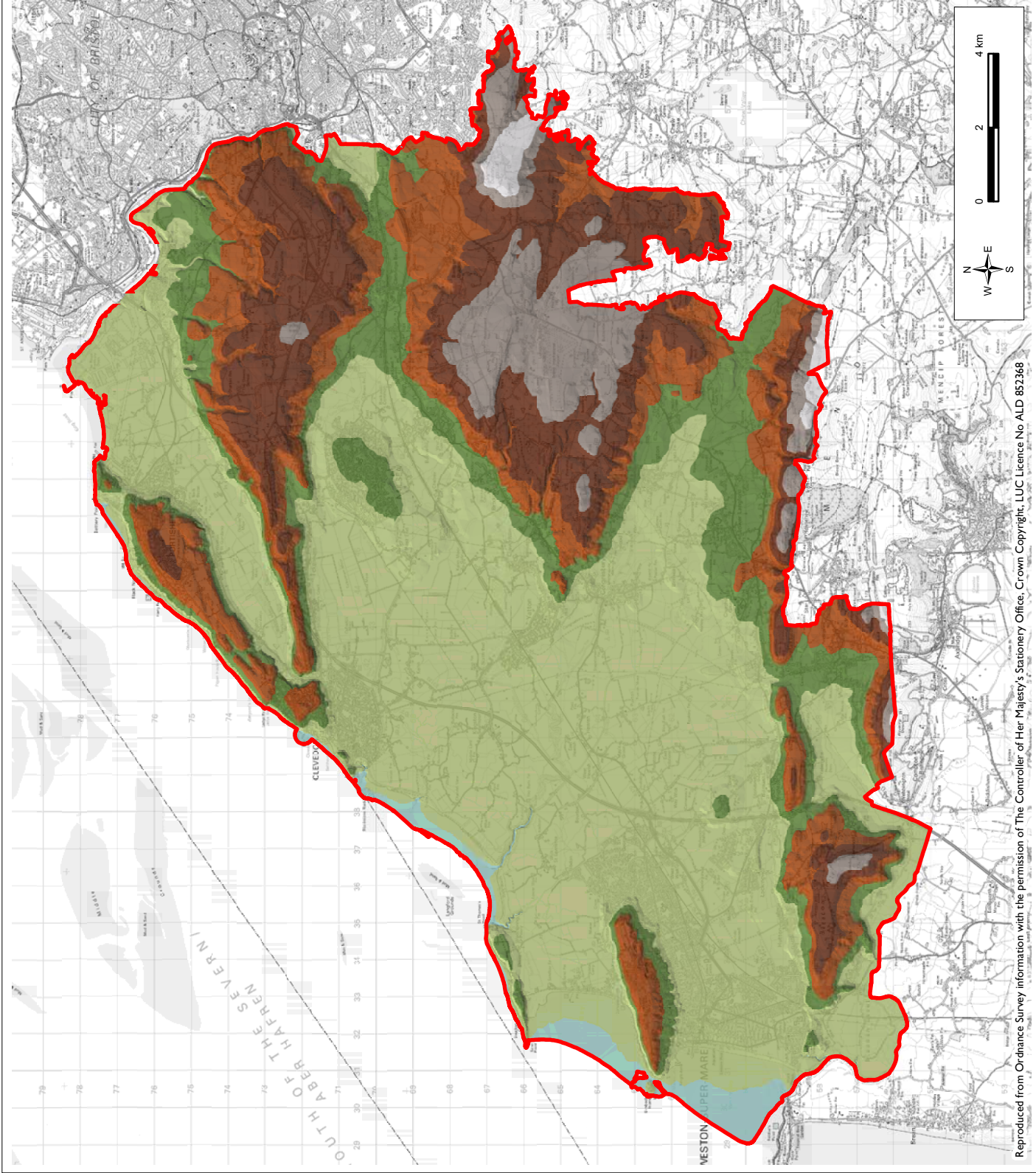
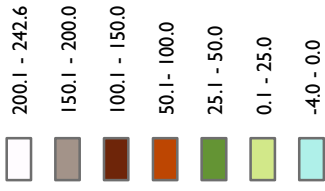


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**Figure 5:
Simplified Topography**

Key
 North Somerset Boundary

Elevation (m)










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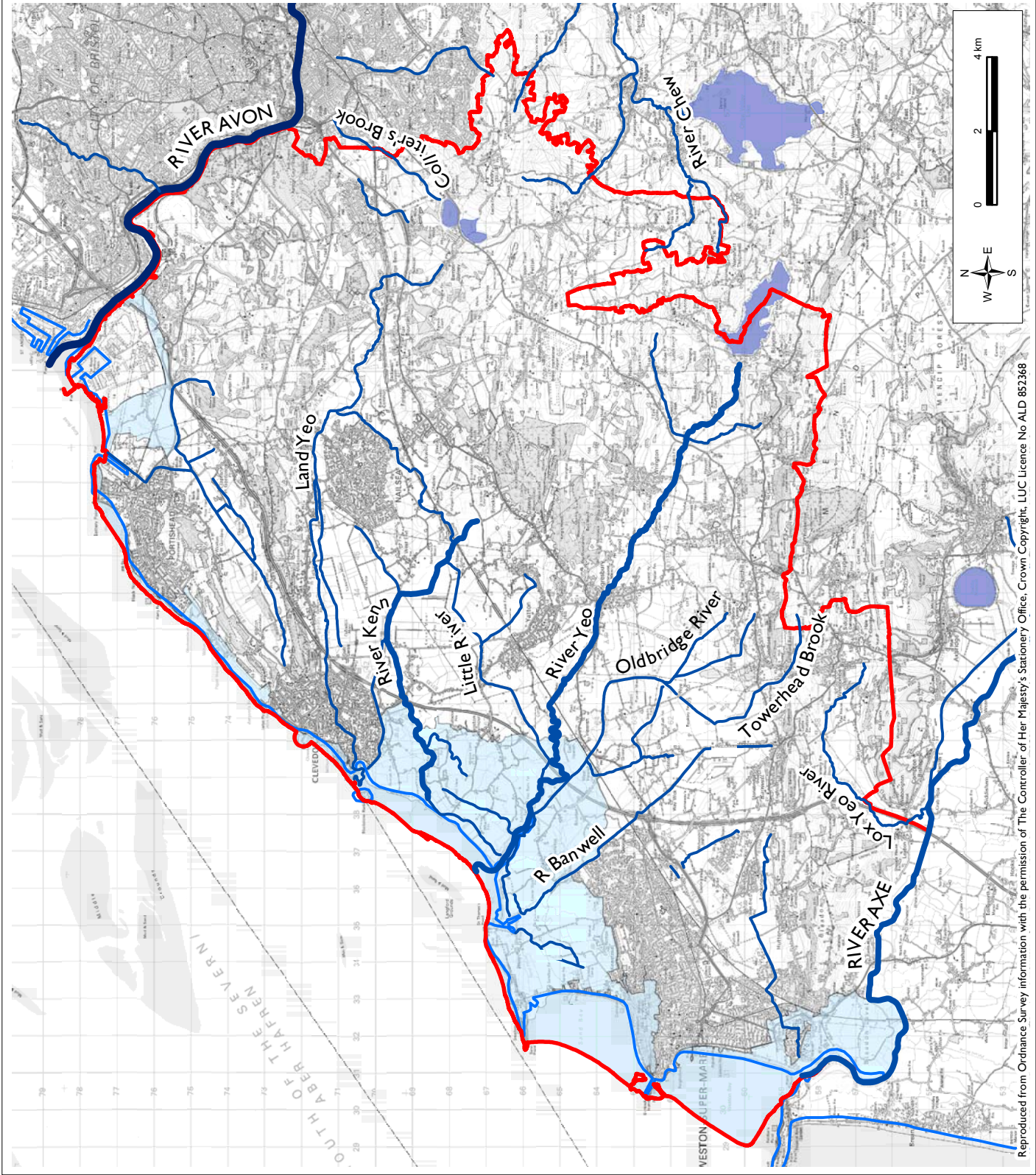
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**Figure 6:
Simplified Hydrology**

- Key**
-  North Somerset Boundary
 -  Main River
 -  Secondary river
 -  Minor river
 -  Coastline
 -  Lake
 -  Coastal Zone



Source:
North Somerset Council

Drawing No:
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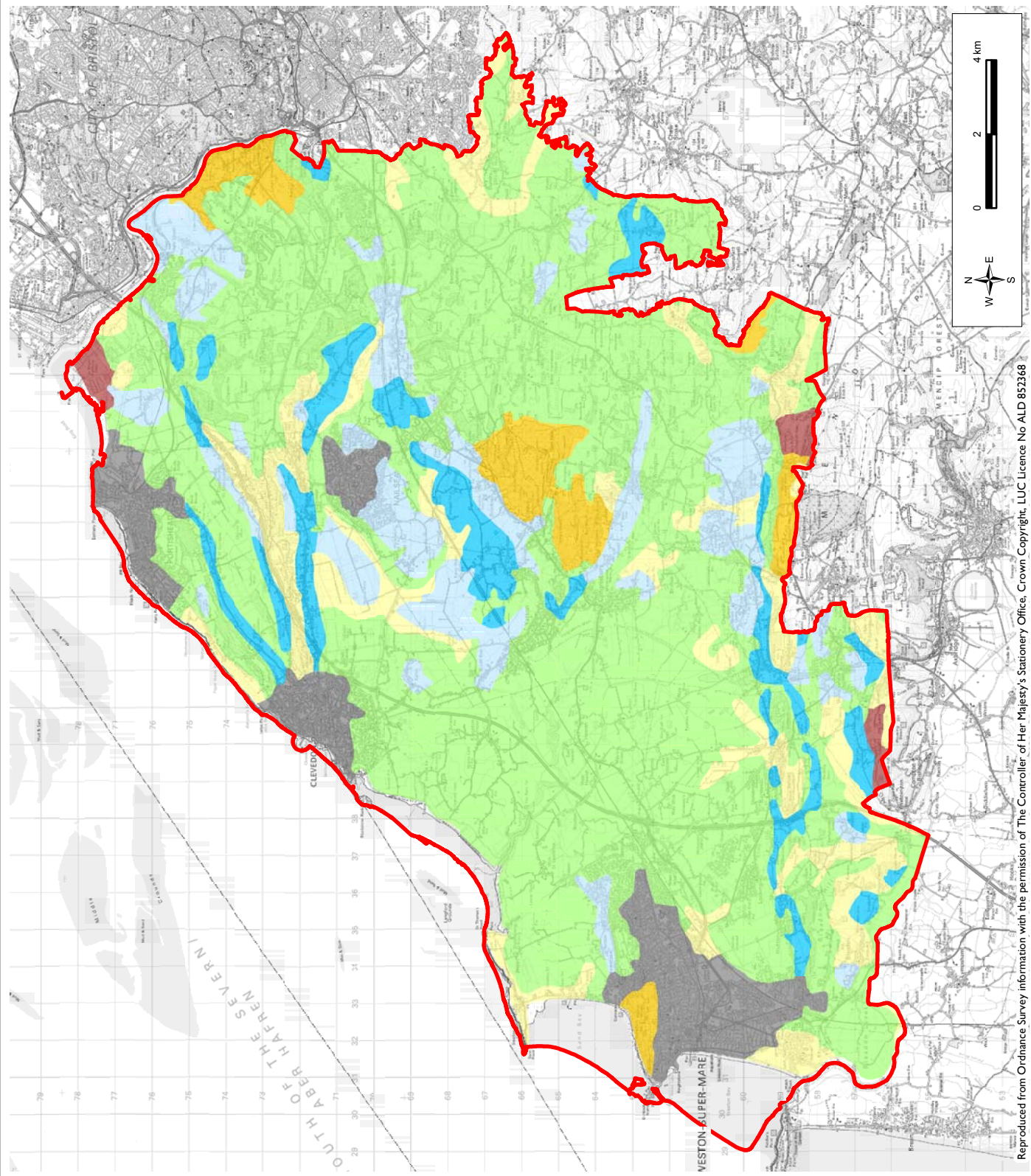


NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Figure 7:
Agricultural Land Classification**

- Key**
- North Somerset Boundary
 - Grade 1 - Land with very minor or no physical limitations to agricultural use
 - Grade 2 - Land with some minor limitations which exclude it from Grade 1
 - Grade 3 - Land with moderate limitations due to soil, relief or climate, or some combination of these factors which restricts the choice of crops, timing of cultivations, or level of yield
 - Grade 4 - Land with severe limitations due to adverse soil, relief or climate or a combination of these
 - Grade 5 - Land with very severe limitations due to adverse soil, relief or climate, or a combination of these
 - Non Agricultural
 - Urban

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3. ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER

Context

- 3.1. Natural Areas (NAs) are sub-divisions of England identified by English Nature as being unique on the basis of their physical, wildlife, land use and cultural attributes. This approach provides a wider context for conservation action and offers a framework for setting objectives relevant to nature conservation. There are four NAs within North Somerset highlighting the variety of habitat types within the district and these are shown in **Figure 8**. **Figures 9 and 10** show National and Local Nature Conservation Designations.
- 3.2. To the north a fairly small part of North Somerset district falls within the **Severn and Avon Vales NA** which is characterised by low-lying undulating floodplain through which flow a network of tributaries. The land surrounding these rivers frequently flood in winter and contain such features as old pollards, wet pastures, ditches and tall hedgerows and provide important over-wintering sites for wildfowl which feed on the mud-flats of the Severn estuary.
- 3.3. Much of the land is intensively farmed with arable, livestock and mixed farming throughout the area, while horticulture and fruit growing are also common. Improved and semi-improved grassland dominating the landscape is botanically poor, but wetland areas bordering the rivers edge such as swamp, mire and salt-marsh are fairly species rich and provide good habitat for a range of invertebrates. The Gordano Valley NNR is of particular note containing a wide variety of peatland habitats, including fen meadows, tall-herb fen, rhynes, scrub and woodland which together support a wide range of plants, invertebrates and breeding birds such as lapwing, redshank and reed bunting.
- 3.4. A large part of the district falls within the **Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges NA**, characterised by alternating ridges and broad valleys with some steep wooded slopes and open rolling farmland. The large expanse of the city of Bristol is a major feature of the area along with the Avon Gorge which is of international importance for both its geology and the habitats it supports.
- 3.5. This natural area is underlain by Carboniferous and Jurassic Limestone and the quarry exposures and the natural cliffs of the Avon Gorge, together with the screes, scrub, pockets of grassland and adjacent woodland, support an exceptional number of nationally rare and scarce plant species.
- 3.6. Broad-leaved semi-natural and plantation woodlands are characteristic, as are a number of parklands which are of nature conservation importance particularly for invertebrates. Limited areas of calcareous grasslands are scattered throughout the area and although they are generally small in size, they are characteristically species-rich and of national importance due to the rarity of such habitat. Reservoirs, rivers and streams are also found throughout which act as corridors for wildlife.
- 3.7. **The Mendip Hills NA** to the south of the district is characterised by the limestone from which the hills are made. Limestone outcrops protrude from the species rich unimproved calcareous grassland and heath; an area of which has been designated an SAC (Mendip Limestone Grasslands) due to the rare and scarce plants it contains. Fairly large areas of broad-leaved ancient woodland grow throughout the NA which contains a diversity of woody species and a rich ground flora.
- 3.8. Reservoirs in the area are of importance for wintering wildfowl while the caves and mines within the hillsides provide winter roosts for bats. Furthermore the broad-leaved semi-

natural woodlands and hedgerows of the Mendip hills support one of the strongest populations of dormouse in the country.

- 3.9. The south and western part of the district falls within the **Somerset Levels and Moors NA**, a very distinctive area of open low-lying floodplain underlain by peat and consisting of predominantly grazing marsh with an intricate network of ditches and rhynes along which grow pollarded oaks of some age. Although much of the grassland is species poor due to agricultural intensification, these waterways support an abundance of aquatic plants and nationally important populations of invertebrates as well as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan species otters and water vole (the latter have been reintroduced and recent sightings are unconfirmed). Substantial areas of the levels and moors within the district have been designated as SSSI's specifically for these waterways.
- 3.10. Although improved grazing land dominates the landscape small areas of species rich fen meadow, remnant raised bogs and wet heath are scattered throughout the area which support a wide variety of flora and fauna not found elsewhere in the district.
- 3.11. The Somerset Levels and Moors lie only a few metres above sea level and much of this floods each year attracting internationally important numbers of waterfowl in winter; the NA is regarded as one of the best places for breeding waders in lowland Britain.
- 3.12. North Somerset contains a diverse and distinctive range of geological types, habitats and associated fauna, represented in the considerable number of international, national and locally designated sites throughout the district. An impressive collection of nationally rare and scarce species of both flora and fauna can be found within these sites including species endemic to the region such as the white beams *Sorbus bristoliensis* and *S. willmottiana*.
- 3.13. However ecological richness is not limited to just these designated sites but is present throughout the district. The whole of the Somerset levels and moors for example, although consisting mainly of improved grazing marsh is of great ecological value due to its vast network of ditches and rhynes which contain a variety of aquatic life from plants to invertebrates, mammals and molluscs.
- 3.14. The predominantly rural aspect throughout North Somerset coupled with its varying geology and topography has resulted in a landscape of great nature conservation value which is important in both a national and international context.

Wildlife Attributes

- 3.15. Assessment of local and national Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and statutory and non-statutory wildlife site data for North Somerset indicate that a wide variety of habitats and associated fauna occur within the district. North Somerset's most valuable habitats are summarised below as:
- Woodland
 - Grassland
 - Rivers, rhynes and ditches
 - Rock features and associated flora
 - Hedgerows
 - Inter-tidal bays

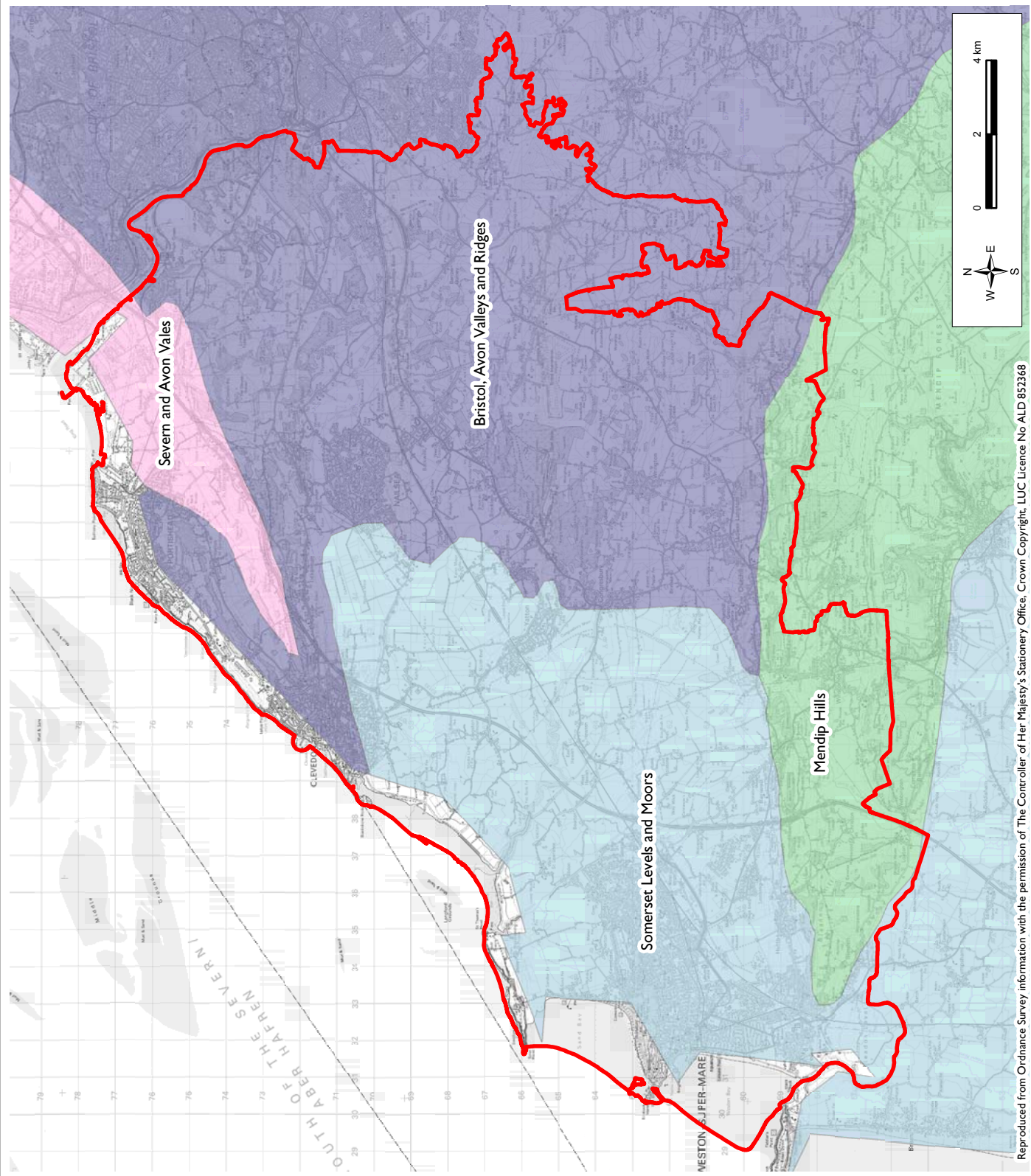
- 3.16. **Woodland:** North Somerset is well wooded with a range of woodland types from coniferous and broad-leaved plantation through to ancient semi-natural woodland. A number of these woodland sites have been designated as SSSI's or have County Wildlife Site status. Particularly well wooded areas are found to the north-east around Tynesfield and Long Ashton where large areas of mixed plantation occur; and to the centre of the district around Cleeve where fragments of ancient broad-leaved semi-natural woodland are connected by large extents of conifer and mixed plantation.
- 3.17. **Ancient Woodland** is scattered throughout the District, although the northern and central areas support particularly high concentrations. North Somerset contains several ancient woodland types including; lime-maple forest, hazel-ash forest and oak-ash forest.
- 3.18. To the north-east and south of the District lime-maple forests overlaying carboniferous limestone are of international importance due to the rarity of such habitat. These woodlands, such as the Avon Gorge SAC, North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC and Mendip Woodlands SAC contain a diversity of other woody species including; yew, small leaved lime, pedunculate oak, ash and whitebeam, while the ground flora is characteristic of ancient woodland containing species such as blue bell, moschatel, woodruff and wood sorrel. Ancient woodlands are also of great value for fauna; for example King's Wood and Urchin Wood SAC support significant populations of dormouse while the Lime-maple forests of North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC support a substantial colony of greater horseshoe bats.
- 3.19. Broad-leaved, mixed and coniferous **plantation woodland** is a common feature to the north-east, central and southern parts of the district where it has been planted in the place of ancient woodland. Fragments of ancient broad-leaved semi-natural woodland still remain and the associated woodland ground flora is present in many of these plantations. Although such plantations (particularly coniferous) are of limited conservation value these could be restored under appropriate management to maximise their value to support nesting birds, invertebrates and fungi.
- 3.20. **Wet woodland** is a fairly common habitat within the Somerset Levels and Moors, where the low-lying and flat topography provide ideal conditions for willow and alder carr which grow in association with marshy grassland. In North Somerset wet woodland is not a common habitat.
- 3.21. **Grassland:** the most valuable grasslands within the district are those that have escaped agricultural improvement. Although much of the levels and moors have been agriculturally improved, in the more upland areas of the district, the chalk escarpments support several areas of **unimproved calcareous grassland** of national and international importance. Mendip Limestone Grasslands SAC for example, is comprised of an extensive area of sheep's fescue- carline thistle grassland and rare and scarce plants such as rock hutchinsia, white rock-rose and honewort.
- 3.22. **Wet grassland** is the most common type of grassland habitat within North Somerset and covers much of the Levels and Moors. The majority of this habitat has been agriculturally improved and consequently is species poor. However, the flushes around springs and rivers can be quite diverse containing a range of rushes, sedges and marshy plants such as creeping buttercup, marsh marigold and cuckoo flower. The wet grassland of the Levels and Moors is of international importance for wildfowl during the winter months, which feed on the mudflats of the Severn Estuary and roost on the wet grassland.
- 3.23. **Unimproved neutral grassland** is present in small areas throughout the county, although mainly restricted to small fields and road side verges or found in combination with marshy grassland.

- 3.24. **Rivers and ditches** form an important part of the ecology of North Somerset, particularly in the lowland areas of the Levels and Moors where the extensive ditch and rhyne system supports a diversity of aquatic flora and fauna including nationally rare and scarce invertebrates and the UK BAP species water vole. There are a number of rivers running throughout the district including; the River Yeo, River Kenn and River Banwell as well as a network of tributaries which together form important corridors for wildlife, particularly the BAP species otter and water vole.
- 3.25. **Rock features and associated flora** are an important habitat type within North Somerset, with the Mendip Hills and Avon Gorge being the most substantial areas. The Avon Gorge is a well known example where this impressive geological feature supports a mosaic of habitats including calcareous grassland on thin stony soils, scrub, ancient woodland and limestone heath. These rock outcrops support an exceptional number of nationally rare flora such as the round-headed leek, Bristol rock cress and nit-grass.
- 3.26. **Hedgerows** form a rich network throughout the district which provide important corridors for wildlife. Many of these hedgerows are extremely species rich with some being remnants of ancient woodland. Woody species vary according to the geology of the area, but those characteristic of North Somerset as a whole include; beech, elm, pedunculate oak, field maple and ash among many others.
- 3.27. **The intertidal bays** of the Severn Estuary are of international importance for wintering wildfowl and waders. The extensive mudflats contain invertebrates and molluscs on which these birds feed, while the salt-marsh adjacent to the flats, provide roosting habitat. Some stretches of this salt-marsh contain nationally scarce plants including sea clover and sea barley. Eelgrass beds, a UK BAP habitat grow on the more sheltered mud and sand banks providing shelter for a variety of fish.

**NORTH SOMERSET
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT**

**Figure 8:
Natural Areas**

- Key**
- North Somerset Boundary
 - Natural Areas
 - Severn and Avon Vales
 - Mendip Hills
 - Severn and Avon Vales
 - Somerset Levels and Moors



Source: English Nature
 Drawing No:
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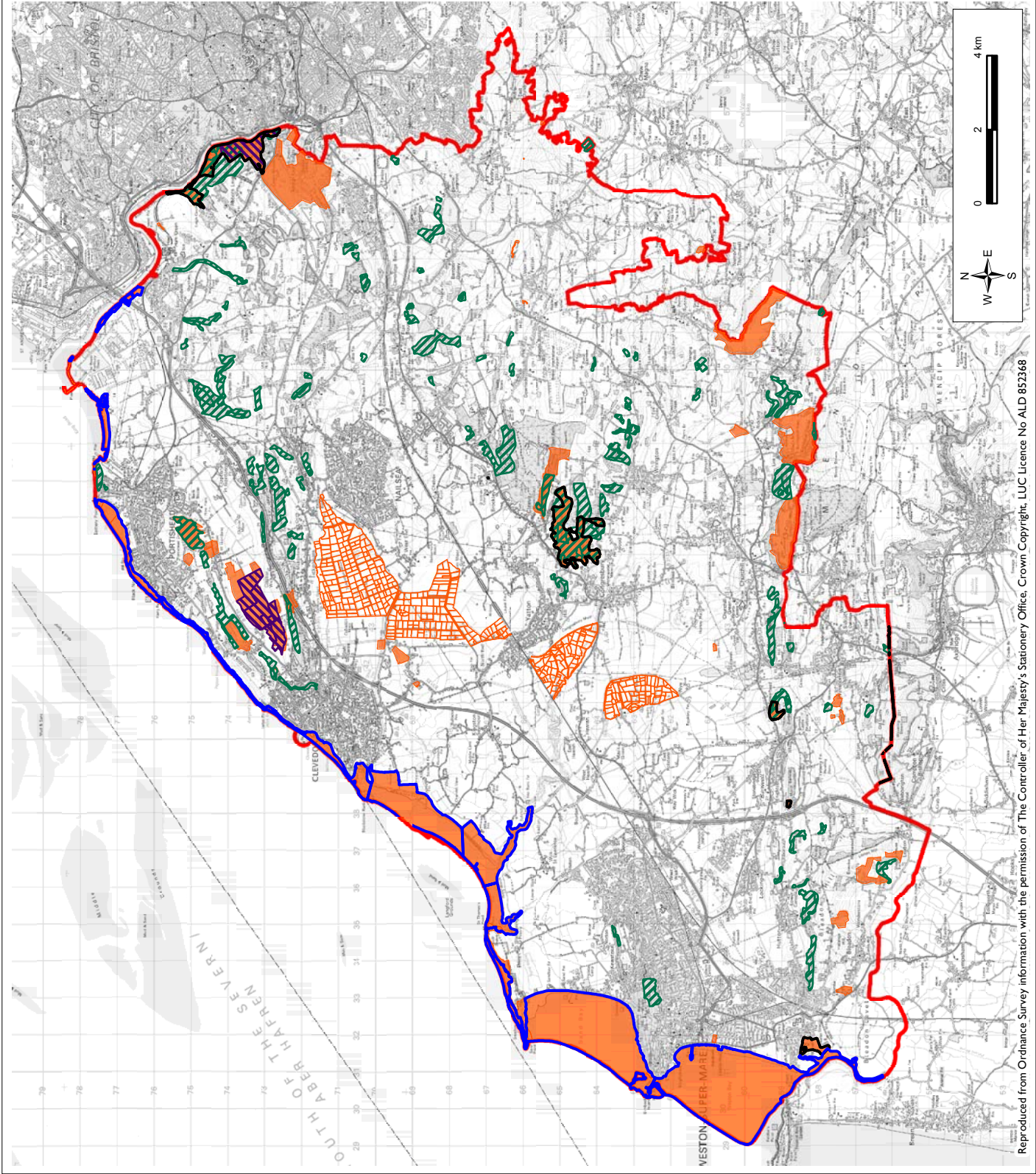


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NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Figure 9:
Statutory Nature
Conservation Designations**

- Key**
-  North Somerset Boundary
 -  Special protection area and RAMSAR
 -  Special area of conservation
 -  National nature reserve
 -  Ancient woodland
 -  Site of special scientific interest







Source: English Nature
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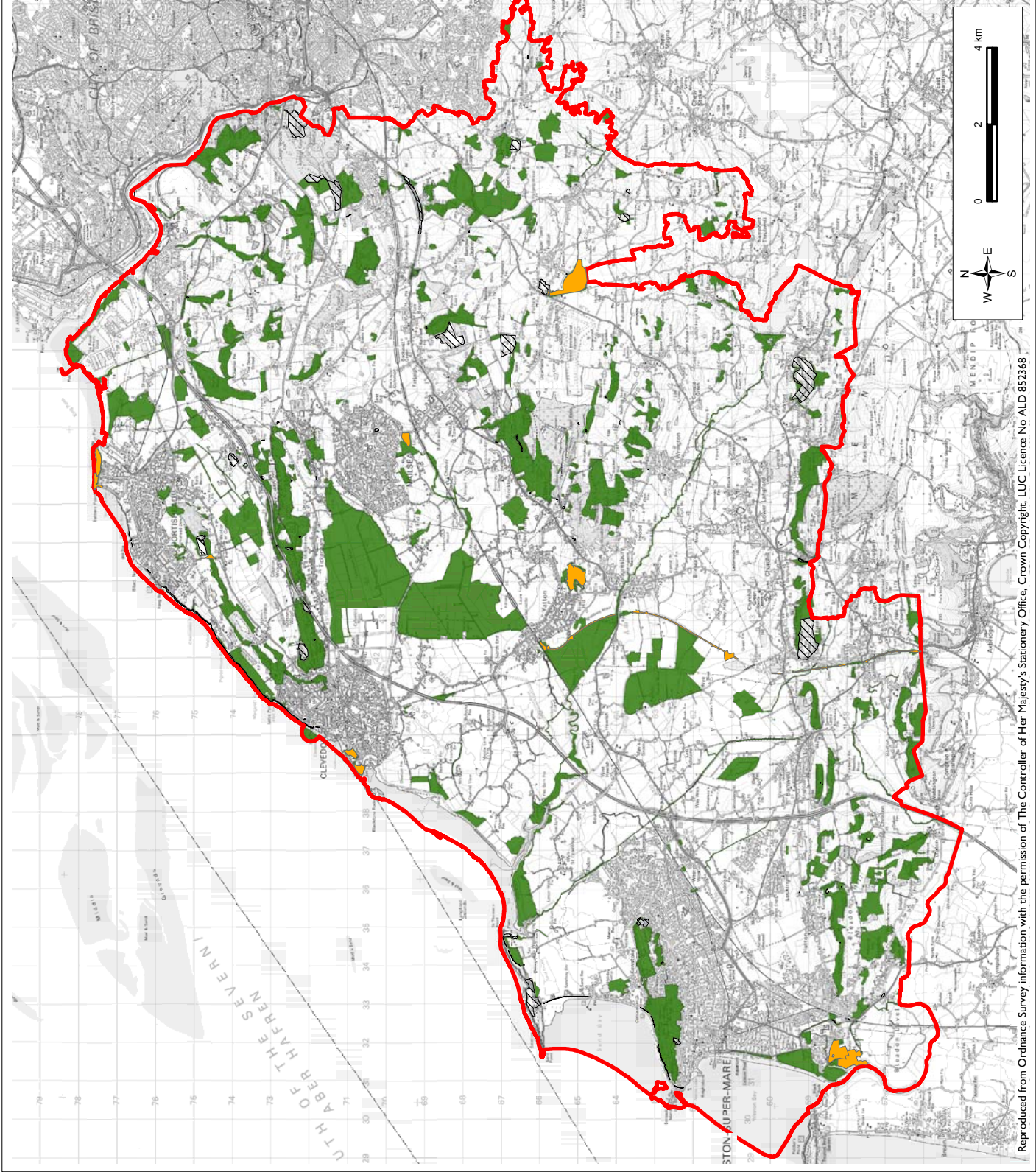
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NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Figure 10:
Local Nature
Conservation Designations**

- Key**
-  North Somerset Boundary
 -  Local nature reserve
 -  (Regional) Wildlife Site
 -  Regionally important geological site



Source: North Somerset Council

Drawing No:
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4. HUMAN INFLUENCES






- 4.1. The designated landscapes of historic significance are shown on **Figure 11**. The diverse landscape of North Somerset reflects not only its varied geology and topography, but also its human uses throughout history. Evidence of the hunter gatherers of the Mesolithic and even earlier times survives in North Somerset however it was with the development of agriculture in Neolithic period that the first major impacts were made by man with the clearance of the native woodland. Since then each generation has inherited from its forebears an historic landscape and has, in turn, transformed it, in some cases subtly, in others more drastically, leaving the District with a multi-layered landscape but also one with some remarkably intact examples of the historic landscape of particular periods.
- 4.2. The hunter gatherers of the Mesolithic period left little visible trace on the landscape although important archaeological remains of these people are present in North Somerset in the form of scatter of stone tools and traces of occupation in caves such as at Burrington Combe. The Neolithic period (beginning c. 4000 BC) saw the first major changes to the landscape with the beginning of agriculture, and the clearance of the forest cover of the District. This led to soil erosion from upland areas in some cases causing such severe damage that the areas have not been ploughed since so that the earthworks of the Neolithic field systems are still visible – this occurs in the Mendip hills in sites such as Bleadon.
- 4.3. During the Neolithic and the Bronze Ages (c. 4000-800 BC) the first recognisable field monuments were constructed consisting of burial monuments (long and round barrows) and stone monuments such as the standing stones at Yarberry near Banwell. With the arrival of technology based on iron in the first century BC society became more complex with larger numbers of settlements and large scale engineered structures such as the ‘hill forts’ of Dolebury, Worlebury, and Cadbury. These are the highly visible remains of this era but it is likely that settlement was widespread in the District and a few earthworks indicating more open settlement sites survive for instance at Walton Common.
- 4.4. With Roman occupation the centres of power shifted from the hill forts to other forms of settlement; towns and villas, with many of the latter eventually becoming Royal estate centres which underlie medieval villages (for instance Wrington). During the period of occupation agriculture became more organised and intensive and was extended into the moors areas involving some degree of drainage and construction of sea defences. Much of the cultivation was undertaken from scattered farmsteads. Traces of Romano British field systems survive at Butcombe. The withdrawal of Roman administration at the end of the fourth century AD led to the abandonment of the moors to flooding, leading to the deposition of up to 2 metres of clay. Hill forts may once again have become centres of power with evidence that Cadbury was reoccupied and refortified in the fifth and sixth centuries.
- 4.5. In the middle ages nucleated villages and open-field systems came into being, traces of these large common arable fields are widely visible through the District and there are many surviving examples of medieval villages with church, manor and a cluster of farms. Resettlement and drainage of the moors had begun in late Saxon period and areas such as Kingston Seymour retain the sinuous pattern of drainage ditches and rhynes, likely to have followed, to some extent, pre-existing watercourses. In some areas of the moors there are traces of ridge and furrow. The lower lying inner moors remained undrained but were likely to have been used for grazing. In the uplands there was also grazing and some of these areas remain as relic commons such as Dundry Down or are recalled in names like Walton Common. Other landscape features dating from medieval times are enclosures and earthworks for deer parks and rabbit warrens. Woodland had been managed to provide fire wood and timber for building since Neolithic times but was particularly intensively managed

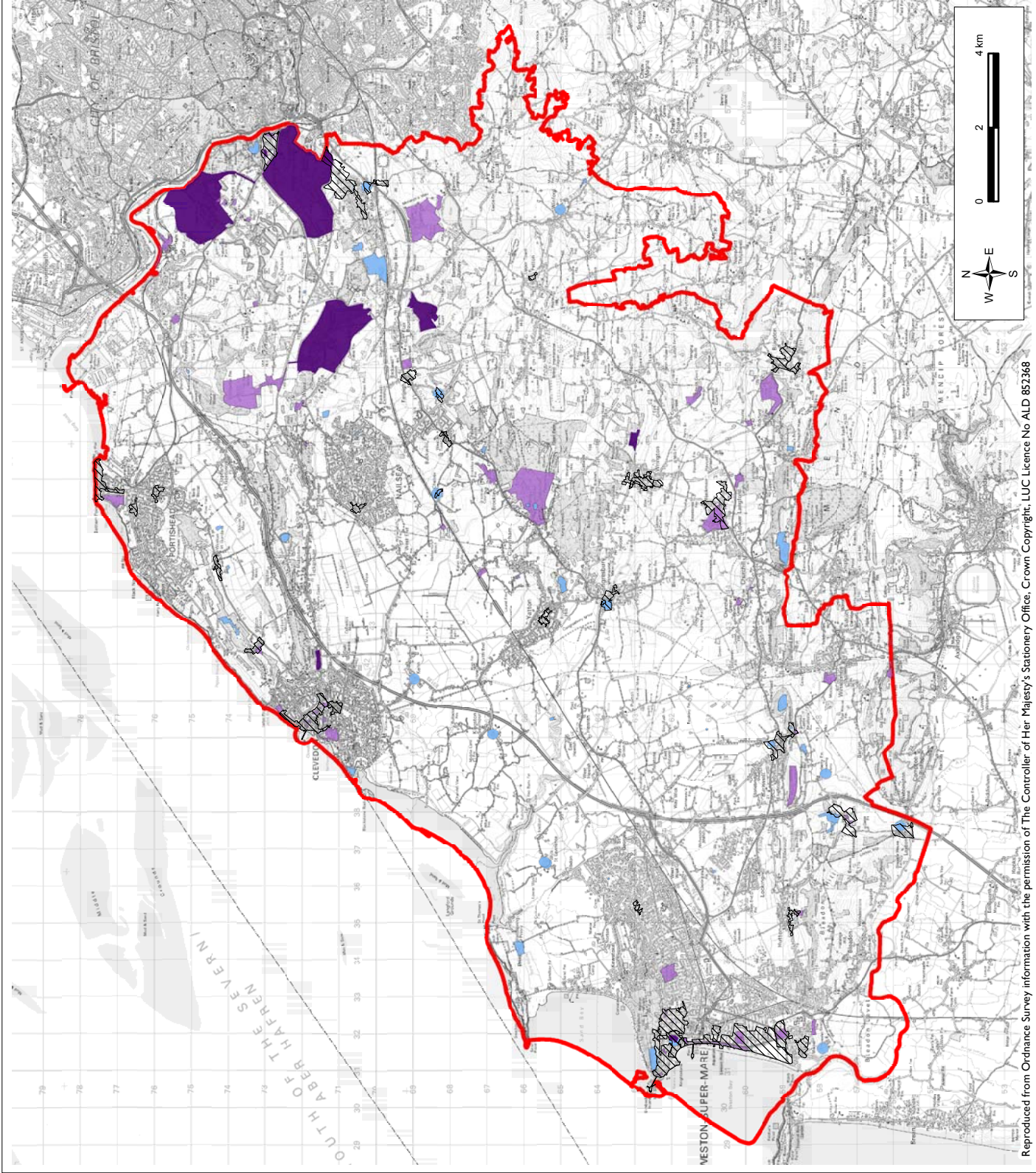
in the medieval period and relict woodland sites from that period survive for instance at Leigh Woods.

- 4.6. The next major change to the landscape was enclosure not only of the open fields but also the commons and the moors. This began at the end of the medieval period with the decline of feudalism and reached its peak in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The early enclosures were usually piecemeal and by agreement so retained the sinuous outline of the medieval fields. Later enclosure was increasingly by Act of Parliament and more geometrical in pattern with Kenn and Tickenham Moors typical of this period with rectangular fields enclosed by straight drainage ditches.
- 4.7. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was an expansion of the settlements fringing the Severn Estuary due largely to new leisure uses and the main towns of the District, Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Portishead were created with their distinctive seaside character complete with piers, hotels and promenades. Part of the towns' success was due to the rail system and the remnants of various disused lines remain in the landscape. During the twentieth century the road network expanded to include the M5 which runs north south through the District.
- 4.8. Bristol was the chief centre of trade in the area and the influence of the city was felt in an absence of market towns and also in the creation of substantial country houses and areas of parkland in the north of the District by merchants from the city. Some of these were based on medieval deer parks and/or preserved older landscapes for instance at Ashton Court which contains ancient field systems within its parkland.
- 4.9. Mining and quarrying have been important features of the District, with small scale works during the medieval times to the present large scale quarries. Upland areas have been mined for lead, calamine and coal, (the latter on a substantial scale at Nailsea after the Industrial Revolution) with quarrying becoming more important in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Figure 11:
Historic Landscape**

- Key**
-  North Somerset Boundary
 -  Scheduled ancient monument
 -  Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
 -  Unregistered Parks and Gardens
 -  Conservation areas



Source: North Somerset Council

Drawing No:
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5. THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF NORTH SOMERSET

INTRODUCTION



- 5.1. The physical and cultural influences described in the previous chapters have combined to create the unique and distinctive character of North Somerset. The area is characterised by a diversity of landscapes and these variations and differences are represented by eleven **landscape types**.
- A. Moors
 - B. River Flood Plains
 - C. Settled Coastal Edge
 - D. Limestone Gorges
 - E. Limestone Ridges and Combes
 - F. Sandstone Uplands
 - G. Settled Limestone Plateau
 - H. Settled Hills
 - J. Rolling Valley Farmland
 - K. Farmed Coal Measures
 - L. Inter-tidal Bays
- 5.2. Each of the generic landscape types has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover, and historical evolution. The landscape types can be further sub-divided into component **landscape character areas**.
- 5.3. These are discrete geographic areas that possess the common characteristics described for the landscape type. Each character area has a distinct and recognisable local identity.
- 5.4. The landscape classification for the District is set out in **Table I** (overleaf) and illustrated on **Figure 12**. Figure 12 has been prepared on a Geographic Information System (GIS), with mapping undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000. It should however be noted that there are subtle differences between and within the individual landscape types and character areas. The boundaries illustrated therefore usually indicate transitions rather than marked changes on the ground.

Table I: Landscape Classification

Landscape Character Types	Landscape Character Areas
A. Moors	
	A1. Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors
	A2. Clapton Moor
	A3. Kenn and Tickenham Moors
	A4. Locking and Banwell Moors
	A5. Bleadon Moor
B. River Flood Plain	
	B1. Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Flood Plain
	B2. Lox Yeo River Flood Plain
C. Settled Coastal Edge	
	C1. Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge
	C2. Portbury Settled Coastal Edge
D. Limestone Gorges	
	D1. Avon Gorge
E. Limestone Ridges and Combes	
	E1. Mendip Ridges and Combes
	E2. Worlebury Ridges and Combes
	E3. Middlehope Ridges and Combes
	E4. Portishead Ridges and Combes
	E5. Tickenham Ridges and Combes
	E6. Cleeve Ridges and Combes
F. Sandstone Uplands	
	F1. Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands
G. Settled Limestone Plateau	
	G1. Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau
	G2. Failand Settled Limestone Plateau
H. Settled Hills	
	H1. Dundry Hill
J. Rolling Valley Farmland	
	J1. Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
	J2. River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
	J3. Chew Rolling Valley Farmland
	J4. Colliters Brook Rolling Valley Farmland
	J5. Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland
	J6. Avon Rolling Valley Farmland
K. Farmed Coal Measures	
	K1. Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures
L. Inter-tidal Bays	
	L1. Weston Bay
	L2. Sand Bay
	L3. Woodspring Bay
	L4. Clevedon-Portishead Bays

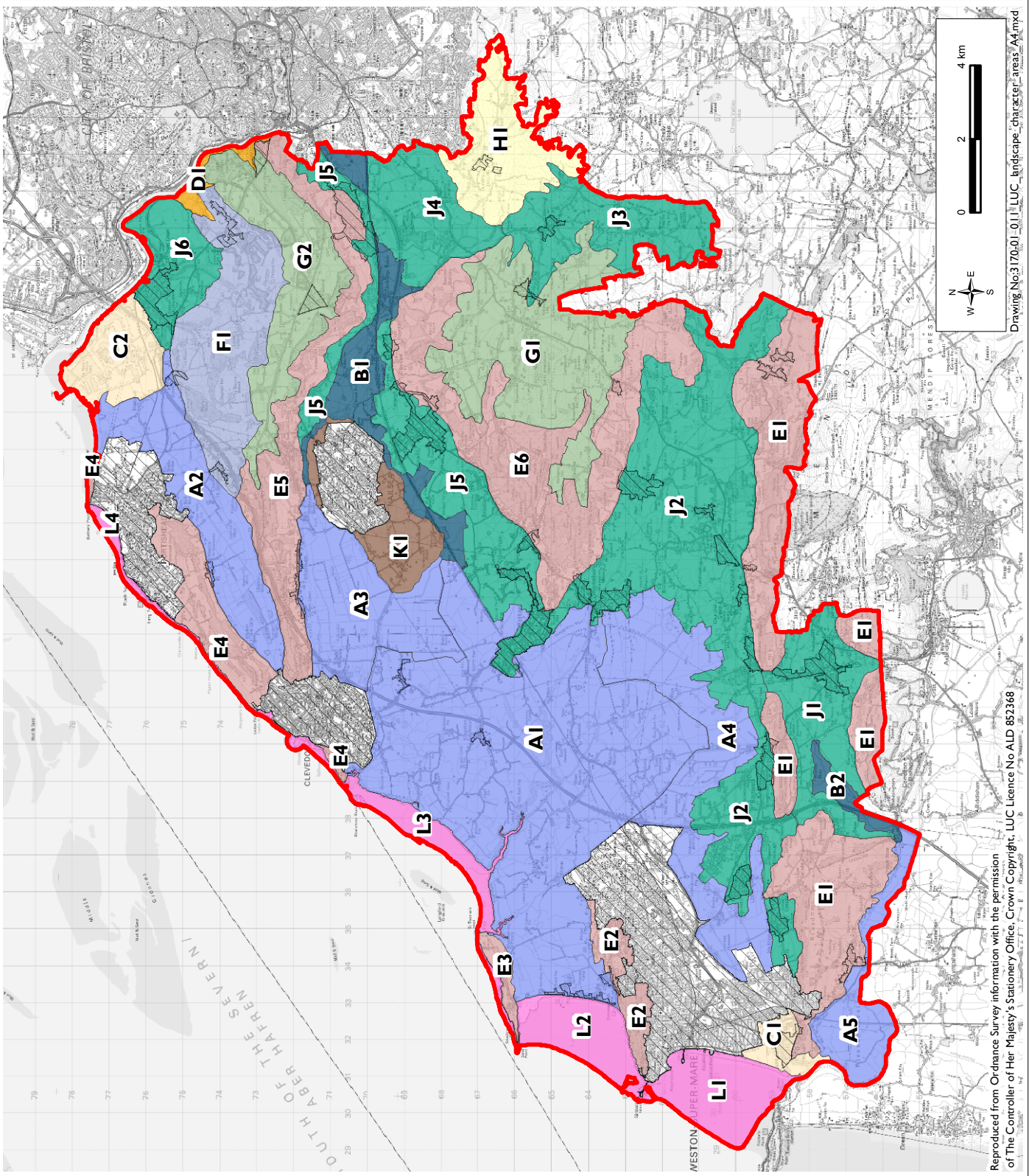
NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Figure 12:
Landscape Character Areas

Key	
	North Somerset Boundary
	Settlement
A: Moors	
A1	Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors
A2	Clapton Moor
A3	Kenn and Tickenham Moors
A4	Locking and Banwell Moors
A5	Bleadon Moor
B: River Floodplains	
B1	Land Yeo and Kenn River Floodplain
B2	Lox Yeo River Floodplain
C: Settled Coastal Edge	
C1	Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge
C2	Portbury Settled Coastal Edge
D: Limestone Gorges	
D1	Avon Gorge
E: Limestone Ridges and Combes	
E1	Mendip Ridge
E2	Worlebury Ridge
E3	Middlehope Ridge
E4	Portishhead Ridge
E5	Tickenham Ridge
E6	Cleeve Ridge
F: Sandstone Uplands	
F1	Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands
G: Settled Limestone Plateau	
G1	Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau
G2	Failand Settled Limestone Plateau
H: Settled Hills	
H1	Dundry Hill
J: Rolling Valley Farmland	
J1	Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
J2	River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
J3	Chew Rolling Valley Farmland
J4	Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland
J5	Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland
J6	Avon Rolling Valley Farmland
K: Farmed Coal Measures	
K1	Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures
L: Inter-tidal Bays	
L1	Weston Bay
L2	Sand Bay
L3	Woodspring Bay
L4	Clevedon-Portishead Bays



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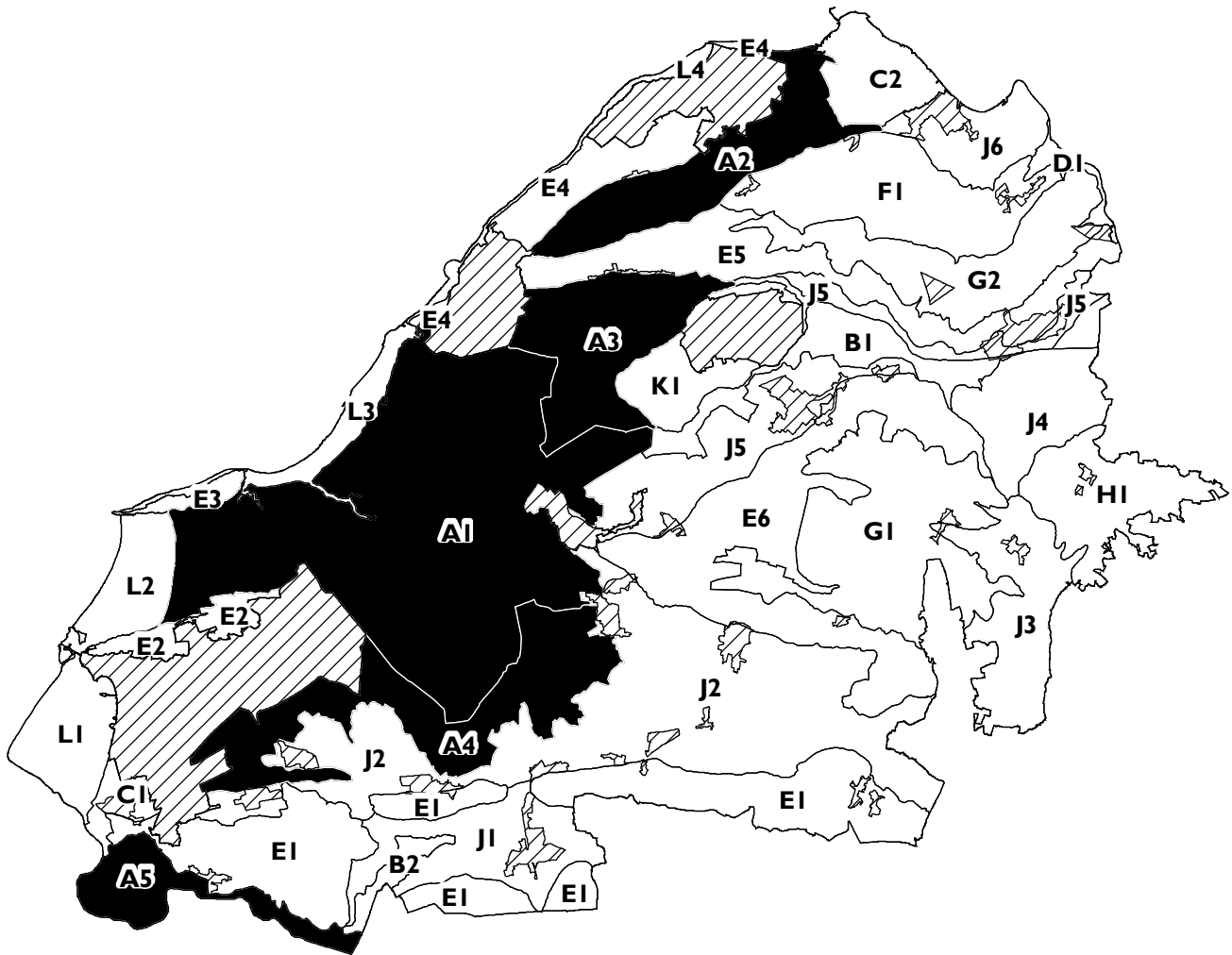


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LANDSCAPE TYPE A: MOORS



A: MOORS



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- A1** Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors
- A2** Clapton Moor
- A3** Kenn and Tickenham Moors
- A4** Locking and Banwell Moors
- A5** Bleadon Moor

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE A: MOORS

Landscape Character Areas

- A1: Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors
- A2: Clapton Moor
- A3: Kenn and Tickenham Moors
- A4: Locking and Banwell Moors
- A5: Bleadon Moor

Location and Boundaries

The *Moors* landscape type occupies a broad sweep of low-lying reclaimed wetland on the west side of North Somerset, with outlying areas to north and south separated from the rest of the type by limestone ridges. The boundaries have been determined by topography and geology and are largely defined by the change from the flat lowlands of estuarine alluvium and peat of the *Moors* to the higher ground of the *Limestone Ridges* and *Rolling Valley Farmland* underlain by the solid geology of the Mercia Mudstone, Carboniferous Limestone and Coal Measures. Here, the boundary is largely based on the 5m or 10m contour, or by roads following the break of slope at the base of the ridges. To the west the area is bounded by the extensive intertidal sandy bays and Salt marsh of the Severn Estuary with mean high water forming the boundary line.

Key Characteristics

- Extensive low lying lands of estuarine alluvium and peat, reclaimed from the sea and now drained and protected by flood defences.
- Highly rural, peaceful landscape and, in many places, a sense of remoteness and isolation.
- Wide, open strikingly flat landscape framed by intermittent hedgerows and the distinctive skyline of wooded limestone ridges.
- Predominantly improved grassland but with important fen meadow species rich habitat in the Gordano Valley.
- Green, pastoral grassland and wetland with cattle and sheep grazing.
- Water ever-present in the artificial linear form of the many ditches and rhyes, and embanked and canalised rivers.
- Network of ditches and rhyes support important populations of aquatic invertebrates, macrophytes and water voles.
- Hedgerows of varying condition and completeness, some originating as scrub grown up over the ditches and rhyes.
- Frequent hedgerow trees including willow, oak and ash with mature gnarled willow pollards an important vertical feature.
- Largely unwooded but some plantation woodlands, and poplar shelterbelts form prominent vertical elements in areas. There are also isolated remnants of ancient and Carr woodland
- Distinctive cider orchards frequently associated with farmsteads.
- Views over the Severn estuary from the top of the sea wall (often difficult to access)

contrast with the rural landscape inland.

- Generally, sparsely settled, with a few historic villages with church spires forming landmarks and scattered farmsteads along roads and at the edges of the moors.
- Buried archaeological sites of potentially high significance due to the waterlogged nature of soil.

Physical Influences

The Moors landscape type is flat lowland based mainly on superficial geology of beach and tidal flat deposits. A broad band of these alluvial deposits runs along the coast and is slightly raised at between 5m and 10m AOD. Within this there are small isolated areas of exposed bedrock, Lias and Mercia Mudstone. To the east the type is characterised by lower ground, between 0m and 5m AOD, and there are significant deposits of peat (Kenn and Tickenham Moors and in the Gordano Valley) which have built up due to impeded drainage caused by the higher area of alluvial deposits along the coast. There are also isolated areas of river terrace deposits at the north of the Gordano Valley and Burtle Beds around Kenn.

Historic Environment

The earliest evidence for fields and settlements on the North Somerset Moors occurs during the Romano British period. The investment and creation of such extensive landscapes will have required a high degree of confidence in the sea defences and land drainage capabilities. On the east side of the levels the remains of the landscape of fields and settlements with Romano British characteristics can still be seen as earthworks along a roughly N/S strip on Nailsea, Kenn, Congresbury, Puxton and Banwell moors. However, some time around 400AD the sea defences, either on the coast, or up the tidal rivers, ceased to function and marine alluvium was deposited forming the slightly higher coastal levels. The Romano British landscape towards the coast therefore lies buried under this deposit with the substantial villa at Wemberham, on the River Yeo, lying under some 0.45m of alluvium.

During the immediate post Roman and early Saxon period, between the 5th and 7th centuries AD, much of the levels would have returned to tidal saltmarsh conditions. On the eastern edge of the levels, in the areas of peat in the back fen, there is evidence of creek systems and tidal channels which can be traced on the surface. On the surrounding high ground there is no evidence of continuity of settlement but there is also no evidence of abandonment. Cadbury Congresbury hillfort was reused and the evidence of cemeteries suggests a significant population continued to occupy the area. The presence of high status Mediterranean goods also implies a local economy strong enough to produce the necessary material for exchange.

By the 7th and 8th centuries late Saxon activity on the levels was characterised by recolonisation and expansion. Many of the settlements include early English place name elements such as *Huish*, *Worth*, *Wick* and are located on the wide, slightly higher, coastal belt that stretches inland as far as Puxton. These settlements were connected by the sinuous lanes and droves that reflect the natural drainage patterns developed on the post Roman alluvial surface; these roads form the basis of the existing system of minor roads surviving today. The irregular fields were developed between the roads and the settlements and in the medieval period included areas of open fields. The areas of back fen, on the eastern side of the levels and at the south western end of the Gordano Valley, remained unenclosed and probably functioned as common land.

During the later medieval period the drier areas of the back fen began to be enclosed with more regular sided fields as were other marginal areas like Bleadon Level, the land behind Sand Bay, areas on the coast in the NW and at the lower end of the Gordano Valley. Some, if not all, of the open fields were also enclosed at this time. The new enclosures on Congresbury, Puxton and Banwell

moors were superimposed on the relict landscapes with Romano British characteristics; the land being worked probably for the first time since the late Roman period.

The final period of enclosure occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries when the remaining areas of the back fen were enclosed with rigidly rectangular fields. On Kenn Moor and in the Gordano Valley the remains of duck decoys and their enclosure rhynes appear to predate the parliamentary enclosure indicating an unusual form of early post medieval investment in the last of the undrained back fen. The remaining area of derelict Romano British fields and settlement earthworks on Ken Moor were now enclosed as were the warths on the coast and those on the lower reaches of the rivers Axe and Yeo.

With the basic historic landscape structure in place by the end of the 19th century the twentieth century saw only minor, though visually dominant, elements laid across the Saxon and early medieval, late medieval and post medieval landscapes. While the remains of the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway survive only as hedged lines in the landscape, with the occasional railway building, the Great Western Railway is still extant. The Second World War has left a series of pill boxes around Weston Airfield and Starfish decoy sites were built west of Kingston Seymour and on Kenn Moor where some of the buildings still survive.

Biodiversity

The *Moors* character type is characterised by extensive open areas of low lying grazing marsh, mainly of improved grassland. The network of large rhynes and smaller field ditches are of considerable value for biodiversity and several sections of these aquatic systems have been designated as SSSIs. Flushes, hedge-lined meadows and cider orchards also characterise the area.

Along with the improved grassland a variety of other habitats are present, including a small patch of lowland mire known as Yanal Bog SSSI which supports nationally rare plant communities indicative of base-rich conditions. In addition, the type also contains one of the largest remaining areas of fen meadow in the UK. This fen meadow is located within the Gordano Valley NNR, a site which is notable for supporting an extremely species rich habitat of outstanding importance. Small areas of fen (a priority habitat) contain BAP species including, large marsh grasshopper, argent and sable moth and narrow bordered bee hawk moth.

The ditches and rhynes support important populations of rare aquatic invertebrates and macrophytes as well providing a valuable potential habitat for water vole, a UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plan species. Ditches located close to the coastline contain brackish water and support unique assemblages of plants and animals, for example sea club rush and grey club rush are found in the ditches and rhynes of the Tickenham, Nailsea and Kenn Moors SSSI. Although generally of improved character, the annual flooding of the levels provides an important over-wintering and breeding habitat for wetland birds.

The relative absence of woodlands from the majority of the moors is indicative of the intensive farmland management and the high water table. There are only small isolated remnants of Ancient and Carr woodland. The Gordano Valley is the exception being characterised by areas of woodland dominated by hazel with diverse woodland ground flora and poplar plantations which contain an understorey of willow, elder and silver birch with occasional conifers.

Settlement Character

Settlement is sparse throughout the *Moors* landscape type but the pattern of settlement varies in line with the periods of historic drainage and enclosure. In the band of higher land along the coast settled in medieval or pre-medieval times, there are a small number of nucleated villages with stone church towers rising as landmarks in the flat landscape and with clusters of old stone buildings at their centres. Scattered farms are reached by winding rural roads. Alongside, these historic settlements are small orchards. In the more recently enclosed landscapes, mainly to the east, there is very little settlement with farms on the slightly higher ground at the base of the ridges and a few buildings along the roads (which are generally straight in these areas). Some sections of the moors,

although noticeably unsettled, are now bordered by urban and industrial areas expanded during the 20th century and the influence of these both visually and in land use is pervasive.

Roads are generally rural, with a few A roads and the M5 the exception. The smaller roads are often bordered on one or both sides by water channels of varying scales and the modest bridges have simple white or metal handrails. There is a mainline rail track traversing the eastern side of the area that is still in use. The area also has a number of disused railway tracks of historic light railways that dissect the area.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Flat, open pastoral grassland.
- Highly rural and remote with strong sense of isolation in many areas.
- Open skies and wide horizons but with enclosure and sense of scale given by intermittent hedges and views to wooded ridges.
- Frequent hedgerow trees of pollarded willow along with oak and ash.
- Extensive drainage system with rhynes and ditches forming an important historic feature and valuable ecological habitat.
- Important areas of fen meadow in the Gordano Valley.
- Presence of the estuary and rivers concealed by flood banks adding to sense of isolation.
- Largely unsettled, but with some ancient villages and farmsteads of stone with church towers important vertical features.
- Small rural roads are bordered by ditches or rhynes – forming linear features reflecting the sky.
- Many areas with little access even on foot, creating strong sense of isolation.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of the ditches and hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Lack of management of ditches and rhynes in some areas leading to regeneration of scrub along field boundaries in place of the historic open ditches fringed by water plants.
- Bunding and land raising which is incongruous within this flat wetland landscape.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the willow pollards and orchard remnants.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the rural, remote character.
- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. recreational uses, scrap yards, horse paddocks) which are often visually intrusive.

- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Encroachment of development along rural roads and villages, particularly around the periphery.
- Demand for tall vertical structures (e.g. masts, industrial type farm buildings) which are visually prominent within parts of the flat open landscape.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the Moors Landscape type will generally be one of **conservation** and **enhancement**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote and rural nature of the pastoral landscape.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of ditches and hedgerows.
- Consider restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open water.
- Maintain key local landscape features including the distinctive pollarded willows and orchard remnants.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- Ensure management of the important archaeological resources to include:
 - maintenance of grassland containing archaeological sites, with a very strong presumption against arable in the areas of relict landscape and peat deposits;
 - grazing management of grassland to prevent poaching of the earthworks in areas of relict landscapes.
- Management of water levels to maintain high water tables to preserve organic cultural and palaeoenvironmental evidence.

AI: KINGSTON SEYMOUR AND PUXTON MOORS

Location and Boundaries: *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors* make up the largest character area of the *Moors* type and occurs within the centre of the District to the north and east of Weston-Super-Mare. *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors* is distinguished from the other *Moor* landscape character areas by its earlier enclosure, presence of settlement and generally more irregular field pattern. The boundaries forming the transition to A3 and A4 character areas follow field boundaries, droves, roads and rivers marking this change in pattern. Elsewhere, the boundary follows the settlement edges, the 5 metre contour at the base of Worlebury Ridge and, along the edge of the coast, Mean High Water.

Key Characteristics

- Lowland area predominantly of beach and tidal flat deposits with small areas of gravel, peat, Mercia Mudstone and Lias.
- Flat landform largely at between 5m and 10m AOD.
- Strong sense of remoteness, ruralness and unity.
- Pastoral landscape with cattle grazing.
- Network of waterways with winding rivers which are embanked, and rhynes and ditches which support a rich diversity of aquatic plants and invertebrates.
- Hedgerows intermittent with a proportion formed by regenerated scrub grown up over ditches and rhynes.
- Frequent hedgerow trees, oaks and pollard willows.
- Medium scale fields are sinuous and irregular in the core of the area and more geometric elsewhere, but this contrast is not easily perceived due to the fragmented hedgerows and large number of hedgerow trees.
- Semi-enclosed landscape with trees and hedgerows framing views to the wooded limestone ridges.
- Small orchards close to older settlements and farmsteads.
- Presence of the sea has limited effect on the landscape character due to the enclosure given by the hedgerows, scrub and hedgerow trees and the visual barrier of the raised sea walls.
- Views along rivers and out to sea from the difficult to access sea wall and the river embankments counterpoint the pastoral semi-enclosed landscape.
- Coastal inter-tidal margins of sand, mudflat and salt marsh.
- Scattered farmsteads with a few small villages characterised by older buildings of grey limestone, with church towers forming landmarks in the flat landscape.
- 19th and 20th century buildings rendered or pebbledashed include farmhouses, infill at the edges of the villages and development along roads particularly the A370.
- Winding rural lanes and tracks run between farmsteads and villages often with sinuous

roadside ditches, but there is little access to some areas especially close to the sea.

- Historic landscape dominated by Saxon and medieval enclosure.
- Settlement pattern and minor roads developed in late Saxon period.

DESCRIPTION

Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors is a flat lowland landscape at 5m to 10m AOD. The area is based on beach and tidal flat deposits with a few isolated areas of varying geology: peat and Mercia Mudstone near to Claverham; an outcrop of Lias at Culm Farm; another of Mudstone north of Weston-super-Mare; and Burtle Beds at Kenn. These give some subtle variations in landform and use. At Kenn, the area of Burtle Beds, outwash gravels and sands with associated fossils, is designated an SSSI because of its geological interest.

The area is predominantly pasture, consisting of improved grassland and marshy grassland grazed by cattle, sheep and ponies, but there are also some small areas of arable farming.

The Rivers Kenn, Yeo and Banwell flow through the area from east to west largely enclosed by embankments which link with the sea wall providing containment for flooding. Draining into the rivers is a network of channels, ditches and rhyes crossed by modest bridges of stone or wood with metal handrails. The drainage channels contain a rich diversity of aquatic, emergent and marginal plants including several nationally scarce species. A diverse invertebrate fauna is also present including molluscs, dragonflies and water beetles. Puxton Moor SSSI, for example, is particularly rich in species, including frogbit, smaller and lesser pondweed and the nationally scarce rootless duckweed and the soft hornwort which dominates in a number of ditches.

Much of the central area of *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors* was drained for summer pasture in medieval times or earlier and brought into cultivation by a piecemeal process. This is evident in the pattern of settlement, the winding roads and sinuous field boundaries enclosing fairly regular medium sized fields. Hedgerows vary from complete to highly intermittent, with a significant proportion grown up as scrub over ditches. There are frequent hedgerow trees of oak, ash and willow, the latter often pollarded. These frame the views to the distant enclosing ridges giving variety and a human scale to the flat landscape.

The bays of the Severn Estuary form most of the western boundary of the area but the presence of the sea is largely hidden by the hedges and hedgerow trees. Along this edge of the coast later enclosure and drainage create a variation in the field pattern with larger, rectangular fields. There are wide open views of salt marshes and mud flats from the sea wall. This section of the area is largely inaccessible either by road or by public footpath. Small rural tracks and roads form dead ends at evocatively named remote farmsteads: Wharf Farm, Channel View Farm, and Sluice Farm. At Sand Bay the sea is more accessible and is fringed by largely 20th century development of seaside bungalows and caravan parks.

There is a scattered settlement pattern of small villages and hamlets. The villages of Kenn, Kingston Seymour, Puxton and Wick St Lawrence are characterised by churches (often medieval in origin) and buildings of stone at their centres with more recent suburban style dwellings at the edges. The scattered stone farmsteads often have small orchards nearby.

The M5 runs through the centre of the area on a slight embankment but as there is no access to the motorway from the area there is no associated development. The road does however, have a significant visual and audible impact on the rural character of the adjacent land. The A370 cuts through the east section of the area and along this road there is ribbon development and diverse land uses including horse paddocks, caravan parks, and scrap yards. There are remnants of historic railway track and buildings, between Clevedon and Weston and Clevedon and Yatton.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Mechanical management of ditches and hedges reducing visual amenity and biodiversity value. Need for management of willow pollards.
- Lack of management of ditches and rhynes in some areas leading to regeneration of scrub along field boundaries creating fragmented hedges in place of the historic open ditches fringed by water plants.
- Some small orchards and pollards in poor condition and no longer maintained.
- New access for leisure on foot or bicycle with visual effects in the form of signage and other infrastructure.
- Pressure for new land uses such as caravan parks, scrap yards and horse paddocks. Demand for recreational land e.g. sports pitches around the edge of Clevedon introducing a 'greener' more managed character.
- Noticeable impact of land raising particularly along the M5 corridor which is very visually apparent within this flat, open landscape.
- Proliferation of tall structures of masts and signage associated with the M5 corridor.
- Ubiquitous development along roads particularly the A370 and as infill of historic villages.
- Influence of urban edge near Weston-super-Mare – some fly tipping and rubbish in ditches.
- Cumulative impact of change - affecting the highly rural, remote ambience of the area.

Character

Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors exhibits characteristics typical of the *Moors Landscape Type* including flat landform with semi-enclosed views to wooded ridges and highly rural pastoral character. The medieval historic landscape is apparent in the form of the organic pattern of enclosure, winding rural roads and tracks alongside sinuous ditches and scattered farmsteads. Together, these features create a remote and ancient character. There is some influence from the urban edge of Weston-super-Mare and from the A371 but this is slight. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition

This is an area of mainly well maintained grazed pastoral farmland which forms part of the largely intact historic pattern of rural roads, villages and farmsteads with an actively maintained network of field boundaries consisting of rhynes, ditches and hedgerows with hedgerow trees. There are a few areas and elements which show signs of declining condition but the overall landscape condition is **good**.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors* is to **conserve** the existing landscape of strong character and good condition typified by the highly rural, remote pastoral grassland with strong networks of drainage channels and hedgerows, and winding rural roads between historic villages and farmsteads. Alongside this some elements of the landscape, which are in declining condition such as the small farm orchards and hedgerow trees and willow pollards should be restored. There is also an opportunity to enhance the character and condition of the area by

reverting some areas to a more semi natural state for wildlife enhancement and conserving traditional features associated with land drainage. Some areas adjoining urban areas are in need of sympathetic enhancement.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote, pastoral character of the area.
- Enhance the hedgerow network (ensuring cyclical hedge cutting and nurturing new and existing hedgerow trees).
- Consider restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open water bodies.
- Maintain the pollarded willows and encourage local uses for the cut material.
- Promote active management and replanting of orchards using local varieties.
- Management of ditches and rhynes for biodiversity including regular de-silting (in sections to prevent damage to fauna).
- Consider opportunities to reinstate a more natural river form (Banwell).
- Promote opportunities for creating areas of unimproved grassland and wetland habitats.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Seek appropriate management of marginal non-agricultural land use such as caravan sites, scrap yards and horse paddocks.
- Conserve the discrete small scale, nucleated form of the settlements and traditional built character.
- Maintain open views to the church towers and spires which form landmark features.
- Conserve the rural character of the winding lanes and tracks and modest bridges and limit upgrading by widening, kerbing.
- Maintenance of grassland containing archaeological sites.
- Should be a very strong presumption against arable in the areas of relict landscape and peat deposits.
- To prevent poaching of the earthworks in the areas of the relict landscapes considered grazing management should be applied, *i.e.* sheep, goats, and geese.
- Water level management required for maintenance of high water tables to preserve organic cultural and palaeoenvironmental evidence.

A2: CLAPTON MOOR

Location and Boundaries: The *Clapton Moor* character area is located in northern part of the district and forms a discrete geographical area of the Gordano Valley enclosed by prominent limestone ridges to the north and south. A rural road running along the base of the valley slope defines the boundary to the south, combining with the B3124 in the west, which, along with the urban edge of Portishead defines the northern boundary. To the north east Sheepway Lane forms the boundary with coastal edge around Portbury.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying geology of peat to the west, beach and tidal flat deposits centrally and river terrace deposits to the east.
- Linear area with a valley feel, enclosed by the steep slopes of the limestone ridges.
- Predominately pastoral landscape but with more variety than other character areas of this type, with greater woodland cover, marshy grassland fens, wet woodland and occasional arable fields.
- Variety in field boundaries defining medium-large geometric and irregular fields; increasing use of fencing to replace hedgerows and ditches, particularly in the west of the area, although still with numerous mature trees along field boundaries and generally species rich hedgerows.
- Area of significant nature conservation value, the Gordano Valley National Nature Reserve, providing breeding sites for wetland birds and aquatic invertebrates.
- Settlements confined to the edge of the area along minor roads; the lack of settlements within the main part of the area is a distinctive feature.
- Straight roads cross north to south.
- Generally a remote rural feeling, although influenced in places by the M5, the Royal Portbury Docks and the urban edge of Portbury.
- Mixed historic landscape of medieval and post medieval enclosure.

DESCRIPTION

The *Clapton Moor* character area has a linear valley feel with a flat to gently undulating valley floor contrasting with the steep sides of the adjacent limestone ridges. The main part of the area lies below 10 m AOD, this rises slightly around the periphery and to the east of the area beyond Sheepway. The underlying geology is predominantly beach and tidal flat deposits although there are areas of peat to the west and river terrace deposits to the east where the landform rises. The area is noted for its geological features, for example the Weston-in-Gordano SSSI contains inter-glacial fluvial sands, marine gravels and cold-stage fluvial gravels with rich molluscan faunas.

Although principally pasture consisting of improved grassland, the *Clapton Moors* area is more varied than the other areas in this character type with a mixed land cover and variety of habitats. These include wet and mixed woodland clumps and belts and small areas of marshy grassland, reed-bed, fen and scrub found throughout. The Gordano Valley National Nature Reserve dominates the western end of the area incorporating wet woodland, tall fen, reed beds and unimproved wet meadow and is important for breeding wetland birds and aquatic invertebrates. There are three Sites of Nature

Conservation Interest (SNCI) in the valley, all consisting of marshy grassland, with one also containing wet woodland.

Generally, the ditch/rhyne system is less uniform in this character area and hedges less frequent than on the surrounding *Moors*, with belts and clumps of trees along the field boundaries being a common feature. However, centrally, the area is more typical of the type, with medium-large geometric and irregular pattern of pasture fields bounded by species-rich hedgerows with numerous mature hedgerow trees including occasional willow pollards. The central areas is also characterised by the network of drainage ditches including the large Portbury Ditch and Sandy Rhyne to the west. Towards the west, between Walton Moor and Weston Moor, hedgerows have often been replaced by fencing, creating a much more open character and permitting more extensive views. There are also soil mounds from a disused tip at Weston Drove, which are visually disruptive.

Settlement is limited and confined to the periphery of the area, clustered around the road intersections with some ribbon development along the rural roads. These small villages generally consist of a mix of development of traditional stone and more modern brick, render and weatherboard finished houses. There are also some isolated farms with associated buildings. To the west, where the landform rises around Sheepway, there is a noticeable increase in the use of stone for walls and buildings. Remnants of the Clevedon Portishead minerals light railway are still visible.

The surrounding settlements and infrastructure have an impact on the character of the area. The linear nature of the valley channels views east towards the large-scale industrial structures of The Royal Portbury Dock. The M5, that runs along a cut in the valley slopes to the south, and the urban edge of Portishead have a impact on the area and reduces the sense of remoteness that characterises many of the other *Moors* landscapes.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- The introduction of fences and the deterioration of hedgerows and ditches.
- Ribbon development and infill along the rural roads around the periphery of the area.
- The changing nature of fringe activity – creation of horse pasture with temporary boundaries and associated buildings.
- Views to the urban edge of Portishead including new development encroaching on the area.
- Pressure for recreational land including sports pitches close to Clevedon.

Character

The Clapton Moor area exhibits characteristics typical of the *Moors* landscape type. It is a predominately flat pastoral landscape with medium-large fields bounded by hedgerow and ditches/rhynes with a strong rural character and high biodiversity interest. There are however a number of differences including a greater diversity in the land cover than the other areas of the same type. The replacement of hedgerows and ditches with fencing, plus views to the disused tips are detracting features. The changing use of land along the periphery, Portishead urban edge, the M5 and views to The Royal Portbury Dock also have a disruptive affect. The overall strength of character is therefore considered to be **moderate**.

Condition

The Clapton Moor area is generally considered to be in **good** condition, particularly through the active management of the Gordano Valley Nature Reserve to the west and of the pastoral farmland. However, the replacement hedgerows with fencing and change in nature of activity around the periphery are damaging the integrity and unity of the area reducing its distinctive character.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for this area is to **conserve** the rural character of the landscape, the important ecologic resource of wet woodlands and the pastoral farmland with its network of ditches/rhynes and hedgerows. There are also key opportunities to **enhance and strengthen** the character, particularly around the periphery of the area through by promoting a sensitive rural/urban interface and encouraging the retention and management of traditional field boundaries.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rural, pastoral character of the area.
- Consider opportunities for grassland, woodland and wetland habitat creation, particularly in areas which are marginal for farming.
- Encourage the replacement and retention of traditional field boundaries, with active cyclical management of the network of ditches/rhynes and hedgerows.
- Maintain the pollarded willows and encourage local uses for the cut material.
- Promote a sensitive rural/urban interface at Portbury – consider opportunities for wet woodland planting to provide a boundary feature and visual separation from the expanding urban areas.
- Enhancement of former landfill/raised sites.
- Maintain the distinctive ‘empty’ valley feel, by limiting development within the central part of the area.
- Limit village infill and ribbon development, and where development does take place encourage sensitive use of materials and quality of design.
- Water level management required for maintenance of high water tables to preserve organic cultural and palaeoenvironmental evidence.

A3: KENN AND TICKENHAM MOORS

Location and Boundaries: *Kenn and Tickenham Moors* is a belt of low lying land running inland from the coastal settlement of Clevedon, located between the higher ground of the *Tickenham Ridge* and the *Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures*. It adjoins the *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors* character area to the south. The boundaries are formed by the 5m/10m contour to the higher ground of the coal measures, by rhynes marking the change in field patterns from Kingston Seymour, and the B3130 which runs along the base of the limestone ridge to the north.

Key Characteristics

- Lowland based on beach and tidal flat deposits to the west and peat to the east.
- Largely flat landform with very subtle gradations as the ground rises to the north west of the area.
- Highly rural landscape, remote and unified in the south but less so in the north where views to settlement on the ridge are present.
- Pastoral landscape with cattle and sheep grazing.
- Regular network of rhynes and ditches in rectilinear pattern largely dating from early 19th century enclosure and supporting rich plant communities and invertebrate populations.
- Some small plantation woodlands.
- Fragmented hedgerows (many originating as scrubbed over ditches) and large numbers of hedgerow trees visually soften the rectangular field pattern.
- Views to wooded hills and high ground give sense of enclosure, these are framed by the intermittent hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Very little settlement within the area, with a few isolated farmsteads and hamlets and ribbon development along on the A3130 (which is visually prominent due to its elevation).
- Buildings include rendered dwellings and industrial style farm buildings on the moors. A variety of material including local stone and clay tiles is used in marginal ribbon development.
- A small number of straight rural roads cross the moors.
- Historic church and buildings at Tickenham are prominent landmarks in the east of the area.
- Historic landscape dominated by post medieval parliamentary enclosure.

DESCRIPTION

Kenn and Tickenham Moors is a rural, unsettled landscape. It is a lowland with most of the area under 5m AOD, with a gentle rise to the north west of the area. Underlying the western parts of the area are beach and tidal flat deposits while the lower ground to the east is based on peat. The flat low nature of the landform means that the views to the high ground to the east and north are significant. Also highly visible in the level terrain are the few large scale farm buildings, the views toward the

suburban style development at the base of the ridge to the north (along the B3130) and moving traffic on the M5.

The highly regular pattern of field boundaries date mainly to early 19th century parliamentary enclosure. The drainage ditches and rhynes are evident especially at close range and particularly to the north and east of the area where there are fewer hedgerows. Elsewhere the visual effect of the geometric field pattern is broken down by the often incomplete hedges (some grown up as scrub over the ditches), the hedgerow trees of willow, oak and hawthorn and isolated remnants of ancient woodland.

The majority of the character area is covered by the Tickenham, Nailsea and Kenn Moors SSSI. This site is comprised of agricultural grazing marsh and a network of ditches and rhynes which support exceptionally rich plant communities. Species recorded from this site include, common and thread-leaved water-crowfoot and frogbit. Nationally rare species are also found here such as the hairlike and fen pond weeds and whorled watermilfoil. The SSSI is also important for a diverse invertebrate fauna including molluscs such as the nationally rare pea mussel, the nationally rare great silver water beetle and a nationally scarce soldier fly.

To the south of the area at Kenn Moor the use of the land for sport is evident in the planted woodland blocks and names such as Decoypool Rhyne.

There is very little settlement in the area, with a small number of rendered farmhouses with large scale modern farm buildings, while along the B3030 there are some older stone buildings, with clay roofing tiles and slates along with some suburban style dwellings. The historic settlement at Tickenham includes the Church of St Quiricus and St Julietta, dating from the 11th century and Tickenham Court, c.1400.

The sense of passing through a highly distinctive, remote wet lowland landscape is strong while traversing the few roads that cross the area such as the Causeway and the Nailsea Wall, emphasised by the rising land at the edge of the Coal Measures and the density of settlement on the higher ground. There is little access to the heart of the area which remains the peaceful province of cattle, sheep and wildfowl.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Replacement of historic field boundaries (ditches/hedgerows) by fences particularly adjacent to the B3130.
- Lack of management of ditches and rhynes in some areas leading to regeneration of scrub along field boundaries in place of the historic open ditches fringed by water plants.
- Mechanical management of ditches – limiting biodiversity interest.
- Development along the B3130 is highly visible from the north part of the area, use of non-vernacular materials, scale of development and associated horse paddocks detract from the rural character.
- Diversifying land use for instance plant nurseries and warehouse along the Kennmoor Road, plus large industrial style agricultural buildings are visually prominent in the landscape.

Character

The landscape of the Kenn and Tickenham Moors shows many of the characteristics of the Moors landscape type with an intact network of drainage ditches and rhynes, elements of the landscape dating from the 19th century enclosure. The lack of settlement within the area leads to strong sense

of ruralness and remoteness. However, to the north the rural character is weakened by the views to development along the fringe of the area. Despite this, the character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition

Landscape condition is generally **good** with well maintained farmland, an intact network of drainage ditches and rhynes of considerable ecological value. Also surviving from the historic pattern are the straight roads, the droves (tracks), hedgerows in some areas, hedgerow trees and the woodland blocks which are remnants of the sporting landscape.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for the *Kenn and Tickenham Moors* area is to **conserve** the remote, rural, pastoral character of the landscape with its extensive open areas of grassland, and its network of ecologically rich drainage channels and hedgerows. There are also opportunities to strengthen the landscape character in some areas for instance by selectively reinstating scrubbed over ditches and careful control and screening of ribbon development along the B3130.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote, rural pastoral character of the area.
- Manage the network of drainage channels to conserve their biodiversity through measures such as rotational de-silting.
- Manage woodland blocks for nature conservation value.
- Conserve historic hedgerows and nurture existing and new hedgerow trees particularly pollarded willows.
- Consider restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open water bodies.
- Minimise visual effects of modern settlement along the B3130 for instance through careful screening and replanting of hedgerows and or new woodland belts.
- Maintenance of high water tables required to preserve the organic cultural and palaeoenvironmental evidence.
- Maintenance of grassland containing archaeological sites.
- Should be a very strong presumption against arable in the areas of relict landscape and peat deposits.
- To prevent poaching of the earthworks in the areas the areas of the relict landscapes considered grazing management should be applied, *i.e.* sheep, goats, and geese.

A4: LOCKING AND BANWELL MOORS

Location and Boundaries: The *Locking and Banwell Moors* character area runs as a narrow band from Weston-super-Mare to Congresbury. To the south it is bounded by the higher ground of the *River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland* and to the north is distinguished from the neighbouring *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors* character area by the geometric nature of its field pattern which contrasts with the more organic pattern characteristic of piecemeal enclosure in *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors*. The boundaries are defined by the urban edge of Weston-super-Mare to the west and the 10 metre contour to the south. Little Wall Drove, Meer Wall (track) Nye Drove, and the River Banwell form the boundary with landscape type A1 *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors*.

Key Characteristics

- Low lying (less than 10m AOD) land founded on beach and tidal flat deposits.
- Landform generally flat contrasting with the slopes of the Mendip Ridge to the south.
- Rural and predominantly pastoral landscape with some orchard remnants and small farm woods.
- Regular geometric field patterns bounded by hedgerow and reed-filled drainage ditches/rhynes. At ground level the geometry of the field pattern is not overtly obvious, as it is broken up by gappy hedges (many grown up as scrub over ditches) and by the hedgerow trees.
- Numerous hedgerow/ditch line trees, particularly pollarded willow and some poplar shelterbelts.
- East of the M5 the area is occasionally crossed by roads (north/south), further east beyond Drove Way there is limited access and the area is very remote.
- Sparse settlement limited to isolated farm houses along the rural roads. The area is influenced however, by a connection with the urban fringe, particularly towards Weston-super-Mare.
- Views to settlement on the edge of the character area (e.g. Congresbury church spire).
- Historic landscape dominated by medieval enclosure.

DESCRIPTION

The Locking and Banwell Moors comprise a belt of low-lying beach and tidal deposits forming a flat pastoral/wetland landscape. The north eastern section of the area towards Congresbury is perceived as remote and exposed, contrasting with the west which is bounded by urban activity at Weston-super-Mare and Locking and the south which feels more enclosed due to the prominence of the *Mendip Ridge*.

The field pattern is regular and geometric, distinguishing this area from the neighbouring *Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors*, which has a generally more sinuous formation, older in origin. The field boundaries are formed by a network of geometric, linear drainage ditches/rhynes and canalised rivers, such as Banwell River along Riverside. The majority of the ditches/rhynes are associated with mixed hedgerows that have grown up over them; the larger channels have however remained open. The ditches and rhynes contain a diversity of emergent, marginal and submerged flora with associated invertebrates and molluscs. Biddle Street, Yatton SSSI is characteristic of the area

containing a variety of species including, common water-starwort, frogbit, fan-leaved water-crowfoot and stonewort as well as the nationally scarce rootless duckweed and hairlike pondweed. Reeds and umbellifers comprise the emergent vegetation and dominate in those ditches less frequently managed.

Mature trees along the field boundaries are a prominent feature of this character area, with willow (both pollarded and not) and oak present giving rough textured feel to the landscape. The variety in vegetation scale and height breaks the unity and regularity of the field patterns. There are also shelterbelts of birch and a few remnant orchards.

Although almost devoid of settlement, the fringe of this character area is heavily influenced by marginal activities, such as horse grazing, scrap yards and caravan parks. This is particularly apparent west of the M5 motorway, where the area meets Weston-super-Mare and Locking. This section of the area has less vegetation cover, emphasising the prominent urban edge and exposing the busy A370. Also a large section of this part of the character area is a disused airfield with large hangers used by the Helicopter Museum. The visual connection with the urban edge makes the this part of the area feel less remote.

In contrast, the area east of the M5 is crossed only occasionally by straight rural roads, with a large proportion, east of Drove Way to Congresbury, only accessible by foot. This lack of activity gives a remote rural feeling similar to other areas in the Moors type. What little settlement there is limited to isolated, relatively modern rendered houses.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Intensive farming methods are reducing biodiversity value of the ditches.
- Poorly managed hedgerows.
- Lack of management of ditches and rhynes leading to regeneration of scrub along field boundaries in place of the historic open ditches fringed by water plants.
- Some small orchards in poor condition and no longer maintained.
- Urban fringe development around Weston-super-Mare and Locking has impacts on the remote and rural character of the area.
- Pressure for visually intrusive new land uses such as caravan parks, scrap yards and horse paddocks.

Character

The character of the *Locking and Banwell Moors* is distinctive and typical of the *Moors* landscape type forming a pastoral landscape with regular network of hedges, ditches and rhynes, numerous mature trees included pollarded willow and the sparse settlement creating a strong sense of remoteness and isolation. However, the area is also under pressure from the urban edge of Weston-super-Mare and changes in use of agricultural land around the periphery and along the roads. The strength of character for the *Locking and Banwell Moors* is therefore **moderate**.

Condition:

The *Locking and Banwell Moors* character area is generally in a **declining** condition. Fringe activities such as caravan parks and scrap yards have a disruptive influence on the structure of the landscape and create an unkempt appearance. This is particularly evident west of the M5 and around Weston-super-Mare where the transition between urban and rural is more degraded. There is also evidence

of decline in the condition of the field boundaries. These issues are however not universal and there are areas, such as the less accessible east, that are in a good condition.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for the *Locking and Banwell Moors* is to **conserve** the remote pastoral nature of the area and **enhance** the areas in decline, reducing the negative impacts from urban fringe activities and strengthen the key characteristics, such as the network of ditches/rhynes.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote and rural nature of the pastoral landscape, with its absence of settlement and buildings.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical management of the ditches/rhynes and hedgerows.
- Consider restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open water bodies.
- Promote management of trees, including the remaining orchards and pollard willows and seek opportunities to reinstate these local landscape features.
- Encourage restoration of unimproved grassland and less intensive farming methods (a reduction in the use of fertilizer) to enhance biodiversity of ditches.
- Consider opportunities to reinstate a more natural river form to the River Banwell.
- Manage urban fringe development/activity to encourage a sensitive urban/rural interface. Planting of new wet woodland belts may be appropriate in the area adjoining Weston-Super-Mare.
- The close links with adjacent urban areas suggest that there may be opportunities to encourage public access whilst retaining the remote nature of the area.
- Maintenance of high water tables required to preserve the organic cultural and palaeoenvironmental evidence.
- Maintenance of grassland containing archaeological sites.
- Should be a very strong presumption against arable in the areas of relict landscape and peat deposits.
- To prevent poaching of the earthworks the areas of the relict landscapes considered grazing management should be applied, ie sheep, goats, and geese.

A5: BLEADON MOOR

Location and Boundaries: Bleadon Moor is a small section of land to the south of Weston-super-Mare and the *Mendip Ridge*. The boundary follows the 10m contour to the north and the authority boundary forms the edge of the area to the south (with the River Axe forming the boundary line). The area is a small part of the Somerset Levels which continue to the south into Sedgemoor District.

Key Characteristics

- Flat lowland based on beach and tidal flat deposits.
- Mixed pastoral (sheep and cattle grazing) and arable land use.
- Views to wooded hills give enclosure and form a complex skyline to an otherwise simple and open landscape.
- Regular fields pattern, medium in size in the heart of *Bleadon Moor*, with larger geometric fields to the east and around the margins of the Moor
- Mainly grassland but some in arable use appearing bleak and monotonous.
- Hedgerows intermittent with sparse hedgerow trees in the west of the area, to the east more complete with variety of hedgerow species including willows, oak, elm and ash.
- Network of drainage channels, ditches and rhynes in evidence but not visually dominant due to growth of scrub along smaller channels forming gappy hedgerows.
- River Axe forms southern boundary, partially embanked for flood defence.
- Very little settlement with a few scattered stone farmsteads to the east, associated with pasture, small orchards, stone walls and species rich hedgerows.
- Signs of urban influence to the west with marginal land uses such as model car racetrack and dumped cars, sewage treatment works, and with pylons highly visible in the flat terrain.
- Main part of the moor to the west is remote and inaccessible, with just one rural road giving access to the centre of the area, to the east the road skirts the north of the area.
- Historic landscape dominated by medieval enclosure with post medieval reclamation of the warths.

DESCRIPTION

Bleadon Moor is a remote area cut off from the other moors by the *Mendip Ridge*. The western section is a roughly circular piece of land with an inner core of medium sized regular fields and an outer area reclaimed later from the flood plain of the River Axe. This latter area has large fields of regular rectangular shape, a proportion of which are used for arable farming. The landscape here is monotonous and large in scale although the varied views to the wooded ridges and buildings of Weston-super-Mare (particularly the Old St Nicholas Church at Uphill) add complexity and interest. In this section of the area, hedgerows are mainly hawthorn, flailed in places and in others gappy and generally with few hedgerow trees. Ditches and rhynes are less in evidence in this area than the *Moors* type generally due to scrub growing up over them. This part of the area feels remote and

rural but lacks the strong pastoral character typical of the *Moors* type. Along the single road though the area there are non-agricultural land uses such as a model car racing circuit. Dumped cars are also in evidence. A line of pylons is visually prominent in the flat landscape. Away from the road there is very little access although the West Mendip Way footpath runs around the area following the New Rhyne which forms the division between the two types of field patterns.

The character area continues along the base of the ridge to the east forming part of a larger area which continues on the other side of the River Axe into Sedgemoor District. Here, the landscape is predominantly pastoral with sheep grazing in large rectangular fields and with hedgerow trees and hedgerows that are largely intact and richer in species than the part of the area to the west, with willow, oak, sycamore, elm, field maple and ash. There are also small farm orchards. The few buildings include substantial old farmsteads of stone and the 18th century, brick built, Shiplate House. This easterly section of the *Bleadon Moor* character area is more typical of the *Moor* character type in its remote, rural and pastoral feel, although to the eastern end the noise of the M5 is intrusive.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Areas of arable farming stand out from the characteristic pastoral landscape of the *Moors* type.
- Hedgerow management is variable, with few hedgerow trees in some sections and generally gappy, species poor hedgerows, many originating as scrub grown up over ditches.
- Loss of historic orchards.
- Pressure for diversification of land use particularly near the urban edge of Weston-super-Mare.
- Urban influences apparent in the form of neglect, fly tipping and car dumping in western section.

Character

Bleadon Moor character area has a **strong** character although in places, particularly at the west of the area this has weakened due to the large scale change in land use to arable farming plus the influence of urban fringe activities. Elsewhere, the area is more typical of its type with a strongly rural and peaceful pastoral character with intact hedgerows and drainage ditches.

Condition

The condition of the landscape in the *Bleadon Moor* area is variable with overall condition **declining**. To the south of Summerways Bridge the traditional grazed landscape has been replaced with arable, which with the large scale regular fields with flailed thorn hedgerows and few hedgerow trees and visually dominant pylons contrasts strongly with the pastoral landscape with ecologically rich hedgerows found elsewhere in the area and throughout the *Moors* landscape type.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for *Bleadon Moor* will be to **conserve** the rural pastoral landscape with its intact, species rich hedges and hedgerow trees, its network of ditches and rhyne and historic farmsteads. Alongside this, the areas and elements of the landscape which are in decline should be **enhanced**, in particular through enhancement of field boundaries for visual enclosure and biodiversity and control of visually intrusive or anti-social land use.

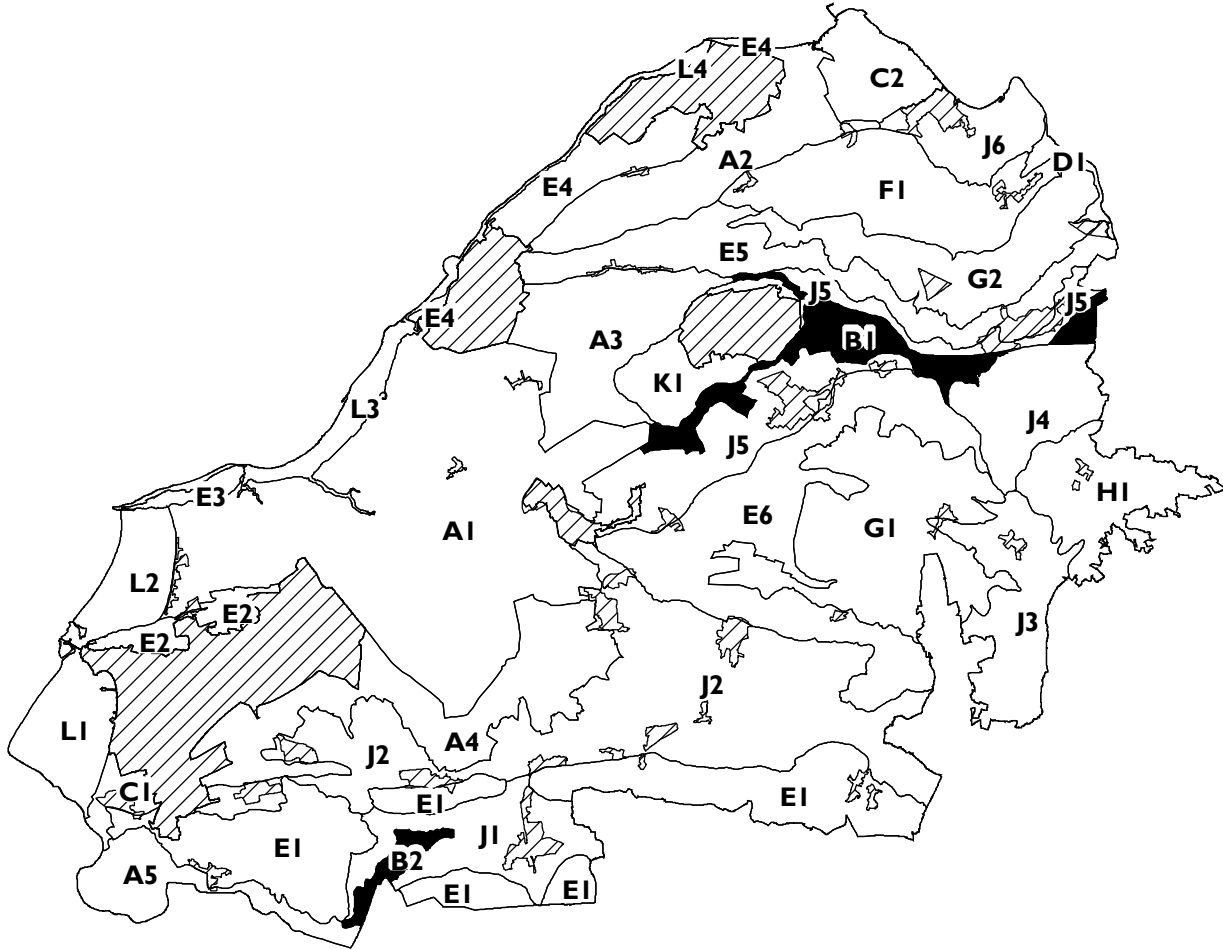
Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve remote rural, pastoral character, with its absence of settlement and buildings.
- Encourage restoration of pasture in areas now under intensive arable, and encourage less intensive farming methods to enhance the biodiversity interest of ditches and rhyes.
- Enhance the historic hedgerow network where this has become weakened through replanting using a range of species and cyclical cutting.
- Nurture new and existing hedgerow trees and manage/restore the pollards and traditional orchards using local stock.
- Encourage sensitive management of ditches and rhyes for nature conservation for instance through cyclical de-silting.
- Consider restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open water bodies.
- Control marginal/leisure uses of land such as that can have a significant visual impact within this flat open landscape. Planting of new wet woodland belts may be appropriate in the area adjoining Weston-Super-Mare.
- Discourage anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping that affects the condition and rural ambience of the landscape.
- Maintenance of high water tables required to preserve the organic cultural and palaeoenvironmental evidence.
- Maintenance of grassland containing archaeological sites.

LANDSCAPE TYPE B: RIVER FLOODPLAINS



B: RIVER FLOODPLAINS



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

B1 Land Yeo and Kenn River Floodplain

B2 Lox Yeo River Floodplain

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE B: RIVER FLOODPLAIN

Landscape Character Areas

B1: Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Floodplain

B2: Lox Yeo River Floodplain

Location and Boundaries

The River Floodplain Landscape Type comprises two areas of floodplain centred on river courses, one to the north east of the District (Land Yeo and Kenn) and one to the far south (Lox Yeo). The boundaries have been determined by the rise in ground level at the edge of the floodplains and largely follow contour lines and field boundaries.

Key Characteristics

- Level and low lying with Alluvial and Gravel deposits overlying Mercia Mudstone geology.
- Open flat landscape contrasts with adjacent rolling slopes and steep wooded ridges.
- Views to rising valley sides and limestone ridges giving sense of enclosure.
- Presence of rivers with areas of wetland and open water bodies.
- Predominantly pastoral land use.
- Large open rectilinear fields with low short flailed hedges and occasional hedgerow trees.
- Woodland blocks, and trees line the riverbanks.
- Sparse settlement in the form of scattered farmsteads of medieval and post medieval date linked by rural roads.
- Valleys and floodplains used as transport corridors in more recent times with 19th century railway and 20th century arterial roads.
- Historic landscape characterised by enclosure from the early medieval to the post medieval periods.

Physical Influences

The *River Floodplain* Landscape Type is flat lowland running along the valley floors of small rivers. These areas are founded on Mercia mudstone but the superficial deposits of Beach and Tidal Flats, Alluvium and River Terrace Gravels determine the level landform of the type.

Historic Environment

Though no doubt prehistoric and early historic communities will have made use of the alluvium enriched grassland in the valley bottoms the present enclosures of the Land Yeo and River Kenn mainly date from the early medieval period when a more structured approach to exploiting the economic benefits of the floodplain was established.

Subsequent enclosure and settlement appears to have moved in an upward direction with the valley sides dominated by late medieval enclosure.

By comparison the Lox Yeo wetlands were not enclosed until the post medieval period though the aerial photographic evidence shows some earlier, isolated enclosure of unknown date in this area.

Biodiversity

The landscape type is characterised by marshy and semi-improved neutral grassland forming the floodplain to the Land Yeo, Lox Yeo and Kenn rivers. Broad-leaved semi-natural woodland grows in small copses and (in places) along the embankments of the railways. Several of these woodlands are ancient and contain a diversity of flora indicative of this.

Settlement Character

Settlement is sparse with scattered farmsteads mainly at the edges of the areas on the slightly higher ground. The river valleys form important transport corridors. The main railway line, A roads and the motorway all run through or alongside the *River Floodplain* landscapes.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Generally, peaceful rural landscape.
- Small rivers running through the areas, lined with trees and crossed by modest bridges.
- Tributary streams and open water bodies contribute to the wetland landscape.
- Open valley floor with flat topography framed by wooded ridges and rolling valley farmland.
- Small woods, some of them ancient, and vegetated river banks.
- Predominantly pastoral grassland with cattle grazing.
- Presence of hedgerows and hedgerow trees (willow, oak and ash).
- Scattered stone farmsteads on rising ground at the edge of the floodplain.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Mechanical management of hedgerows and drainage ditches is impacting on visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Few new young hedgerow trees to replace mature and over mature stock.
- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. recreational uses, scrap yards, horse paddocks) which are often visually intrusive.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful rural character.
- There is unknown palaeoenvironmental potential in the valley floor wet deposits and this is threatened by lowering of the water table.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *River Floodplain* Landscape Type will generally be one of **conservation** and **enhancement**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the peaceful rural nature of the pastoral landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows and nurture new and existing hedgerow trees.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Maintain key local landscape features including the distinctive modest stone bridges, riverbank vegetation belt, hedgerow trees and open water bodies.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Undertake an assessment of the palaeoenvironmental potential of the valley floor wet deposits.
- Ensure appropriate water level management for maintenance of high water tables to preserve organic cultural and palaeoenvironmental evidence.

BI: LAND YEO, KENN RIVER AND RIVER AVON FLOODPLAIN

Location and Boundaries: The *Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Floodplain* lies to the north east of the District and is a narrow corridor of land following the courses of the Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon, their tributaries and other water bodies. It also includes a small section of the Ashton Brook and Colliter's Brook, south east of Long Ashton, which forms part of the River Avon catchment extending eastwards into Bristol. The area boundaries largely follow contour lines marking the edge of the rising ground of the adjacent *Rolling Valley Farmland* and *Farmed Coal Measures*. Elsewhere the boundaries follow field divisions, and near Long Ashton the boundary follows the railway line and the A370.

Key Characteristics

- Level lowland based on Alluvium, River Terrace Deposits and Head.
- Strong valley feel varying in width from intimate to wide and open, except south east of Long Ashton where the valley is indistinct.
- Peaceful pastoral landscape with cattle grazing though much of the area, except south east of Long Ashton where the landscape is fragmented and disturbed by the influences of the city fringe, and road and rail traffic.
- Presence of the small rivers, the Kenn and the Land Yeo and their tributaries, plus the Ashton Brook forming part of the Avon catchment to the east.
- Many small open water bodies, pools, fishing ponds and reservoirs.
- Large geometric fields with low hedges and hedgerow trees of oak and ash.
- Broadleaved small woodlands and trees along the lines of rivers and streams.
- Generally little settlement apart from scattered stone farmsteads on rising ground at the edges of the area and some large institutional buildings and installations. The Ashton Brook area to the east adjoins the city fringe.
- Transport corridor with the railway line running through much of the length and the A370 (in cuttings and on embankments) bordering the area to the east.
- Proximity of Bristol and Long Ashton at eastern end of area felt through views to urban areas and variations in land use.

DESCRIPTION

The *Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Floodplain* is a narrow extended area of flat land largely at 5m to 20m AOD founded on Alluvium, River Terrace Deposits and Head gravel lying over the older Mercia Mudstone. The rivers Land Yeo and Kenn and their tributaries run from east to west through the area while at the eastern end of the area the Ashton Brook and Colliter's Brook flow north eastwards towards the River Avon. The level land of the floodplains forms the base of the wider valley system edged by the *Rolling Valley Farmland* which rises up to the steep wooded slopes of the *Limestone Ridges and Combes* to north and south. The floodplains of the *Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Floodplain* are contained and framed by the valley sides, with the floodplain forming wide open areas as the valley broadens in the middle and west of the area and intimate, small scale corridors where the rivers wind their way around the higher ground of the *Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures*.

The presence of the rivers and streams with their modest stone bridges and the variety of farm ponds, fishing lakes and small reservoirs, give a distinctive wetland feel to the landscape which is particularly strong in the narrow valleys to north and south of Nailsea. The western section of the area is highly rural and peaceful with access only from a winding rural road and by footpaths, and the riverine feel of this section is emphasised by place names such as Watercress Farm and Bathing Pond Wood. In contrast the character of the eastern part, along Ashton Brook, is influenced by the prominence of the city edge.

The *Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Floodplain* is predominantly an open grassland landscape with cattle grazing, but the small woods, several of which are ancient semi-natural woodland, the vegetated river banks and the mature hedgerow trees give a verdant appearance to the area despite the mainly low and occasionally gappy hedgerows. Fields are large and, to the west, irregular in outline and enclosed in early medieval times. To the east there is an area of post medieval enclosure of open heath with large, more geometric fields, here also the quality of the pasture is, in places, noticeably poorer than the rich grassland to the west. Also in this easterly area the influence Bristol is felt in the views to the urban areas, the presence of the Park and Ride car park, and prominent views of the village Long Ashton sitting on higher ground to the north.

There is little settlement in the *Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Floodplain* itself, with a few scattered farmsteads of local stone and tile and a hospital and sewage works in the middle section of the area where telephone poles and wires are also prominent in the flat landscape. The main line railway passes through most of the area and to the east the A370 forms the northern boundary, detracting from the rural ambience of this section through noise, views of moving traffic and lighting. The Yanley landfill is also a feature of the area.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Mechanical management of hedges reducing visual amenity and biodiversity value.
- Few young hedgerow trees to replace existing mature and over-mature stock.
- Pressure for new land uses such as fish farming and horse paddocks.
- Proliferation of tall structures such as lighting and signage associated with the A370 plus telephone poles and wires crossing the area.
- Visual impact of the edge of Bristol and the Long Ashton.
- Cumulative impact of change - affecting the rural, peaceful ambience of the area.

Character

Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Floodplain has many of the strong landscape elements characteristic of the *River Floodplain* Landscape Type including flat landform with semi-enclosed views to wooded ridges, presence of rivers, streams and ponds, small woodlands and a peaceful, rural ambience. However the east of the area is highly influenced by the urban edge of Bristol and the presence of the A370 so that overall character is considered to be **moderate**.

Condition

This is an area of mainly well maintained pastoral farmland with a largely intact hedgerow network and areas of woodland and wetland of ecological value. There are however signs of decline such as the occasionally gappy hedges with few young hedgerow trees and the areas of less well maintained pasture to the far east of the area adjacent to Bristol, making overall landscape condition **declining**.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Floodplain* is to **conserve** the rural pastoral landscape of the floodplain where it is largely intact to the west of the area and to **enhance** declining elements and areas such as the hedgerows and pasture to the east. There are also opportunities for screening intrusive urban edges and transport corridors and for enhancing and creating wetland and woodland habitats.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rural, pastoral character of the area.
- Enhance the hedgerow network (ensuring cyclical hedge cutting and nurturing new and existing hedgerow trees).
- Management of streams and ponds for biodiversity including planting bank side trees for light shade.
- Promote opportunities for creating areas of unimproved grassland and wetland habitats.
- Seek appropriate management of marginal non-agricultural land use such as fish farms and horse paddocks.
- Consider opportunities to introduce wet woodland possibly for screening intrusive land uses, urban edge and transport corridors.
- Conserve the character of the rural roads and modest bridges and limit upgrading by widening, kerbing.

B2: LOX YEO RIVER FLOODPLAIN

Location and Boundaries: The *Lox Yeo River Floodplain* is a narrow band following the route of the Lox Yeo River as it cuts through the Mendip Hills to the south of the district. The boundary defined by the 10m contour.

Key Characteristics

- Level and low lying, below 10m AOD with Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits overlying Mercia Mudstone geology.
- Open flat landform contrasts with rising valley sides and steep wooded limestone ridges of the Mendip which channel views upstream along the wide valley.
- The small River Lox Yeo flows southwards through the area to the River Axe.
- Large open rectilinear fields with low short flailed hedges and occasional hedgerow trees making a simple verdant landscape.
- Pastoral, rural area even with the presence of the M5 motorway which has a strong influence in this small area and often dominates views.

DESCRIPTION

This low lying floodplain, under 10m AOD, follows the path of the Lox Yeo River south as it cuts through the Mendip ridge to the River Axe. The flat valley floor contrasts with the steep slopes of the ridge. Views are channelled along this wide valley, up the rising slopes to the wooded hilltops, the occasional settlement and to the landmark of Banwell Castle.

Land cover is predominately grade 4 pasture, divided by the post medieval enclosure of the Lox Yeo wetlands into a network of large and regular fields with tightly cut hedgerows and ditches along their boundaries. There is also a limited area of medieval enclosure of the alluvium-enriched grassland at the east end of the area. A few hedgerow trees form isolated vertical elements in this level, unified landscape which is disrupted only by the M5 motorway, with no other road or settlement within the area. Development is limited to a single sewage works. A sign of historic use of the area is the Neolithic standing stone at Yarberr. The lack of accessibility makes the area feel remote and, despite the presence of the M5, rural.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of hedgerows and ditches are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Few new young hedgerow trees to replace mature and over mature stock.
- Visual impact of the M5, and proliferation of tall structures such as lighting and signage associated with it.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the rural, remote character.

Character

The *Lox Yeo River Floodplain* displays a number of positive characteristics that are typical of the *River Floodplain Type*. It is a verdant unified area of large rectilinear pastoral fields with its low, level landform contrasting with the surrounding steep wooded limestone ridges. The limited access and lack of settlement creates a sense of remoteness despite the presence of the M5 motorway, contributing to a **strong** overall character.

Condition

The *Lox Yeo River Floodplain* is a well managed landscape and is in **good** overall condition. Some elements of the landscape show signs of decline such as the occasionally gappy hedgerows and intensive farming methods could be reducing the levels of biodiversity and having an impact on the Lox Yeo River.

STRATEGY

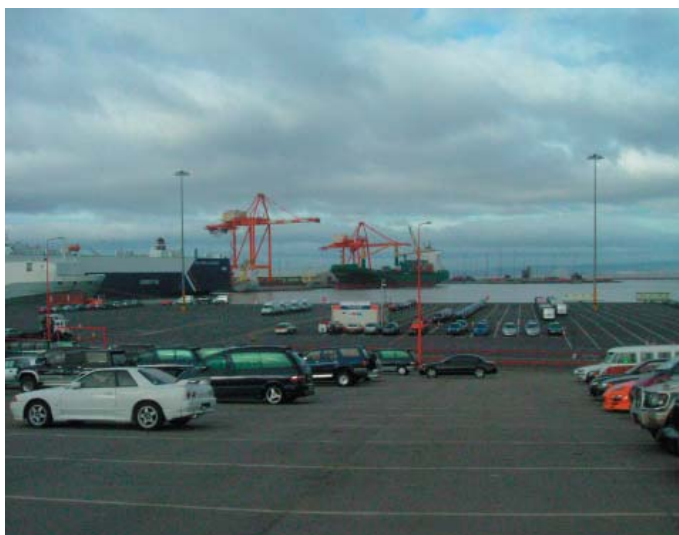
Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy is to **conserve** the peaceful rural character of the *Lox Yeo River Floodplain* including pastoral land use and network of hedges and drainage ditches, and to enhance the landscape through hedgerow management, nurturing hedgerow trees and wetland habitat management and creation.

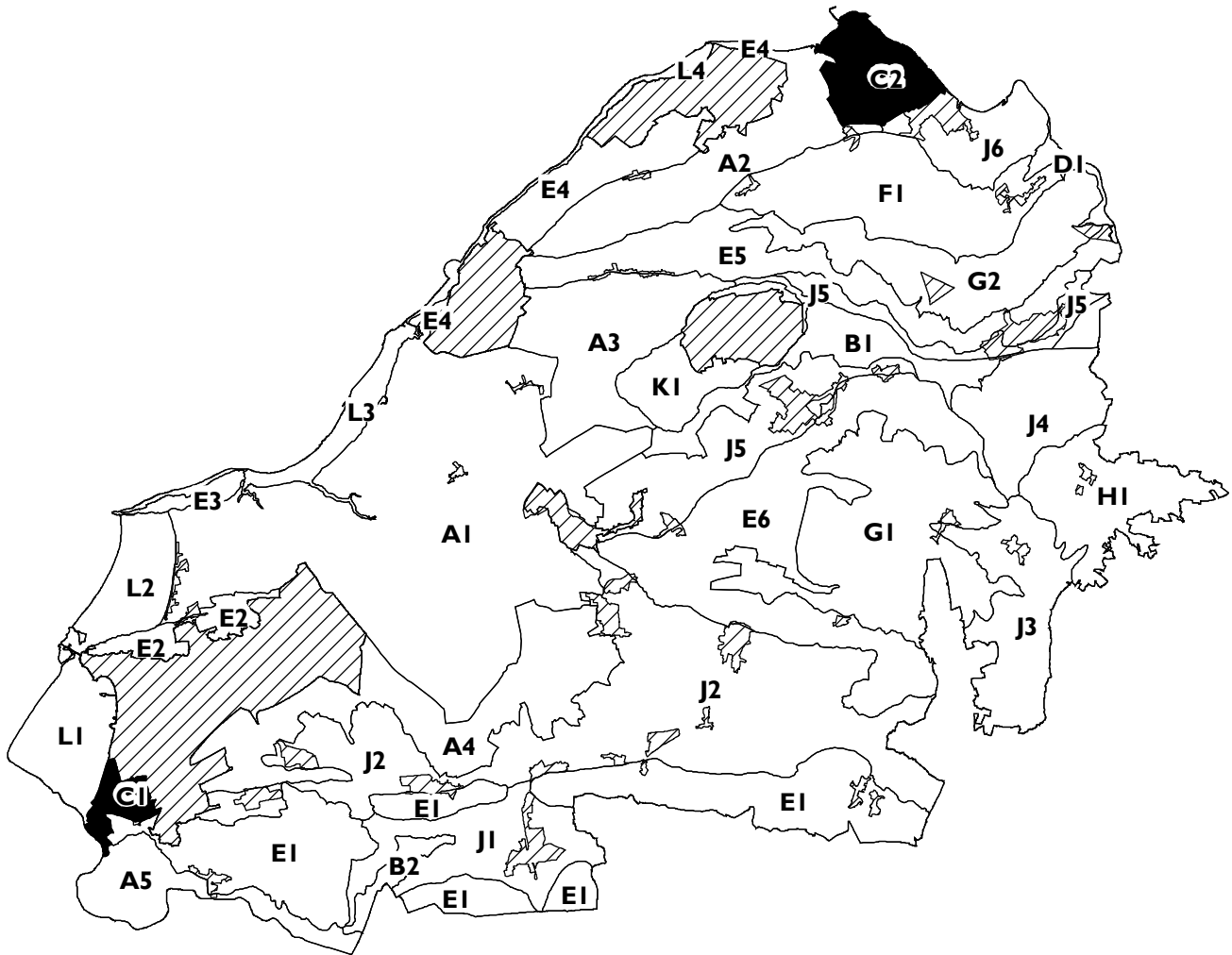
Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rural, pastoral character of the area.
- Enhance the hedgerow network (ensuring cyclical hedge cutting and nurturing new and existing hedgerow trees).
- Management of the river and ditches for biodiversity including planting bank side trees for light shade.
- Promote opportunities for creating areas of unimproved grassland and wetland habitats.
- Consider opportunities to introduce wet woodland possibly for screening intrusive land uses and transport corridors such as the M5.

LANDSCAPE TYPE C: SETTLED COASTAL EDGE



C: SETTLED COASTAL EDGE



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

C1 Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge

C2 Portbury Settled Coastal Edge

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE C: SETTLED COASTAL EDGE

Landscape Character Areas

C1: Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge

C2: Portbury Settled Coastal Edge

Location and Boundaries

The Settled Coastal Edge Landscape Type consists of two areas on the seaward edge of the District, one to the far north (near Portishead) and one to the south (near Weston-super-Mare). Boundaries are determined largely by land use with the areas differentiated from both settlement and the more rural surrounding areas of the Moors. To the west the areas are bounded by the sea or coastal bays with Mean High Water forming the boundary.

Key Characteristics

- Flat low lying land of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits.
- Open level landform contrasts with the adjacent steep wooded limestone ridges.
- Wide views across inter-tidal bays to the Bristol Channel, islands and the coast of Wales framed by the adjacent ridges.
- Views of water in many forms, from the Bristol Channel to rivers, docks, ponds and drainage ditches.
- Small surviving pockets of pasture with historic farmsteads but dominated by 20th century development.
- Considerable settlement in the type particularly widely spaced large scale buildings for institutional and industrial use.
- High biodiversity value of the coastal grassland and remnant woodland.
- Influence of the sea manifested in the docks and boatyards.
- Protected from flooding by coastal defences notably sea walls.

Physical Influences

The *Settled Coastal Edge* landscape type is flat lowland largely at less than 10m AOD with geology of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits with localised areas of Mercia Mudstone and River Terrace Deposits. The type is dominated by the Severn Estuary to the west and by the presence of other water bodies such docks, rivers and drainage ditches.

Historic Environment

The historic settlement of these areas owes more to their *Moors* hinterland than to a coastal connection, though Uphill Pill was used during the post medieval period as a haven and minor port for the local coastal trade. Today much of the landscape is dominated by 20th century industrial, transport and recreational facilities.

Biodiversity

The *Settled Coastal Edge* Landscape Type is characterised by industrial and urban development interspersed by a variety of water features including rivers, docks, reservoirs and ditches. Areas of improved, semi-improved and marshy grassland form the periphery to this development along with small areas of broad-leaved woodland (some ancient) which provide shelter belts. The Severn Estuary to the west of the type is a dominant feature, with mudflats and saltmarsh forming the boundary between land and sea.

Settlement Character

Along with water in many forms the presence of settlement is particularly characteristic of the landscape type. This is largely in the form of modern industrial or institutional large scale buildings widely spaced and set in grounds or with expanses of parking. By contrast small scale residential buildings, including a few stone farmsteads, remain in isolated pockets of the areas. The urban areas of Bristol and Weston-super-Mare fringe character areas within the landscape type and are highly visible in the flat open landscape.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Wide sea views across the Bristol Channel.
- Rich variety of water bodies, from main rivers to docks, ponds, ditches and rhynes.
- Remnant areas of pastoral landscape associated with historic farmsteads.
- Shelter belts of broadleaved woodland including some ancient woods.
- Marshy grassland of high ecological value.
- Strong maritime influence with container ships, yachts and small boats in the docks and boatyards.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Lack of management of the hedgerows and ditches reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Proliferation of visually dominant large scale industrial and institutional buildings with associated parking areas, security fencing and amenity landscape.
- Pressure on the remaining areas of pastoral farmland for conversion to recreation or industrial land use.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Settled Coastal Edge* landscape type will be **conservation** and **enhancement**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the maritime landscape of waterways with shipping, boats, docks and boatyards.

- Conserve the remnant pasture with rhynes and hedgerows, and the ecologically rich wetland and woodland habitats.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of ditches and hedgerows and nurture new and existing hedgerow trees.
- Promote opportunities for creating areas of unimproved grassland, wetland and woodland habitats, for linking existing habitats together and for screening.
- Consider restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open water.
- Encourage public access to the shore side but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure. Retain and enhance public access provision, particularly in the light of new development.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.

CI: WESTON BAY SETTLED COASTAL EDGE

Location and Boundaries: *Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge* is located to the south west of Weston-super-Mare at the southern edge of the district. The boundaries are defined by the change in land use and geology, with the western boundary formed by the Mean High Water, the eastern by the edge of the settled area of Weston-super-Mare and the south by the sea wall separating the area from *Bleadon Moor* and the rise in ground to the *Mendip Ridge* marked by the 10m contour.

Key Characteristics

- Level lowland founded on Beach and Tidal Flats and Mercia Mudstone.
- Presence of the sea and tributary of the River Axe.
- Wide views across the bay to the Bristol Channel contrast with the more enclosed wooded and settled inland section of the area.
- The ridges of Brean Down and the *Mendip Ridge* form dramatic backdrop to the level landform.
- Variety of land use and cover including marsh, pasture, amenity grassland, woods and parkland.
- Rich biodiversity in marshland, parkland, woodland belts and grassland of the golf course.
- Large scale institutional buildings set in grounds with shelterbelts and extensive parking.
- Old village core of Uphill with stone church and dwellings, plus Uphill Manor with presence of historic estate felt in stone lodge, walls and parkland.
- Suburban edge of Weston-super-Mare visually dominant in some of the open grassland areas to north and east.
- Wide urban road (A370) plus winding rural roads to south of Uphill.

DESCRIPTION

Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge is a small but highly varied area united by its flat landform, the influence of the sea and the use of the area predominantly for leisure.

The area is uniformly low lying at around 5m AOD although the underlying geology varies from Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits to the south and east to Mercia Mudstone with blown sand to the north. Land uses are distinctive and varied with a golf course occupying the northern section, grazing and marshland to the west and south, and parkland and large institutions with their grounds to the east. These various land uses result in a patchwork of habitats, including woodland, grassland and marshland of ecological interest. In the centre of the area is the village of Uphill, with its core of traditional stone buildings and more suburban infill to the north. The early Victorian gothic Uphill Manor forms a landmark to the north of the village with substantial stone walls, lodge and remnant parkland with fine old trees and mature woodland. Wrapping around the village to the north and east are large new institutional buildings, mainly of brick, with playing fields, parks and grounds, mainly amenity grassland but with broadleaved woodland belts, remnant hedgerows and drainage ditches of ecological value. The open grassland areas are surrounded by the suburbs of Weston-super-Mare which in some places form an abrupt urban edge in this flat area.

The north end of the *Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge* is dominated by the Weston Golf Course which was developed during the 20th century on stabilised sand dunes and is made up of grassland (including semi-improved calcareous and neutral grassland) and scrub.

To the south of the area there is an area of pastoral wetland, with the proximity of Weston-super-Mare manifested in the llamas and ponies replacing the usual cattle grazing at least in the area close to the village of Uphill. Locally fences have replaced traditional field boundaries.

The southern end of the area, against the mouth of the Axe estuary, is characterised by late post medieval enclosure of the warth with a fringe of unenclosed salt marsh along the edge of the river. The openness of the landscape is emphasised by the views over to large buildings on the coast near Brean outside the District. The influence of the sea is felt here in the sea walls and the marina and boat yard with the masts of the small yachts forming vertical features in the level landscape.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Replacement of ditches and hedgerows with fences reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Lack of management of ditches and rhynes in some areas leading to regeneration of scrub in place of the historic open ditches fringed by water plants.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the woodland belts.
- Visual impact of sometimes unsympathetic urban edge of Weston-super-Mare.
- Pressure for further diversification of land uses in the remaining pastoral areas (e.g. recreational uses).
- Incremental changes e.g. proliferation of signage and lighting associated with A370 and surrounding urban areas further eroding the wooded parkland character of the area to the east.

Character

The character of the *Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge* is mixed, with elements and areas of strong character, for instance the open pastoral wetland, the historic parkland and woodland blocks and the maritime riverside boatyard but with substantial areas of weak character such as the playing fields highly influenced by the suburban edge of Weston-super-Mare. Therefore the overall character of the area is judged as **moderate**.

Condition

The condition of the area is **declining** as manifested in the partial loss or weakening of traditional landscape features such as hedgerows and drainage ditches in the remaining areas of pastoral farmland. These features are also failing to fulfil their potential to strengthen character and enhance biodiversity in the eastern area of recreation grounds, playing fields and hospital grounds.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge* is to **conserve** the areas and features of strong character and good condition such as the marshland and pastoral farmland, the mature woodland and historic parkland, the surviving ditches and rhynes of ecological value and to **enhance** the weaker and declining elements such as the areas of amenity grassland and suburban edge. There are also opportunities to enhance the character and condition of the area by linking the woodland and grassland habitats and creating new semi-natural habitats for instance by planting woodland for screening and by changes in maintenance of parks and playing fields.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remaining areas of rural pastoral wetland.
- Enhance the hedgerow network (ensuring cyclical hedge cutting and nurturing new and existing hedgerow trees).
- Consider restoration of scrubbed over ditches back to open water bodies.
- Management of ditches and rhynes for biodiversity including regular de-silting (in sections to prevent damage to fauna).
- Promote opportunities for creating areas of unimproved grassland, wetland and woodland habitats and for linking existing habitats.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge of Weston-super-Mare through design guidance and possible screening with woodland belt or parkland tree planting.

C2: PORTBURY SETTLED COASTAL EDGE

Location and Boundaries: *Portbury Settled Coastal Edge* is located to the far north of the District. The area is distinguished from neighbouring areas largely by its settlement pattern. To the south the boundary skirts the edge of Pill and follows the line of the M5 and to the west it follows Sheepway Lane along the edge of the less settled character area of *Clapton Moor*.

Key Characteristics

- Flat low lying land of Beach and Tidal Flats Deposits with areas of Head, Mercia Mudstone and River Terrace Deposits giving slight variations in level.
- Wide views across inter-tidal bays to the Bristol Channel, islands and the coast of Wales framed by limestone ridges.
- Presence of the Royal Portbury Dock plus smaller open water bodies, rhyes and ditches.
- Pastoral area to the east with historic farmstead.
- Coastal marshy grassland and remnant woodland of biodiversity value.
- Industry dominates the area with brightly coloured large scale buildings and cranes.
- Constantly changing scene of container ships docking, loading and unloading and mass vehicle movement and storage.
- Buildings accompanied by metal fencing, amenity landscape and some shelterbelts and remnant hedgerows.
- Wide roads with kerbs, roundabouts and lighting.
- Vertical elements of lighting columns, cranes and tall metal fencing tower over the flat landscape.
- Views to elevated section of M5.
- Protected from flooding by sea walls with areas beside the sea and river remote and difficult to access.

DESCRIPTION

Portbury Settled Coastal Edge is a level area of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits at around 8m to 10m AOD, with isolated slightly higher sections of Mercia Mudstone, River Terrace Deposits and Head gravel in its centre and to the south east. The area is dominated by the Royal Portbury Docks with extensive areas of hard standing for vehicle storage, large industrial buildings, colourful cranes and transport infrastructure of urban roads. The constantly changing scene of large container ships unloading at the docks gives a strong maritime character reinforced by wide views over the Bristol Channel and to the shores and hills of Wales. The large industrial buildings are widely spaced with amenity grassland, shelter belts (including poplar, amenity shrubs and wet woodland of alder and willow), and tall metal fences. Serving the buildings is a substantial road network with extensive areas of parking/vehicle storage overlooked by the tall lighting columns which together with the dock cranes, visually dominate views over the area particularly from the flat rural areas to the south and west. Amongst the large installations are remnants of agricultural land use such as rhyes and scrubby hedgerows along with marginal land uses such as a caravan park.

Although the character area is dominated by 20th century development the deposits of gravels have the potential to contain Lower Palaeolithic artefacts.

The fringes of the area next to the Bristol Channel and the River Avon are marshy grassland but these are difficult to access with no public roads or footpaths through the docks.

To the east is a remnant area of grazing marshland, enclosed in medieval times and centred on the traditional stone built Court House Farm. This is now overshadowed by the elevated M5 motorway and its junction with the A369 with the railway line also passing nearby. Although they no longer have the peaceful rural atmosphere of other pastoral areas in the District, the fields and the open ground around the transport corridor harbour unimproved neutral grassland and marshy grassland of nature conservation interest.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Lack of management of the hedgerows and ditches reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Proliferation of visually dominant elements linked to large scale industrial land use such as tall lighting columns, extensive areas of car storage, road signs and brightly coloured metal fencing which are also visually intrusive in views in from other character areas.
- Pressure on the remaining areas of pastoral farmland for conversion to industrial land use.
- Areas of amenity grassland and decorative small trees and shrubs installed as landscaping around buildings, fail to integrate the installations with the surrounding rural areas or exploit the potential for habitat linkage, restoration and creation.
- Development potentially threatens to damage the Lower Palaeolithic artefacts that may exist in the gravel deposits.

Character

The *Portbury Settled Coastal Edge* character area has a highly distinctive **strong** industrial and maritime character manifested in wide sea views, large scale docks, container ships, cranes and brightly clad buildings alongside remnant areas of wetland pastoral landscape, woodland shelter belts and marshy grassland of high ecological value. Although some parts of the area are blander with typical industrial estate style landscape of amenity grassland and small trees.

Condition

The condition of the area is mixed with the industrial installations generally in good condition and with some landscape elements also well kept such as some of the woodland shelter belts and the marshy grassland. Other key features such as hedgerows are neglected and generally the landscape of the *Portbury Settled Coastal Edge* is **declining**.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

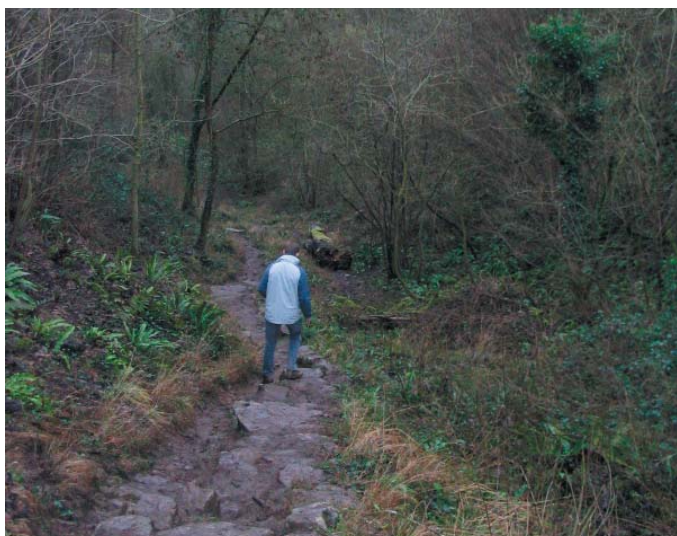
The landscape strategy for *Portbury Settled Coastal Edge* is to **conserve** the dramatic working maritime landscape while **restoring** declining and lost elements of the residual rural landscape such as the rhynes, drainage ditches, and hedgerows, which can also assist the visual relationship between this very different landscape and the surrounding rural areas.

Landscape Guidelines

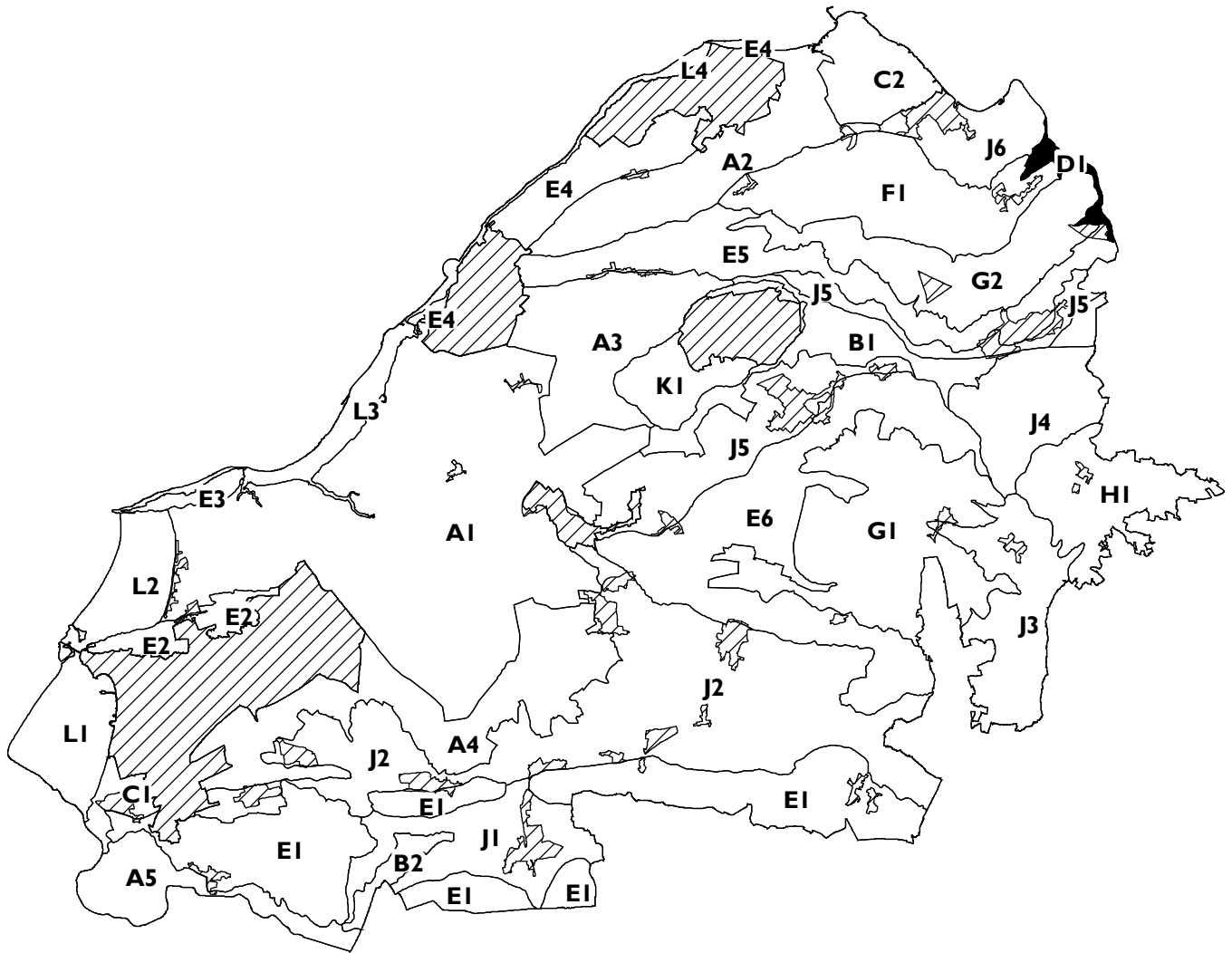
- Conserve the remaining areas of rural pastoral wetland and the marshy grassland fringing the Bristol Channel and River Avon.

- Enhance the hedgerow network (ensuring cyclical hedge cutting and nurturing new and existing hedgerow trees).
- Restoration and management of ditches and rhynes for biodiversity including regular de-silting (in sections to prevent damage to fauna).
- Promote opportunities for conversion of existing areas through changes in maintenance or creation of new areas of unimproved grassland, wetland and woodland habitats.
- Link new and existing shelterbelts and screening to form a network of woodland using native species of local provenance where possible.
- Ensure that intrusive views of the area from surrounding rural landscapes are screened.
- Encourage public viewing of the spectacular working dockland landscape from safe vantage points outside the Port fence. Retain industrial character and sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Encourage investigation and protection of the Lower Palaeolithic artefacts that may exist in the gravel deposits.

LANDSCAPE TYPE D: LIMESTONE GORGES



D: LIMESTONE GORGES



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

DI Avon Gorge

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE D: LIMESTONE GORGES

Landscape Character Areas

DI: Avon Gorge

Location and Boundaries

The Limestone Gorges Landscape Type comprise a deep ravine, with steep slopes cut through limestone. There is only one area of the Limestone Gorges Landscape Type within North Somerset and this is situated to the north east of the district along the River Avon.

Key Characteristics

- Distinctive Carboniferous Limestone gorge.
- Steep slopes creating dramatic narrow valley down to river.
- Exposed Limestone faces, with woodland where the vegetation can take hold on the steep slopes.
- Evidence of quarrying often apparent.
- Ancient woodland of oak, ash, lime, white beam and yew that is nationally significant for nature conservation.
- Views channelled along the gorge.

Physical Influences

Limestone gorges are deep narrow valleys formed by the down cutting action of a river on the underlying Limestone geology. The distinctive steep sides contrast with more gentle topography in neighbouring sections of the valley based on less resistant rock.

Historic Environment

The steep sides and valleys of the Avon Gorge are covered with ancient coppiced woodland and wood pasture. The areas of wood pasture are now associated the Iron Age fort of Stokeleigh Camp and it is possible that this form of management dates back to that time.

The coppiced woodland was worked in the medieval period and there are earthworks of medieval and post medieval settlement on the steep sides.

Biodiversity

The Avon Gorge (SAC) dominates this character area rising 100 metres from the tidal River Avon. The plant assemblages found on the rock face include a number of rare and scarce plant species including round-headed leek, Bristol rock cress, nit-grass and little robin.

Lime-maple woodland dominates the steep limestone escarpments which support endemic species of whitebeam. This woodland type is listed on the European habitats directive and the woodlands at Avon Gorge have been designated an SAC because of the high concentrations of small-leaved lime compared with other sites in the region.

The dominant species forming Avon gorge woodland are pedunculate and sessile oak with frequent ash and wych elm. Species characteristic of the ground layer include soft shield fern and hart's

tongue fern with more uncommon species such as green hellebore. Species rich dry grasslands and scrub are associated with the woodland.

Settlement Character

The steep sides of the gorge are unsettled but the influence of neighbouring urban areas is often evident. Bridges span the gorge and transport corridors use the channel cut by the river.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Dramatic changes in landform with exposed Carboniferous Limestone geology.
- Views channelled down the narrow gorge.
- Steep wooded slopes. Woodlands are of outstanding ecological value.
- Long established historic woodland management regime as coppice and wood pasture.
- Remote, untamed, wilderness character.
- Brunel's suspension bridge at Clifton.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- High volume of leisure use (e.g. walking,) may cause wear and tear to fragile habitats and historic and geological sites.
- Potential threat to woodland from lack of resources for continuing historic maintenance regimes of coppice and wood pasture.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with recreational uses and increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the rural, remote character.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Pressure to use the gorge as a major transport route increasing noise and disruption.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for the *Limestone Gorges* landscape type is of **conservation**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the sense of wilderness and the drama of emerging from the enclosed wooded slopes into the open space of the gorge itself with its views along the river, to the towering rocky slopes of the north side and to the Clifton suspension bridge.
- Encourage traditional methods of woodland management.

- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Current and future woodland management should reflect the historic practices of coppice and wood pasture.

DI: AVON GORGE

Location and Boundaries: The *Avon Gorge* character area is situated along the northeast district boundary where the River Avon has cut through a belt of limestone forming a deep narrow channel at Clifton. The area covers the southern face of the gorge up to the break of the slope at the top of the rise. The northern face falls outside the District.

Key Characteristics

- Exposed carboniferous limestone faces, with large areas of deciduous woodland on the scarp slopes creating a rugged natural environment.
- Dramatic intermittent views through the woods to the river and opposite slopes and channelled along the narrow gorge.
- Steep gorge walls create a strong sense of enclosure.
- Natural cliff exposures of Limestone of great geological interest.
- Rich ecology of lime-maple woodland with unique whitebeam species and other nationally rare plants, plus calcareous grassland and scrubland.
- Intrusive traffic noise from the transport routes on the northern face of the gorge.
- Views to and from Brunel's Clifton suspension bridge.
- Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Historic landscape comprising coppiced ancient woodland and wood pasture.

DESCRIPTION

Where the River Avon, flowing predominantly through soft Mercia Mudstone, meets belts of tougher Carboniferous Limestone and Lias it has cut a deep but narrow gorge, the south side of which forms the *Avon Gorge* character area. The steep slopes rising to over 85m AOD from the muddy edge of the Avon are covered in hanging woodland. Where the slopes become too steep for vegetation to take hold and where quarrying has taken place, bare rock is exposed forming a dramatic back drop and channelling views along the River.

Several steep cloughs cut back into the gorge side, such as Paradise Bottom and Nightingale Valley, forming natural routes for a series of wooded walks. The ancient coppice woods, forming part of Leigh Wood and Oak Wood are comprised of a wide range of species. There is also an area of overgrown wood pasture associated with the substantial earthworks of the Iron Age fort of Stokeleigh Camp. The Forestry Commission and National Trust have responsibility for the management of the woods and their use as a recreational facility. Paths are generally well maintained, reinforced sensitively in places with local limestone.

Emerging from the enclosure of the woodland into the gorge is a dramatic transition with views across the Avon met by the vertical north face of the gorge towering above. However the busy A4 road, following the channel cut by the river is noisy and disrupts this otherwise peaceful area. Also following the channel cut by the Avon is a disused railway and the towing path, which forms part of the South West Coast Path National Trail.

There is no settlement in the area. There is however, the 20th century residential area Leighwoods to the south of the area, from which the striking Clifton Suspension Bridge spans the gorge into Clifton and the city of Bristol on the ridge top. Despite the close proximity to a large urban area

the *Avon Gorge* character area retains a sense of remote wilderness which makes it a particularly valuable recreational resource.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Historic landscape of coppice woodland and wood pasture vulnerable to changes in management regime and lack of resources for ongoing maintenance.
- Volume of leisure use (e.g. walking,) may cause wear and tear to fragile habitats, historic and geological sites.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, tidal rubbish deposited on the banks of the river, signage associated with recreational uses and increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the rural, remote character.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Pressure of major transport routes increasing noise and disruption.

Character

The *Avon Gorge* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Limestone Gorges* Landscape Type, including exposed limestone faces and steep wooded slopes forming a narrow but deep valley. Views, channelled along the River Avon or intermittently glimpsed through the tree cover are dramatic, adding to the sense of wilderness and enclosure. The character of the *Avon Gorge* is considered **strong**, although noise from the A4 road on the northern side of the valley is disruptive.

Condition

The *Avon Gorge* is in **good** condition overall with active woodland management from the Forestry Commission and the National Trust. Heavy use as a recreation facility takes its toll on the paths, particularly when wet, with a danger of excessive widening due to erosion. The changing tide on the Avon dumps large quantities of rubbish on the river banks and mudflats.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Avon Gorge* is to **conserve** the sense of drama and wilderness within the wooded gorge landscape.

Landscape Guidelines

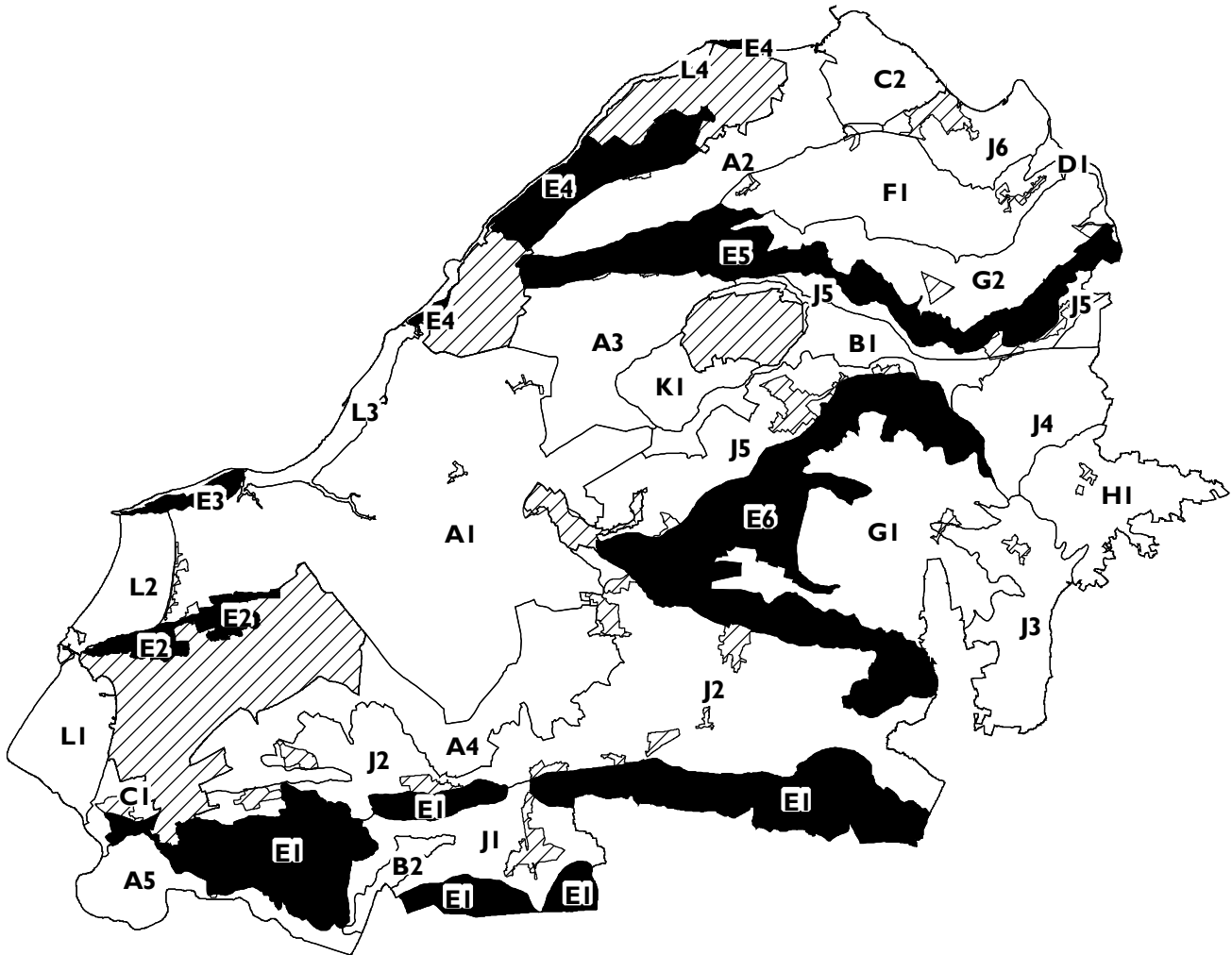
- Conserve the sense of wilderness and the drama of emerging from the wooded slopes into the open base of the gorge.
- Current and future woodland management should reflect the historic practices of coppice and wood pasture.
- Ensure frequent rubbish clearance from the banks of the Avon.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure such as signage.
- Instigate appropriate recreation management to conserve the visual integrity of the gorge and important habitats, historic and geological sites.

- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.

LANDSCAPE TYPE E: LIMESTONE RIDGES AND COMBES



E: LIMESTONE RIDGES and COMBES



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- E1 Mendip Ridge
- E2 Worlebury Ridge
- E3 Middlehope Ridge
- E4 Portishead Ridge
- E5 Tickenham Ridge
- E6 Cleeve Ridge
- ▨ Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE E: LIMESTONE RIDGES AND COMBES

Landscape Character Areas

- E1: Mendip Ridges and Combes
- E2: Worlebury Ridges and Combes
- E3: Middlehope Ridges and Combes
- E4: Portishead Ridges and Combes
- E5: Tickenham Ridges and Combes
- E6: Cleeve Ridges and Combes

Location and Boundaries

The Ridges and Combes landscape type forms the backbone and highest part of the District based on the outcrops of carboniferous limestone. Boundaries generally follow the break of slope at the base of the ridges (often marked by roadways) and similarly follow contour lines along the edge of the plateaus at the top of some of the ridges. The upstanding landform and woodland cover makes this a very visually prominent landscape type.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated ridges of Carboniferous Limestone, with lower flanks of Mercia Mudstone.
- Steep escarpment slopes forming a distinctive and visible topographic feature rising above, and creating the backdrop to, the low lying areas of the district.
- Outstanding collection of historic monuments, earthworks (hillforts) along the scarp top plus local legends associated with the gorges/cleaves.
- Wooded, with large-scale mixed and deciduous plantations plus extensive areas of ancient woodland.
- Spring line settlement concentrated along road following the foot of the escarpment ridge.
- Hidden, deep wooded combes/gorges extend into the scarp slopes providing important historic routeways, and now steep, winding rural lanes.
- Intimate, enclosed wooded landscape counterbalanced by occasional dramatic and surprising views out.
- Small limestone quarries and workings - some now used as tip sites.
- Archaeological landscapes comprise earthwork remains of later prehistoric sites.
- The field pattern is a mosaic of medieval and post medieval enclosure.

Physical Influences

The *Ridges and Combes* landscape type form much of the high ground of the District on a series of ridges running roughly east west across the area. The type is founded on the Carboniferous Limestone, a base of soft shales overlaid with hard grey limestone which gives the type its dramatic topography of steep slopes, cliffs and combes and karst features such as the sinkholes and caves at Burrington Combe. Mercia Mudstone, a younger, softer rock forms the gentler slopes at the base of the ridges. These rocks have given rise to thin limestone soils.

Historic Environment

This landscape type contains most of the later prehistoric monuments in North Somerset including fields, enclosures and five major Iron Age hill forts surviving as substantial earthworks. These features survive on the higher ridges and imply an extensively populated and organised lowland. The fort at Worlebury has the remains of outworks and possibly fields extending to the east. The string of prehistoric enclosures surviving along the north west facing slopes of E6: *Cleeve Ridges and Combes* suggest a significant population who were no doubt exploiting the lowland river valleys and *Moors* landscapes to the north west.

There are the earthwork remains of Romano British fields and settlement in the south eastern corner of this area but it is reasonable to assume that they must have extended once over a larger, if dispersed, area.

Excavation at Cadbury Congresbury Hill Fort has shown that it was reoccupied in the Post Roman period.

Much of the historic enclosure on the lower slopes is medieval with fields of this date being associated with settlements such as Christon, Wonderstone and Shiplate. Earthworks around Christon also show it to be a shrunken settlement. Some settlements, such as Norton, retain their medieval enclosure intact. No open fields survive from this time in North Somerset.

The post medieval enclosure is usually higher up the sides and occasionally includes the ridge though some of the higher areas remained unenclosed. Closer to the important medieval and post medieval city of Bristol with its international mercantile traditions and industry are the ornamental landscapes of gardens and parks associated with large, medieval houses such as Clevedon Court and the post medieval houses of Ashton Court and Tyntesfield.

Biodiversity

The *Ridges and Combes* Landscape Type is characterised by steep limestone outcrops supporting species rich unimproved calcareous grassland, often forming mosaics with scrub. Many of these sites have been designated as SSSI's. Unimproved calcareous grassland is a UK BAP priority habitat and is recognised as declining both at the county and national level. Such areas are of high ecological value supporting a particularly rich flora and fauna. Species characteristic of chalk grassland in Somerset include salad burnet, wild thyme and fairy flax while rarer species found here include white rock rose, Somerset hair-grass and honewort.

Mixed, broad-leaved and plantation woodland are a dominant feature of this type. Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, much of which is ancient, grows in patches throughout the area often connected by woodland of more recent origin. Species characteristic of ancient woodland in North Somerset include abundant pedunculate oak and ash with frequent small-leaved lime and wild service tree. Areas of particular note are King's Wood and Urchin Wood SSSI; extensive lime-maple ancient forest of European importance supporting the nationally rare purple gromwell, and Goblin Combe SSSI, a steep sided dry valley containing broad-leaved semi-natural ancient woodland, unimproved calcareous grassland and limestone heath. This site is nationally important for invertebrates (particularly butterflies) and supports the nationally scarce species limestone fern.

The geology of the area is of considerable interest with two SSSIs designated for their yellow Ochre workings (Banwell Ochre Caves SSSI) and calcite cemented Pleistocene sand and gravel (Bleadon Hill).

Settlement Character

Settlement is concentrated at the base of the ridges, often running alongside roads following the contours along the gentle Mudstone slopes. Historic villages with traditional stone buildings at their centres have expanded during the 20th century with ribbon development along roads and recent suburban type dwellings rising up the open slopes of the ridges towards the tree line. Settlement is largely absent on the steep slopes but the tops of the ridges have scattered stone farmsteads plus occasional larger suburban style development.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Dramatic topography of steep slopes and combes based on underlying Limestone geology.
- Wide and varying views from the ridges, sometimes glimpsed through woods, over valleys, moors and sea.
- Peaceful secluded woods including substantial areas of ancient woodlands.
- Geological interest with exposures in the many quarries.
- Species rich unimproved calcareous grassland.
- Stone farmsteads, drystone walls and historic village centres.
- Wealth of archaeological remains particularly late prehistoric monuments (Iron Age hill forts).

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. horse paddocks, tip sites, recreational uses) which are sometimes visually intrusive.
- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the drystone walls and open sheep pasture at the top of ridges (encroachment by scrub).
- Encroachment of development along roads and in villages, particularly rising up the open slopes at the bases of the ridges where it is highly visible from adjacent lowland areas.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful secluded character.
- Volume of leisure use (e.g. walking, climbing and potholing) may cause wear and tear to fragile habitats and geological sites.
- Level of use of rural roads leading to urbanisation e.g. lighting, kerbs and increased road markings.

- Visual impact of expansion of existing and creation of new quarries particularly in views up to the ridges from the surrounding lowlands.
- Demand for tall vertical structures (e.g. masts) which are visually prominent from lowland areas.
- Intensive agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect the archaeological remains.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Ridges and Combes* Landscape type will be one of **conservation** and **enhancement**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the peaceful and secluded nature of the wooded landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and tear by careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Maintain key local landscape features such as the drystone walls.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses such as quarrying through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management of pasture (sheep grazing) and woodland (coppice).
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be presumption against arable in areas of archaeological sites and landscapes defined by earthworks.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

EI: MENDIP RIDGES AND COMBES

Location and Boundaries: the *Mendip Ridges and Combes* is an extensive series of limestone ridges running from east to west across the southern end of the District. Boundaries are based on topography and follow contours marking the break of slope at the foot of the ridges coinciding in some areas with roadways such as the A368.

Key Characteristics

- High ridges of Carboniferous Limestone with gentler lower slopes of Mercia Mudstone.
- Steep scarp slopes clothed in broad leaved and mixed woodland forming distinctive backdrop to the surrounding low lying areas.
- Dramatic combes form routes for winding rural roads often with exposed geology of grey Limestone.
- Lower slopes under pasture in fields bounded by hedgerows.
- Open grassland plateaus at the summits of the ridges at Bleadon Hill and forming part of the Mendip upland to the east.
- Drystone walls on the high plateau with large rectangular fields of post medieval enclosure.
- Disused quarries with exposures of Limestone.
- Considerable ecological value with unimproved calcareous grassland, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, much of which is ancient, and limestone heath.
- Sparse settlement with a few scattered stone farmsteads on the plateau and lower ridges, villages centred on historic stone churches on the lower slopes following the lines of roads.
- 20th century infill and ribbon development around some villages and rising up Bleadon Hill to the west with associated conifer shelter belts.
- Rich heritage of historic landscape features particularly on the tops of the ridges notably the Bronze Age hill fort on Banwell Hill.

DESCRIPTION

The *Mendip Ridges and Combes* are a series of ridges with slightly varying characters, forming part of the Mendip Hills which continue outside the District boundary to the east and south. Within this assessment the *Mendip Ridges and Combes* landscape type consist of the northern slopes up to the main plateau of the Mendip to the east (rising from 50m to 230m AOD) plus the small ridge of Banwell Hill with summit at 118m AOD and the wider flat topped Bleadon Hill rising to 140m AOD with small outlier at Uphill to the far west. The valley of the Lox Yeo River runs between the ridges while the Bristol Channel is close by to the west of Uphill. Thus from the steep slopes and summits of the ridges there are wide views to the sea, to the *Moors*, and over the river valleys to the other limestone ridges to the north. The *Mendip Ridges and Combes* are highly rural and peaceful. There are extensive woodlands, many of them semi-natural broadleaved and ancient which, combined with the dramatic topography and occasional exposed sheer faces of limestone, give a natural, almost wild, feel to the area. The striking glimpsed views out over the wide landscape below and the

frequent presence of the wooded slopes in views up to the ridges from the lowland areas make these woodlands a key feature in the landscape of the District.

As the land rises up the ridges there are three distinctive zones with the gentle lower slopes under pasture with thick hedges surrounding regular rectangular fields, these give way to the edge of the steeper, often wooded slopes. In contrast the third zone of level, high plateau at Bleadon Hill and at the edges of the main area of the Mendip Hills are open exposed grassland used for grazing sheep and occasionally horses. Here the large rectangular fields of post-medieval enclosure, are bordered by drystone walls, some now in poor condition. Long human occupation of the ridge tops is signified by ancient earthworks.

Settlement forms a distinctive pattern, with practically none on the steep slopes, scattered stone farmsteads on the plateau and most of the settlement in villages along the spring line at the base of the slopes. Here there are major routes running around the contours of the hills, the A368 and the now disused railway. The centres of the villages form historic cores often with fine stone churches while at the edges there is more recent infill of modern brick and render, which also spreads along the roads. At Bleadon the village extends up the hillside and there are also small estates of suburban style housing at this end of the ridge. Roads vary from A roads to small rural roads, winding their way through the narrow combes. The tops of the ridges are generally inaccessible apart from footpaths, the area is well provided with these, and along with the caves and disused quarries they provide opportunities for walking, potholing and climbing.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. horse paddocks, recreational uses) which are sometimes visually intrusive through proliferation of fences and signage.
- Encroachment of development along roads and in villages such as Bleadon, where new dwellings and associated coniferous screening are highly visible from adjacent lowland areas.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the drystone walls and the grassland which is being encroached on by scrub.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful character of the area and the ambience feel of the woods.
- Volume of leisure use (e.g. walking, climbing and potholing) liable to erode fragile habitats and geological sites.
- Level of use of rural roads leading to urbanisation e.g. lighting, kerbs and increased road markings.
- Demand for tall vertical structures on the ridge tops (e.g. masts) which are visually prominent from lowland areas.
- Demand for expansion of existing and creation of new quarries with consequent visual impact particularly in views up to the ridge from the surrounding lowlands.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect the archaeological remains.

Character

The character of the *Mendip Ridges and Combes* is **strong** with many of the typical positive features of the type present including dramatic wooded steep slopes and combes, geological interest with

exposures in the many quarries, species rich grassland, stone farmsteads, drystone walls, historic village centres and ancient hilltop forts.

Condition

The *Mendip Ridges and Combes* are generally in **good** condition, with intact broad-leaved ancient woodland, rich archaeological and geological sites, pastoral farmland with full hedgerows and historic local stone villages and farmsteads. A few elements are declining, notably the drystone walls of the high ground.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Mendip Ridges and Combes* will be to **conserve** the peaceful, rural landscape with its semi-natural and ancient woodlands, open high pasture, ecologically rich grassland and heath, historic settlements and earthworks, and rural roads with limited **restoration** of those elements in decline such as the drystone walls of the plateau.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the peaceful and secluded nature of the landscape.
- Maintain and restore key local landscape features including the drystone walls while ensuring that these retain their natural, weathered appearance and subtle variations in stone reflecting localised geology.
- Guard against urbanisation of small rural roads particularly those which travel through the narrow steep combes.
- Minimise the impact of settlement edge through design guidance and selective hedgerow and woodland planting for screening.
- Minimise the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses such as tall masts, quarrying and horse paddocks through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management of pasture (grazing) and woodland (coppice).
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and tear by careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be presumption against arable in areas of archaeological sites and landscapes defined by earthworks.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

E2: WORLEBURY RIDGES AND COMBES

Location and Boundaries: The *Worlebury Ridges and Combes* forms a relatively small limestone outcrop to the north of Weston-super-Mare. The urban edge of Weston-super-Mare forms the boundary to the south with the mean high water mark and the 10m contour defining the edge of the area to the north.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated ridge of Carboniferous Limestone.
- Steep escarpment slopes rising above, and creating the backdrop to, the adjacent low lying areas of Weston-super-Mare and Sand Bay.
- Iron age Worlebury Hill Fort along the scarp.
- Wooded, with deciduous plantations and garden cultivar escapees.
- Divided into two distinct sections by the urban edge of Weston-super-Mare.
- Intimate, enclosed wooded landscape counterbalanced by occasional dramatic and surprising views out to sea, over Weston-super-Mare and neighbouring bays.
- Large golf course with associated amenity planting to the eastern end.

DESCRIPTION

The *Worlebury Ridges and Combes* is a small outcrop of Carboniferous limestone forming an elevated area rising out of an otherwise flat landscape. It is split into two distinct sub-areas with contrasting characters by encroachment over the ridge by 1960s style development on the edge of Weston-super-Mare.

The western section is completely covered by deciduous woodland plantation with some evidence of cultivated garden escapees around the southern edge, which borders the gardens of Victorian houses of Weston-super-Mare on the ridge slopes. The woods are also the site of Worlebury hill fort and its outworks, although without interpretation it could be difficult to recognise. Views are intermittent and dramatic, with glimpses out of the woodland over the expansive Weston and Sand Bays and the sea. The Victorian 'viewing road', now the old toll road that runs around the western end, encapsulates the impressive views from the ridge, with the trees on either side forming an attractive arch.

By contrast, a large golf course and associated amenity planting dominate the eastern section of the character area. There are also some bungalows and horse paddocks, highlighting the pressure on the ridge from neighbouring Weston-super-Mare. A small amount of pasture still remains. On the ridge top this is divided by drystone walls while at the base of the northern slopes near Norton there are hedgerows. The steep scarp slopes are covered in low scrubby bushes and have, in places, previously been excavated by quarrying.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Invasive garden cultivars permeating woodland.
- Heavy demand on woodland as a recreational resource and lack of public awareness could lead to damage or loss of ecological and archaeological features.

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. golf course, horse paddocks) which are sometimes visually intrusive.
- Pressure of encroachment by Weston-super-Mare.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.

Character

The enclosed woodland with dramatic views out and the historic elements has a strong sense of place. However, the encroachment of Weston-super-Mare over the ridge which effectively divides the area in two and the nondescript golf course reduces the overall strength of character to **moderate**.

Condition

The area is considered to be in **good** condition as the main body of the woodland is actively managed and the golf course is immaculately kept. There is however an opportunity to provide better facilities to visitors around the heavily used western end of the ridge.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Worlebury Ridges and Combes* is to **conserve** the intimate nature of the woodland and the dramatic views out whilst **strengthening** the rural landscape character around the golf course.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the peaceful and secluded nature of the wooded landscape and the archaeological remains of the hill fort.
- Maintain and enhance the grassland and woodland habitats including control of invasive ornamental species.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and tear by careful design of routes and infrastructure such as signage and bins.
- Maintain key local landscape features including the drystone walls.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management, in particular guarding against further expansion of settlement into the remaining open slopes and top of the ridge.

E3: MIDDLEHOPE RIDGES AND COMBES

Location and Boundaries: *Middlehope Ridges and Combes* is a prominent outcrop of limestone situated to the north of Sand Bay and forming a peninsular of raised ground adjoining the Severn Estuary. The boundaries for the area are taken as the 10m contour on the land side and Mean High Water on the marine side.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated ridge of Carboniferous Limestone forming a distinctive landmark in the surrounding lowland and giving visual enclosure and shelter to the bays to north and south.
- Remote, exposed and windswept ridge top with wide open views to sea and across the inland moors.
- Steep slopes forming near vertical cliff faces and tidal shelves on the marine facing slopes and covered in low scrubby vegetation in more sheltered areas.
- Drystone walls divide the ridge top into large fields used for rough grazing by sheep and rabbits.
- Accessible only by footpaths which are well used by leisure walkers.

DESCRIPTION

The *Middlehope Ridges and Combes* Character Area is a raised Carboniferous limestone ridge, which rises like a small island above the sea and the lowlands of the District. Accessible only by footpath the open, windswept and exposed ridge top feels very remote, a feeling amplified by the dramatic views out to sea and over the low lying areas of *A1: Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors*, and *L2: Sand Bay*.

The gently undulating ridge top is divided into large areas of rough grazing for sheep by drystone walls, which have become derelict in places. The unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland contain communities with a restricted British distribution. Rugged in nature the area is a popular draw for visitors with well-worn paths and steps leading up the steep slopes to National Trust owned land.

Low scrubby vegetation covers the sheltered steep southern slopes proving a haven for wildlife. By contrast the northern slopes are near vertical exposed limestone faces, which have formed marine shelves in places and are of great geological importance, designated a SSSI. Towards the eastern end of the area the slopes become shallower and there are large rectilinear fields of post medieval parliamentary enclosure.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Overgrazing from sheep and rabbits could reduce biodiversity and damage the calcareous grassland.
- Coastal erosion may affect the geological interest of the northern side of the ridge.
- Increasing numbers of visitors could put a strain on the landscape and the limited infrastructure.
- Demand for tall vertical structures (e.g. masts,) that would be visually prominent on the raised landform.

- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect the archaeological remains.

Character

Middlehope Ridges and Combes lacks the wooded scarp slopes of the other Character Areas in the *Limestone Ridges and Combes* Landscape Type but its open windswept plateau is closely akin to the top of Bleadon Hill and the Mendip Hills. The rugged and exposed nature of the ridge top and the coastal cliffs creates an evocative sense of place and **strong** character.

Condition

Middlehope Ridges and Combes Character Area is generally considered to be in **good** condition. There are some signs of wear to the footpaths and the drystone walls but the slightly unkempt state of the walls in particular is in keeping with the remote and rugged character of the area.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Middlehope Ridges and Combes* is to **conserve** the open and exposed ridge top of sheep grazed pasture bound by drystone walls and the rugged coastline with its Limestone features.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rugged and exposed nature of the ridge top.
- Promote sensitive management of the area through grazing to maintain the calcareous grassland and the archaeological remains.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and tear by careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Sensitive maintenance of key local landscape features including such as the drystone walls and the marine shelves.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management by grazing.

E4: PORTISHEAD RIDGES AND COMBES

Location and Boundaries: *Portishead Ridges and Combes* is a prominent outcrop of limestone and sandstone forming the coastal edge between Portishead and Clevedon. The boundaries have been determined by the topography of the area with the west defined by Mean High Water and the east by the break of slope at the base of the ridge, which has been taken as the line of the B3124. The ridge continues to north and south into the urban areas of Portishead and Clevedon and two small isolated fragments of the character area are sited at the far ends of these towns.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated ridge of Carboniferous Limestone and Old Red Sandstone with lower slopes of Mercia Mudstone.
- Extensive views over the Gordano Valley inland and to the Bristol Channel, Wales and the Severn Bridge to the west.
- Steep wooded slope of the ridge forms the backdrop to the Gordano valley to the south east.
- Extensive woodland on southeast facing slope and scarp top, semi-natural broadleaved and some ancient, with coniferous woodland on Sandstone area to northwest.
- Largely unsettled with a few scattered farms, historic manors, small villages at foot of slope plus seaside bungalows and caravans along the cliff side.
- Historic sites on the scarp top including Iron Age hill forts, castle and church.
- Proximity of Portishead and Clevedon visually prominent in sometimes abrupt urban edges and also in leisure and institutional land use.
- Roads skirt the edge of the ridge with little access to the high ground of the central ridge apart from footpaths.
- Disused Limestone quarries, including Black Rock Quarry now used as municipal tip.

DESCRIPTION

The *Portishead Ridges and Combes* is a ridge of fluctuating width and height (rising from Mean High Water to 105m AOD) which runs south west to north east beside the Bristol Channel. The underlying geology of parallel bands of Limestone and Old Red Sandstone, with lower slopes of the Mercia Mudstone group is reflected in the undulating topography of the summit of the ridge and in the varying land cover with deciduous woodland, remnant parkland and pasture mainly on the south east facing slope of Carboniferous Limestone and open downland and coniferous vegetation on the Old Red Sandstone on the seaward side. This latter stone has been used for traditional buildings for instance at Walton in Gordano.

On the inland Limestone section of the ridge there are wooded upper slopes, some of ancient woodland, with one section Weston Big Wood, a deciduous woodland likely to be a remnant of ancient forest, of particularly rich ecology with pedunculate oak, ash, small leaved lime, wild service tree and rare whitebeam species. The lower slopes are pastoral with cattle grazing and hedgerows and hedgerow trees of varying completeness and frequency. Small villages are sited along the spring line such as Walton in Gordano, and close to here there are remnant parkland trees. On the summit of the ridge are historic sites, including the 17th century Walton Castle and remains of prehistoric enclosures and fields.

The side of the ridge facing the sea has a contrasting character with a steep slope ending in cliffs with an expansive view of the Bristol Channel. Seaside buildings such as a signal station and small steep encampments of caravans and bungalows are characteristic features. Precipitous private roads and footpaths lead down to the secluded coves of the adjoining area *L4 Clevedon-Portishead Bays*. The low, warm red coloured cliffs along this stretch of coast include notable exposures of the Dolomite Conglomerate of the Mercia Mudstone group. The leisurely seaside ambience is reinforced by the golf course to the south with its vivid greens and coniferous shelter belts.

Large sections of the area on the seaward side of the ridge are given over to grassland such as Weston Down, Portishead Down and Fore Hill, areas of semi-improved neutral grassland with scrub. There are also arable fields with low, flailed hedgerows with few hedgerow trees and some fences.

The two small fragments of the ridge isolated by urban areas to north and south continue the themes of leisure use, historic sites and deciduous woodland. East Wood to the north beyond Portishead is a steep wooded Limestone ridge with views out over the Bristol Channel and the town. To the far south West End is an area of elevated downland with woodland, semi-natural grassland and scrub crowned by an Iron Age camp Wain's Hill Fort and, to the north (on Church Hill) by the late Norman St Andrew's Church.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Encroachment of development along roads and in villages, particularly rising up the open slopes at the bases of the ridges where it is highly visible from adjacent lowland areas.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges of Portishead and Clevedon and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Volume of leisure use may cause wear and tear to fragile habitats and geological sites.
- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. caravan parks, tip sites, recreational uses, quarrying) which are sometimes visually intrusive.
- Demand for tall vertical structures (e.g. masts) which are visually prominent from lowland areas.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect the archaeological remains.

Character

Portishead Ridges and Combes is a more varied area than others in the *Ridges and Combes* Landscape Type. It exhibits many of the positive characteristics of the type with its ancient semi-natural woodlands, ridge top historic sites, wide views, pastoral lower slopes and historic stone villages however the adjacent urban areas have considerable influence on its character through the mixed land use and visual influence of the urban edge. The overall character of the area is considered to be **moderate**.

Condition

The condition of *Portishead Ridges and Combes* is showing signs of deterioration, for instance in the variable state of the hedgerows, the invasion by scrub of open downland areas, and the wear and tear caused by heavy use of footpaths close to urban areas, so that the overall condition is judged as **declining**.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Portishead Ridges and Combes* is to **conserve** the elements of strong character, the woodland, open grassland and pasture, the ancient hilltop sites and stone built settlement while **enhancing** area of declining condition and weaker character such as the urban edges and the gappy hedgerows.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the peaceful and secluded nature of the wooded landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows and nurture new and existing hedgerow trees.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and tear by careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses (such as caravan parks and quarries) through design guidance and appropriate land management (e.g. planting hedgerows and woodland for screening).
- Encourage traditional methods of land management, e.g. coppice (woodlands) and grazing (pasture).
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be presumption against arable in areas of archaeological sites and landscapes defined by earthworks.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

E5: TICKENHAM RIDGES AND COMBES

Location and Boundaries: *Tickenham Ridges and Combes* is an extended area running east west across the northern section of the District between Bristol and Clevedon. It forms a steep slope up to the substantial area of high ground to the south of Bristol. The boundaries are determined by the topography and land use and follow the break of slope at the foot of the ridge marked by the 50m contour to south east and the B3130 road to the south west. The northern boundary is the top of the steep rise of the ridge, largely following the 120m contour line.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated ridges of Carboniferous Limestone and Mercia Mudstone.
- Steep slopes forming a distinctive backdrop to the Land Yeo and Kenn Valleys and moors to the south.
- Intricate enclosed wooded slopes with contrasting wide views out to the open lowlands.
- Extensive areas of ancient broad-leaved woodland.
- Historic parklands with woodlands and parkland trees including ancient oak pollards at Ashton Court.
- Settlement concentrated along roads following the foot of the escarpment ridge with some suburban interfill and ribbon development.
- Hidden combes with steep, winding rural lanes.
- Historic monuments and earthworks along the scarp top.
- Small limestone quarries and workings - some now used as tip sites.

DESCRIPTION

Tickenham Ridges and Combes is a long narrow ridge area of land rising from between 20m and 50m AOD to 120m AOD. It is based on Carboniferous Limestone but with extensive sections of the later Mercia Mudstone group plus limited areas of Head gravel to the east and an outcrop of the Coal Measures to the north west where the land slopes down to the Gordano Valley. The area is largely peaceful and secluded with extensive areas of woodland (much of it ancient) and parkland forming elements in large historic estates (Ashton Court, Tyntesfield, Clevedon Court) complete with substantial mansions commanding views of the valleys south. Stone walls, lodges, carriage drives, avenues and parkland trees including pollarded oaks are key landscape features. Alongside the parkland on this south facing slope are areas of farmland with scattered stone farmsteads and field patterns of medieval enclosure.

Settlements are located at the base of the south facing ridge with the urban area of Long Ashton to the east, presenting a sometimes suburban style edge of 20th century infill to the rising slope. To the west is a long ribbon of development along the B3130 at Tickenham. This is a solid band of mainly 20th century render and brick dwellings facing the road and in some places rising up the hill to the edge of the woodland creating the impression of a more urban character. To the far west the *Tickenham Ridges and Combes* ends at the edge of Clevedon and here the dramatic rising wooded ridge provides a scenic setting for the outskirts of the town, acknowledged in the local name of Swiss Valley.

The top of the ridge is crowned by earthworks including the Iron Age Cadbury Camp and there are a number of disused quarries fringing the slopes.

The roads in this area vary widely with steep rural lanes climbing the combes, minor and B roads following the contour line at the base of the ridge and finally to the west, the M5 motorway cutting a swathe through the woodland and ridge top at Tickenham Hill.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the estate stone walls.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful secluded character particularly of the woodland and parkland.
- Volume of leisure use from nearby Bristol may cause wear and tear to fragile historic sites, ecologically valuable habitats and geological sites.
- Level of use of rural roads leading to urbanisation e.g. lighting, kerbs and increased road markings with the steep winding roads rising up the combes particularly sensitive.
- Encroachment of development along roads and in villages for instance at Tickenham, and particularly rising up the open slopes at the bases of the ridge where it is highly visible from adjacent lowland areas.
- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. recreational use, horse paddocks, tip sites. quarrying) which are sometimes visually intrusive.
- Demand for tall vertical structures (e.g. masts) which are visually prominent from lowland areas.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect the archaeological remains.

Character

The *Tickenham Ridges and Combes* Character Area has a **strong** character with large areas of secluded woodland, parkland and pastoral farmland, with special characteristics from the many historic estates including stone walls and lodges and parkland trees and avenues. Detracting from the character are suburban style developments along roads and rising up the ridge.

Condition

Condition of the landscape in the area is generally **good** with well maintained estates, farmland and woodland. A few elements of the historic estates show signs of neglect, e.g. management of the stone walls.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Tickenham Ridges and Combes* is of **conservation** of the woodland, parkland and pasture, with limited areas of restoration and enhancement where elements have been lost or are failing.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the peaceful and secluded nature of the wooded landscape.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and tear by careful design of routes and infrastructure.

- Maintain key local landscape features including the estate walls, lodges, parkland trees and avenues.
- Seek appropriate management of marginal non-agricultural land use such as horse paddocks.
- Conserve the rural character of the winding lanes and limit upgrading by widening, kerbing.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be presumption against arable in areas of archaeological sites and landscapes defined by earthworks.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks consider light grazing management.

E6: CLEEVE RIDGES AND COMBES

Location and Boundaries: The *Cleeve Ridges and Combes* Character Area is situated towards the east of the District and forms an 'L' shaped ridge rising from *Rolling Valley Farmland* up to a flat plateau. The 50m contour and the roads along the base of the ridge and the break of the slope along the 150m contour and the tree line determine the boundaries.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated ridges of Carboniferous Limestone, with lower flanks of Mercia Mudstone.
- Steep escarpment slopes form a distinctive feature rising above, and creating the backdrop to, the low lying moors and valleys.
- Wooded, with large-scale mixed and deciduous plantations plus extensive areas of ancient woodland.
- Hidden, deep wooded combes/gorges extend into the scarp slopes providing important historic routeways, and now steep, winding rural lanes.
- Intimate, enclosed wooded landscape counterbalanced by occasional dramatic and surprising views out.
- Small limestone quarries and workings.
- Largely inaccessible with only a few rural roads winding through combes up the ridge
- Areas of prehistoric enclosure including an Iron Age hill fort at Cadbury Congresbury.

DESCRIPTION

The *Cleeve Ridges and Combes* forms a broad 'L' shaped ridge that wraps around an elevated plateau at 150m AOD. The underlying Carboniferous limestone geology that forms the ridge is flanked by Mercia Mudstone. Numerous Mudstone veins creeping into the limestone have been eroded forming dramatic combes with recognised geological and ecological importance, such as at Goblin Combe.

A large expanse of semi-natural broadleaved woodland (much of it ancient) covers the majority of the area, creating an intimate environment with occasional wide views out over the surrounding lowland areas of the moors, valleys and to the distant Bristol Channel. The woods are ecologically important with numerous sites protected at local and national levels. The woodlands are also managed commercially for logging and recreational activities such as 'paintballing'. Access to the woodland is largely limited to footpaths and steep rural roads rising up the shady wooded combes, here there are rough rocky limestone exposures of natural cliffs or disused quarries and, as the roads reach the summit of the ridge, a sense of elevation and openness in contrast to the enclosed narrow winding combes.

This contrast between the wooded combes and the wide view from the top of the ridge is well expressed by Coleridge in his poem *Lines composed while climbing the left ascent of Brockley Coomb, Somersetshire, May 1795*:

*From the deep fissures of the naked rock
The Yew-tree bursts! Beneath its dark green boughs
(Mid which the May-thorn blends its blossoms white)
Where broad smooth stones jut out in mossy seats,
I rest: - and now have gain'd the topmost site.
Ah! What a luxury of landscape meets*

*My gaze! Proud towers, and cots more dear to me,
Elm-shadow'd fields, and prospect-bounding Sea!*

The lower slopes of the ridge are historically interesting, with a string of prehistoric enclosures surviving along the NW facing slopes including the Iron Age hill fort of Cadbury Congresbury. There is also pasture founded on a medieval enclosure pattern on the north and southern fringes of the ridge along with grazed parkland around Cleeve Court.

Settlement is limited to the periphery of the area, primarily along the A370 and a minor rural road along the south of the area, forming a line of almost continuous ribbon of development linking several villages; from Flax Bourton in the north through Farleigh, Brockley, Cleeve to Congresbury on the A370 and around to Iwood, Udley and Wrington along the southern boundary. The style of the development varies widely from modern buildings with an urban character along the main road to traditional white rendered cottages in the combes and along the few narrow winding roads that scale the ridge. The limited vehicular access to the area adds to the remote peaceful nature of the area.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. recreational uses such as paintballing) which are sometimes visually intrusive.
- Encroachment of development along roads and in villages, particularly along the base of the ridge at Cleeve and Backwell, and rising up the open slopes where it is highly visible from adjacent lowland areas.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful secluded character.
- Volume of leisure use (e.g. walking, climbing and potholing) may cause wear and tear to fragile habitats and important geological sites.
- Visual impact of expansion of existing and creation of new quarries particularly in views up to the ridges from the surrounding lowlands.
- Increased level of use of the rural roads due to access for commercial and recreational activities leading to urbanisation e.g. lighting, kerbs and increased road markings.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect the archaeological remains.

Character

Cleeve Ridges and Combes exhibits positive characteristics typical of the *Ridges and Combes Landscape Type* with its dramatic landform and large extent of mixed (and largely ancient) woodland dominating the upper slopes with areas of pasture and prehistoric remains on the lower slopes. This area is considered to have a **strong** character.

Condition

Overall, the condition of *Cleeve Ridges and Combes* is considered to be **good** with important ecological, archaeological and geological sites adding to the richness of the area.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Cleeve Ridges and Combes* is to **conserve** the peaceful and remote character of the area and its rich ecological, archaeological and geological heritage.

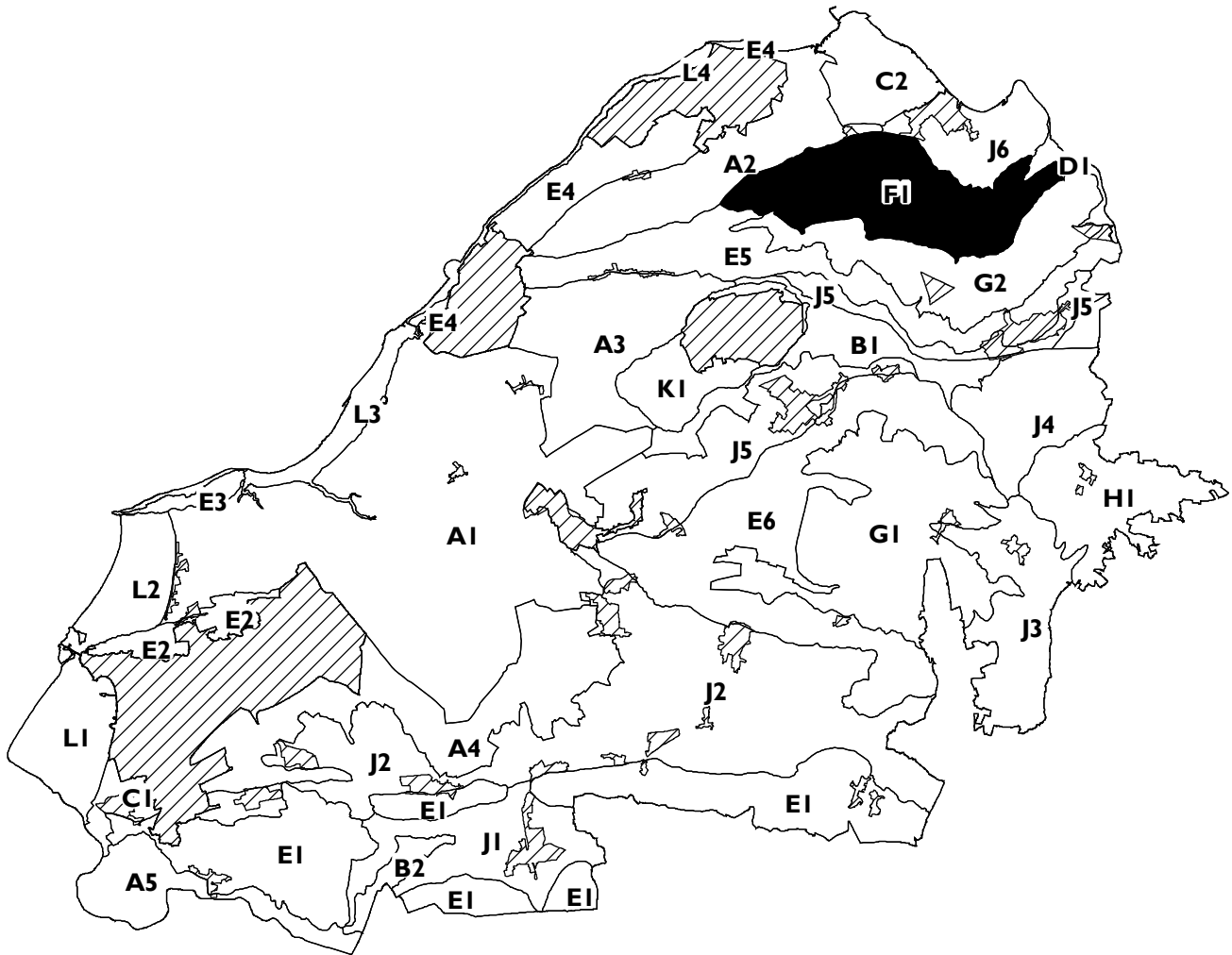
Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the peaceful and secluded nature of the wooded landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and tear by careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses such as quarrying through design guidance and appropriate land management, for instance limiting the expansion of settlement up the lower slopes of the ridge and planting hedgerows and woodland for screening.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management of woodland (coppice) and pasture (sheep grazing).
- Encourage traditional methods of woodland management including coppicing.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be presumption against arable in areas of archaeological sites and landscapes defined by earthworks.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

LANDSCAPE TYPE F: SANDSTONE UPLANDS



F: SANDSTONE UPLANDS



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

F1 Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE F: SANDSTONE UPLANDS

Landscape Character Areas

FI: Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands

Location and Boundaries

The Sandstone Uplands Landscape Type comprises one area located to the north east of the District based on an outcrop of Old Red Sandstone extending from the western edge of Bristol to Clapton in Gordano. The boundaries follow contour lines marking the change in topography distinguishing this elevated rolling area from the lowland (A2) to the north and the level high limestone plateau (G2) to the south.

Key Characteristics

- Upstanding outcrop of Old Red Sandstone – the oldest rock in the district (Devonian).
- Elevated undulating landform with wooded, rural and pastoral character despite proximity to Bristol and the industrial landscapes of the estuary.
- Distinctive pine clumps and plantations, with larger mixed and deciduous woodland blocks and wooded parkland.
- Concentration of historic parkland exploiting the dramatic location and long distance views.
- Land is largely in pasture with some remnant areas of acid grassland.
- Deep sunken lanes cut across the contours creating an intimate, enclosed character contrasting with the open long-distance views from the higher areas.
- Small dispersed settlements – villages and hamlets of characteristic red stone varying from pink to deep red in colour.
- Historic landscape a good example of medieval countryside.

Physical Influences

The *Sandstone Uplands* landscape type is rolling upland, based on an outcrop of the Old Red Sandstone of the Devonian period with lower slopes of Mercia Mudstone and limited areas of the Coal Measures and Limestone of the Carboniferous period. A number of springs arise in the area and deeply incised narrow wooded valleys lead down the slope to the low land bordering the River Avon.

Historic Environment

The surviving landscape is essentially medieval and was clearly a productive area at this time. The place names, such as Abbots Leigh and Prior's Wood, suggest either control or ownership of the Church. The enclosures date from this period, at least, and the dispersed farms are characteristic of this type of medieval landscape including at the western end a moated site with extensive earthworks. The extensive woodland is also a relict of the medieval landscape and the area known as Old Park may date from this time. Much of the apparent medieval prosperity of this area may have been related to the increasing demands of a growing medieval city (Bristol).

During the post medieval period Old Park was enclosed as were other areas of ornamental parkland at Leigh Court and Charlton.

Biodiversity

The Sandstone Uplands are characterised by extensive areas of broad-leaved, mixed and plantation woodland over rolling hills. Significant areas of this are ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland; of particular note is Priors Wood and Birch Wood, covering a wide area of both steep hillside and river gorge. These ancient woodlands have been designated SNCI's for the diverse woody and floral species they comprise.

The wooded areas are linked by predominantly improved pasture, although small areas of unimproved calcareous, neutral and acid grassland still survive throughout the type. These areas are of local importance, located within a largely agriculturally improved landscape and such habitats support a variety of flora and fauna.

Settlement Character

Settlement is in the form of scattered farmsteads with a few villages to the margins of the area on the lower slopes. Many of the older buildings are constructed of the red sandstone with churches and historic manor houses forming distinctive landmarks. A variety of materials are used in the more modern buildings on the fringes of the settlements.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Mix of pasture and woodland giving a varied rural landscape.
- Rolling highland topography allowing intermittent views.
- Complex views through woodland blocks and belts.
- Winding rural lanes follow combe valleys.
- Red sandstone historic buildings particularly churches and manor houses.
- Springs and streams some with waterfalls running through wooded valleys.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Encroachment of development at the edges of the villages and pressures relating to proximity to Bristol.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the drystone walls and historic woodlands.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or impacting on the rural, peaceful character.
- Pressures for masts and other tall structures.
- Pressures for non-agricultural land uses, notably horse and pony paddocks.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The overall landscape strategy for the *Sandstone Uplands* Landscape type is for **conservation**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rural nature of the pastoral and wooded landscape.
- Maintain key local landscape features including the distinctive drystone walls and woodland blocks.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- The area should be managed as a complete unit of historic landscape and not as unconnected, individual medieval sites.
- Management of the woodlands should recognise their value as artefacts and should reflect their ancient pattern of management type.
- Encourage appropriate management of horse and pony paddocks (e.g. minimise erection of hard boundaries and temporary structures).

FI: ABBOTS LEIGH SANDSTONE UPLANDS

Location and Boundaries: *Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands* is located at the north east of the District, its boundaries determined by the sandstone geology and land form. To the north are two lowland areas and here the boundary follows the 50m contour line at the base of the slope down to the *Rolling Valley Farmland* and the 20m contour and Caswell Lane skirting the edge of *Clapton Moor*. To the south the boundary largely follows the 120m contour as the landform changes from the rolling Sandstone topography to the more level Limestone plateau.

Key Characteristics

- Upland area of Old Red Sandstone, with Mercia Mudstone on the northern slope, Carboniferous Limestone at southern margin and Coal Measures at the western end.
- Elevated rolling landform at up to 130m AOD with steep slope north giving dramatic views out across the Severn Estuary Channel and South Wales.
- Close proximity and views to the urban edge of Bristol and the industrial port landscape of Avonmouth creating an urban–rural contrast.
- Wooded landscape with conifer blocks, ancient broadleaved woodlands, mixed plantations and hedgerow trees.
- Historic parkland at Abbots Leigh.
- Pastoral land use with horses and sheep grazing.
- Grassland of ecological interest varying from acid and neutral with underlying geology.
- Irregular, medium scale field pattern bound by full hedges and by drystone walls, some out of repair.
- Dispersed farmsteads and villages with traditional buildings of red sandstone.
- Historic landscape a good example of medieval countryside.

DESCRIPTION

Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands is an undulating upland area which slopes down to the north giving wide views out over the Bristol Channel and the urban areas of Bristol, which contrast with the highly rural, peaceful ambience of the area itself. Chiefly pasture (grazed by horses and sheep) and woodland, this is an intricate semi-enclosed landscape of rolling hills and valleys intermixed with sinuous woodland blocks and belts many with distinctive tall conifers such as larch and pine.

Irregular medium scale fields of medieval enclosure are bounded by tall, full hedgerows (including elm and holly), some with hedgerow trees. Elsewhere there are stone walls, probably associated with parkland and some of these are falling into disrepair. Surviving amongst the pasture are areas of unimproved grassland, varying with the underlying geology from neutral and acid around Lower Failands to calcareous over the Coal Measures to the west.

There are various areas of historic parkland particularly to the east, associated with Leigh Court and at Old Park while at the western end of the area there is an older moated site and earthworks. Ancient woodlands such as Prior's Wood, Old Park Wood and Leigh Wood are frequent in the area, and these are easily accessible for walkers by a network of footpaths, some following the course of the steep combe valleys. Springs, small farm ponds, streams and brooks are a feature of the area with waterfalls at Leigh Wood.

Settlement in the *Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands* takes the form of scattered farmsteads, the small nucleated villages of Failand and Clapton in Gordano and a few villages on the lower ground at the edge of the area all linked by winding rural roads. Red sandstone buildings include churches, farmsteads and the older buildings in the village centres with the warm pink stone highlighted by contrast with the sombre foliage of Scots pine and yew. On the edge of the villages are less distinctive modern brick and render dwellings. The influence of Bristol is felt not only in views to the docks and built up areas but through the less agricultural character of this area manifested in the frequent use of land for horse grazing (including a private racecourse at Racecourse Farm) and the large proportion of historic parkland.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Encroachment of development at the edges of the villages.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the drystone walls and historic woodlands.
- Pressure on rural roads for widening and kerbs.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses on the rural, peaceful character.
- Pressure for non-agricultural land uses notably horse and pony paddocks.

Character

The character of the *Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands* is **strong**, with an intact, distinctive landscape of rolling pasture, semi-enclosed by coniferous and mixed woodland, with full hedgerows and hedgerow trees, sandstone villages and farmsteads reached by winding rural roads.

Condition

The condition of the area is **good** with well maintained woodland, pasture and parkland. A few elements are locally declining such as the drystone walls while elements such as the isolated areas of unimproved grassland offer opportunities for enhancement through extending and linking habitats of nature conservation value.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands* is to **conserve** this rural, peaceful area with its characteristic coniferous planting, ancient woodland, pasture with intact hedgerows and hedgerow trees, drystone walls, ecologically rich grassland and historic farmsteads and villages of richly coloured sandstone.

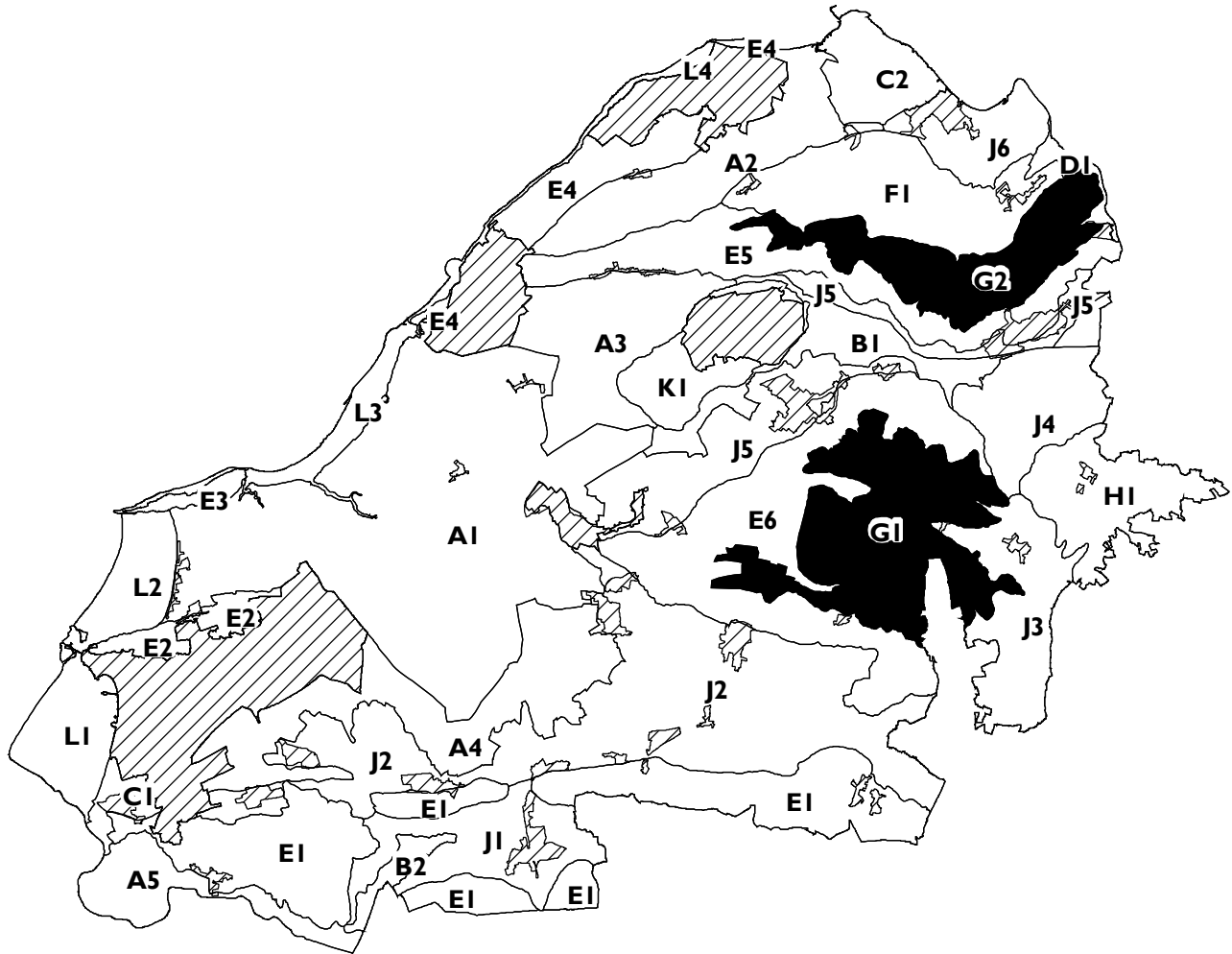
Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the peaceful, rural character of the area.
- Maintain key local landscape features including the distinctive drystone walls and woodland blocks; management of the woodlands should recognise their value as artefacts and should reflect their ancient pattern of management type.
- Promote opportunities for creating areas of unimproved grassland to link with existing sites such as Bristol and Clifton golf course and Conygar Hill.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management including coppice (woodland) and grazing by sheep (pasture).
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- Conserve the discrete small scale, nucleated form of the settlements and traditional built character.
- Maintain open views to the church towers and spires which form landmark features.
- Conserve the rural character of the winding lanes and tracks and modest bridges and limit upgrading by widening, kerbing.
- The area should be managed as a complete unit of historic landscape and not as unconnected, individual medieval sites.
- Encourage appropriate management of horse and pony paddocks (e.g. minimise erection of hard boundaries and temporary structures).

LANDSCAPE TYPE G: SETTLED LIMESTONE PLATEAU



G: SETTLED LIMESTONE PLATEAU



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

G1 Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau

G2 Failand Settled Limestone Plateau

 **Settlement**

LANDSCAPE TYPE G: SETTLED LIMESTONE PLATEAU

Landscape Character Areas

G1: Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau

G2: Failand Settled Limestone Plateau

Location and Boundaries

There are two areas of Settled Limestone Plateau and these are located to the north and east of the District. These level areas lie above the Limestone Ridges and Combes character areas with the boundaries following the tree line or contour line at the top of the ridge. The other boundaries correspond to a change in landform and geology to areas of rolling topography and the boundaries follow the change in landform.

Key Characteristics

- Flat topped elevated broad plateau extending from the summits of the limestone escarpments.
- Underlying Carboniferous Limestone geology.
- Open, exposed landscape with distant views to lowland and ridges.
- Mixed woodland belts and clumps including areas of ancient woodland.
- Parkland and plantations of historic estates.
- Large rectilinear fields enclosed by low hedges.
- Mixed grazing (cattle and horses) and arable agricultural land use.
- Non-agricultural land use such as the airport, playing fields, golf courses and country clubs show the influence of Bristol.
- Scattered stone farmsteads plus some housing along roads and buildings associated with the airport, playing fields and leisure uses.
- Presence of mineral extraction both working and disused quarries and “gruffy” ground.
- The historic landscape is dominated by medieval enclosure with post medieval enclosure on the plateau.

Physical Influences

The *Settled Limestone Plateau* landscape type is level or gently shelving high ground (at around 120m to 180m AOD based on Carboniferous Limestone).

Historic Environment

The dominant enclosure type in this area is medieval with nucleated settlements and dispersed farms. The higher plateaus probably functioned as unenclosed common during this time but only Felton Common survives as an example. The coppiced woodlands on the edge of the gorge supplied fuel to St Augustines in Bristol.

During the post medieval period most of the plateau commons were enclosed and a solitary associated windmill tower survives east of Bristol Airport. Mineral extraction, especially mining, along the Failand Ridge was extensive and large areas of “gruffy” ground survive within the historic landscape and in some cases pre-dates the post medieval enclosure.

The extensive parkland of Ashton Court bears testimony to the industrial and mercantile affluence of post medieval Bristol.

The World War II airfield of Lulsgate Bottom retains some of its ancillary buildings but the site has subsequently been developed into Bristol International Airport.

Biodiversity

The *Settled Limestone Plateau* Landscape Type is characterised by an open landscape of improved grassland and arable land with a mosaic of numerous small woodlands (broad-leaved, mixed and plantation). Several of these woodlands (or sections of larger woods) are ancient, being particularly species rich in both woody and floral species. Small areas of unimproved neutral grassland and unimproved calcareous grassland are found alongside woodland blocks, many of which have been designated SNCI's.

Parkland is a notable feature of this type. The Ashton Court SSSI consists of parkland and woodland which support nationally scarce species of saproxylic invertebrates benefiting from the ancient oak pollards found there.

Settlement Character

The settlement pattern is mixed in this landscape type with scattered farms throughout, a few compact villages and buildings associated with industrial and leisure uses. Farmsteads and some village centres are built of stone with tiled roofs but there is a preponderance of modern structures such as the airport buildings, hotels and playing field changing rooms which are often built of brick and are utilitarian in design.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Wide open views to surrounding lowland areas.
- Frequent woodland belts and clumps plus areas of ancient woodland associated with small areas of grassland of ecological value.
- Historic parkland with parkland trees and plantations.
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pastoral areas with cattle grazing.
- Scattered stone farmsteads.
- Archaeological remains from hill top barrows to “gruffy” ground.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for further diversification of land uses (e.g. recreational uses such as playing fields and golf courses, horse paddocks) which are already visually dominant in large areas of the type.

- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of the hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Encroachment of development along rural roads and around villages.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the woodland blocks and hedgerows and in particular the ancient and coppice woodland.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage and lighting associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the rural character.
- Visual impact of expansion of existing and creation of new quarries.
- Lack of information on the extant remains of historic mining activity may lead to loss of these areas without assessing their archaeological significance.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Settled Limestone Plateau* Landscape type will be one of **conservation** and **enhancement**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Strengthen the rural nature of the wooded and pastoral landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows.
- Maintain key local landscape features such as the mixed woodland belts and blocks; management of the woodlands should recognise their value as artefacts and should reflect their ancient pattern of management type.
- Minimise the impact of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- The areas of historic mining activity need to be mapped to assess their distribution and age.

GI: BROADFIELD DOWN SETTLED LIMESTONE PLATEAU

Location and Boundaries: *Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau* forms an area of relatively flat upland, following the change in topography at the top of F6: *Cleeve Ridge* to the north, west and south, and K3: *Chew Rolling Valley Farmland* to the east. Boundaries largely follow the tree line to the west and the 150m contour to the east.

Key Characteristics

- Flat to gently undulating elevated broad plateau extending from the summits of the limestone escarpments.
- Underlying Carboniferous Limestone geology.
- Open and exposed landscape with distant views to lowland and wooded ridges.
- Mixed and coniferous plantation woodland belts and clumps (some of ancient woodland), the most substantial of which are to the north of the area.
- Remnant areas of grasslands of ecological value such as the unimproved calcareous and acid grassland at Felton Common.
- Large rectilinear fields enclosed by low hedges.
- Bristol International Airport and the associated modern terminal buildings and infrastructure, particularly prominent along the A38, dominate the central section of the area.
- Settlement is limited to isolated farmsteads, nucleated villages and, along the A38, development of a more urban character.
- Fairly inaccessible away from the A38, with few rural roads crossing the area. Near to the airport increased signage and road markings give the small roads a more urban feel.
- Increased lighting at the airport impact on rural character and night skies.
- Several working quarries.

DESCRIPTION

Bristol International Airport, developed from a Second World War airfield, has a profound influence on the character of *Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau*. Dominating the flat central plateau, the runway and taxiways create a wide and exposed bleak area. By contrast, activity around the modern steel and glass terminal buildings of the airport is intense, with a proliferation of car parking, roundabouts, fencing, signage, lighting and noise having a noticeable urbanising effect on the village of Lulgate Bottom.

From the upland plateau, on which the airport sits, the landform slopes gently away with views to the lowlands and distant wooded ridges. Large rectilinear fields typical of parliamentary enclosure segment the pastoral landscape, divided by low scrubby hedgerows.

Elsewhere, particularly to the north, west and far south, the area becomes more rural and remote. The regimented field pattern is broken down to a sinuous and irregular medieval enclosure with increased tree cover in the form of clumps and belts of mix woodland and coniferous plantation.

Rural roads provide the only access, with a large proportion of the area inaccessible, bar tracks to isolated farmsteads.

Other influences on the character of the area include the arterial A38, which bisects the area from north to south. It provides the main route from Bristol to the Airport and has numerous groups of houses along its length. Settlement is also concentrated at Felton, a relatively large village with post war housing on the periphery, which lends its name to the large area of ancient unenclosed common land to the south. Quarrying has also had an influence on the area with a number of workings to the north of the area.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of the hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the mixed woodland blocks and hedgerows and the ancient woodlands.
- Encroachment of development along rural roads and around villages.
- Proliferation of development associated with the airport, including buildings, infrastructure, signage and lighting.
- Visual impact of expansion of existing and creation of new quarries.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage and lighting associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the rural character.

Character

The character *Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau* is disrupted by the presence of the airport and its associated infrastructure. Although the area exhibits a number of the key characteristics of the *Settled Limestone Plateau* Landscape Type, there is a lack of any unity or distinct pattern of features giving the area a **moderate** strength of character.

Condition

The condition of the *Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau* Character Area is judged as **declining** due to the poor management of the field boundaries and the effects of the pressure on the area from airport infrastructure.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau* is to **conserve** the existing positive features such as the blocks of woodland and to **enhance** the rural pastoral nature of the area by improving management of the hedgerow network and by careful design and management of the airport infrastructure such as signage and fencing.

Landscape Guidelines

- Strengthen the rural nature of the wooded and pastoral landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows.
- Maintain key local landscape features such as the ancient woodland blocks.

- Promote opportunities for creating new and linking existing areas of unimproved grassland habitats.
- Minimise the impact of visually intrusive land uses such as quarrying and the airport, associated development and infrastructure through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.

G2: FAILAND SETTLED LIMESTONE PLATEAU

Location and Boundaries: *Failand Settled Limestone Plateau* is located to the north east of the District. The boundaries are based on the topography of the area with the boundary to the south following the contours at the top of the adjoining steep ridge at around 100m to 130m AOD and the boundary to the north following the contours around the rise to the more undulating ground of *Fl Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands* at around 125m AOD.

Key Characteristics

- Level upland based on Carboniferous Limestone.
- Large, regular open fields with highly variable hedgerows.
- Tall woodland belts and clumps including plantations associated with historic estates of Tyntesfield and Ashton Court.
- Substantial area of ancient and coppice woodland at Leigh Woods.
- Areas of unimproved calcareous grassland for instance at the golf courses.
- Hedgerow trees and scattered trees.
- Cattle grazing and horse paddocks.
- Leisure land use with hotels, golf course, country club and many playing fields.
- Sparse settlement – but dominated to the east by large new brick built changing rooms and hotels.
- Straight roads with urban feel due to edging, some fringed by shelter belts.
- Presence of mineral extraction both working and disused quarries and “gruffy” ground.

DESCRIPTION

Failand Settled Limestone Plateau is a level or gently shelving upland area at 100m to 160m AOD based on Carboniferous Limestone with small areas of Mercia Mudstone to the west. Highly influenced by the proximity of Bristol the centre of the area is dominated by leisure uses and especially by sport with large sections devoted to golf courses and playing fields. The latter form large regular fields of amenity grassland divided by shelter belts and hedgerows in highly variable condition. Associated with the playing fields are modern brick buildings of utilitarian design, goal posts and metal gates and fencing. To the far east of the area is Leigh Woods, ancient, semi-natural broadleaved woodland. The nearby large golf courses include areas of unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, there is also remnant open parkland with scattered trees. The eastern end of the area is more rural in character with areas of pasture grazed by cattle along with some horse paddocks. Here the large open fields are bounded by short flailed hedgerows or drystone walls, some in poor condition. The more exposed feel to the landscape is reinforced by small trees shaped by the wind.

There is little settlement in the *Failand Settled Limestone Plateau*, with just a few stone farmsteads, along with large widely spaced sports club houses and changing rooms and the contained block of 20th century dwellings at Failand. Quarries are frequent in the area with an active large site at Durnford which influences the immediate surroundings with views through metal fencing down onto the large industrial buildings. There are also areas of “gruffy” ground, the remnants of mining. The

roads are straight with an urban feel due to kerbs and fencing, some are fringed with thin woodland shelter belts.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Intensive management of sports pitches affecting the adjacent woodland belts through fertilizer run-off and lack of habitat for woodland edge and grassland species.
- Farming methods and mechanical management of the hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the mixed woodland blocks, hedgerows and drystone walls and the coppice woodland.
- Pressure for further diversification of land uses (e.g. sports fields and horse paddocks) which are already visually dominant in the centre of the area.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage, lighting and fencing associated with quarrying and sports fields further reducing the rural character.
- Lack of information on the extant remains of historic mining activity may lead to loss of these areas without assessing their archaeological significance.

Character

Failand Settled Limestone Plateau is highly affected by the large proportion of the area under leisure uses and the associated utilitarian modern buildings, urbanised roads, metal fencing and amenity grassland. Although some parts of the area are more rural and pastoral and there are areas of ancient woodland, and grassland of high ecological value, overall the area exhibits a **moderate** character.

Condition

The condition of the area is **declining** with hedgerows gappy or overgrown, collapsing drystone walls and unmanaged shelterbelts, a high proportion of the area is maintained as sports pitches with amenity grassland heavily reliant on artificial fertilisers.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Failand Settled Limestone Plateau* is to **conserve** the wooded, rural character of the area and **enhance** elements in decline, particularly the field boundaries and woodland belts and taking opportunities to increase grassland biodiversity by changes in management for instance in mowing regimes along the edges of the sports fields.

Landscape Guidelines

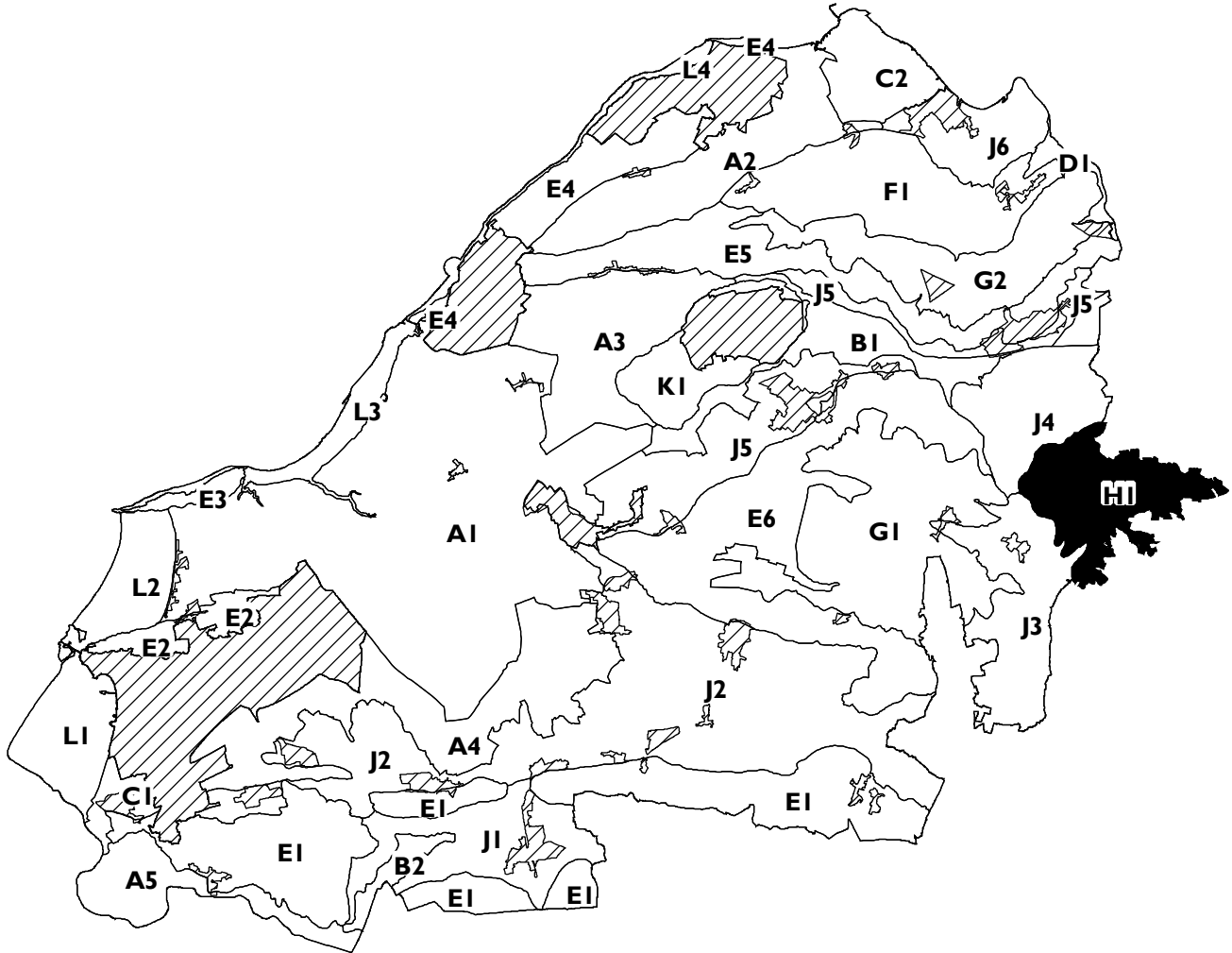
- Strengthen the rural character of the landscape by conserving and enhancing the woodland belts, the areas of cattle grazing, the hedgerows and parkland.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows.
- Maintain key local landscape features such as the mixed woodland belts and blocks and the drystone walls.

- Management of the woodlands should recognise their value as artefacts and should reflect their ancient pattern of management type.
- Encourage enhanced biodiversity of the grassland through changes in maintenance (e.g. relax mowing regime around the edges of the sports pitches).
- Resist further urbanisation of rural roads with kerbs and lighting.
- Minimise the impact of visually intrusive land uses such as large scale quarrying through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- The areas of historic mining activity should be mapped to assess their distribution and age.

LANDSCAPE TYPE H: SETTLED HILLS



H: SETTLED HILLS



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

H1 Dundry Hill

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE H: SETTLED HILLS

HI: Dundry Settled Hill

Location and Boundaries

There is one area of the landscape type Settled Hills. This is located at the far east of the District. The boundary is based on the underlying geology and the topography. The Settled Hill type is founded on Inferior Oolite and features steep slopes while the more gently rolling surrounding areas are on Lias. The line of the boundary follows the break of slope at the base of the hill.

Key Characteristics

- Dramatically rising topography with Inferior Oolite and Blue Lias Limestone geology.
- Highly elevated with long views over surrounding lower lying areas.
- Nucleated villages with local stone dwellings arranged to benefit from dramatic views.
- Scattered farmsteads of Blue Lias some with sheltering ash and yew trees.
- Pastoral landscape with some arable land use.
- Low hedgerows and wind formed hedgerow trees with drystone walls on higher ground.
- Steep winding rural lanes climb the slopes of the hill.
- Presence of quarries and disused mines.
- Historic landscape a good example of medieval countryside.

Physical Influences

The *Settled Hills* landscape type is an elevated inland hill with steeply rising slopes. The area is founded on the Blue Lias of the Jurassic period which outcrops on the lower slopes of the type and is capped by Inferior Oolite, again of the Jurassic and unique in the district. This Oolite deposit is rich in fossils apart from the upper parts of the stone which has been quarried for building stone. There are a number of springs arising towards the summit of the hill in the region where the edge of the Oolite lies on the Lias. Streams arising from the springs have formed small shallow valleys in the steep sides of the hill.

Historic Environment

This landscape type is a good example of a surviving medieval landscape with its nucleated settlement, dispersed farms and medieval enclosure. Some of the enclosures are probably early medieval and others later enclosure of open fields. Although continuity and survival suggest a successful economy here at this time there are, none-the-less, several unexplained examples of deserted medieval farms on the southern side of Dundry Hill. The amount of surviving, unenclosed common on the west side of the village seems small and the market led demands of the nearby City of Bristol may have led to the sacrifice of common land here earlier than in other areas.

Biodiversity

The *Settled Hills* Landscape Type is characterised by a predominantly pastoral landscape of improved grassland, divided up by low hedgerows and drystone walls. Numerous small rivers forming a network across and down the hills, flow from springs on the hill tops.

Large areas of semi improved neutral grassland and unimproved calcareous grassland are located across the type. Many of these sites have been designated SNCI's, particularly the calcareous grassland due to the national (and local) decline of this habitat.

Settlement Character

Settlement in the *Settled Hills* is concentrated in nucleated villages on the flatter ground at the top of the hill, with a few scattered stone farmsteads on the higher slopes. The older buildings are of grey limestone with a substantial proportion of dwellings, particularly at the margins of the villages, dating from the 20th century and brick built or rendered.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Elevated dramatic topography with long views.
- Open windswept upland landscape with small wind formed hedgerow trees.
- Predominantly pastoral with sheep and horses grazing.
- Hedges and hedgerow trees of ash and yew.
- Large areas of semi improved neutral grassland and unimproved calcareous grassland.
- Drystone walls around some fields and stone walls associated with farmsteads.
- Steep winding rural lanes.
- Historic village core of stone built church and dwellings.
- Intact medieval landscape.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. scrap yards, horse paddocks) which are often visually intrusive.
- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of the hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Encroachment of development along rural roads and as infill around villages.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the drystone walls and hedgerow trees.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development and recreational uses.
- Demand for tall vertical structures (e.g. communication masts, industrial type farm buildings) which are visually prominent in places within the type and from surrounding lower lying areas.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Settled Hills* Landscape type will be one of **conservation** and **enhancement**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rural pastoral landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows.
- Maintain key local landscape features including the drystone walls and small hedgerow trees.
- Minimise the impact and encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- Historic landscape - the area should be managed as a complete unit and not as unconnected, individual medieval sites.

HI: DUNDRY SETTLED HILL

Location and Boundaries: Dundry Settled Hill lies at the far east of the District with its eastern boundary made up by the District boundary and the western boundaries running at the break of the slope at the base of the hill around the 100m and 110m contours.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated hill from 100m to 233m AOD based on Blue Lias Limestone capped by Inferior Oolite.
- Steeply sloping hillsides with many springs and streams which form small valleys.
- Long views down to Bristol and the Severn Estuary.
- Predominantly pastoral with some arable land use.
- Traditional stone buildings and drystone walls (some in declining condition).
- Hedges in varying condition and hedgerow trees of ash and yew.
- Exposed open aspect emphasised by occasional low, wind formed trees.
- Grasslands of nature conservation value including semi improved neutral grassland and unimproved calcareous grassland.
- Nucleated villages and farmsteads of local stone with infill of modern brick and render.
- Tall church tower at Dundry forms a significant landmark.
- Concentration of communications masts at the summit.
- Rural roads with dramatic views and some ribbon development at Dundry designed to benefit from these.

DESCRIPTION

Dundry Settled Hill is an open windswept hill, with steeply rising sides of Lias Limestone, topped by a more gently undulating cap of Inferior Oolite which reaches 233m AOD at Dundry Down. Springs arising where the two types of stone meet have led to many small watercourses forming narrow valleys in the hillsides. From this high area there are wide views over the surrounding low land with views out northwards from the village of Dundry to Bristol particularly striking in their rural-urban contrast. Conversely the hill is important in views from the outskirts of Bristol with the tall stone tower of the church forming a conspicuous landmark and the open ground forming a rural backdrop to the urban area.

The *Dundry Settled Hill* is predominantly pastoral with sheep and horse grazing but with some areas of arable production. Fields are medium in scale and irregular, mostly of medieval enclosure. The boundaries are hedgerows on the slopes, in varying condition, and occasionally replaced by fences, with drystone walls higher up the hill, again showing some signs of decline. Low wind formed trees, mainly ash, along the field boundaries, reinforce the high exposed feel of the area. There are few other trees in the area but there are significant areas of semi improved neutral grassland and unimproved calcareous grassland.

Settlement is of scattered farms and nucleated villages, with a cluster of well kept stone farmsteads at East Dundry and the larger village of Dundry itself just below the summit of the hill, sited to take

advantage of the views to the north. Older buildings are of the cold grey Limestone, most notably the church at Dundry with its tall, highly decorated 15th century tower. More modern infill of detached houses and bungalows of brick and render fringes the village and straggles along the road to the west while farmsteads include industrial scale farm buildings. This gives a less rural character to Dundry reinforced by the scrap yard at the village margin and the cluster of communications masts at Dundry Down, a small area of ancient unenclosed common on the west side of the village. Settlement is linked by small rural roads, those climbing the steep slopes having wide open views of the surrounding areas.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. scrap yards, horse paddocks) which are often visually intrusive.
- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of the hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Encroachment of development along rural roads and as infill around villages, particularly intrusive in views up to the area from the urban sites to the north.
- Lack of management of distinctive landscape features such as the drystone walls.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development and recreational uses.
- Demand for tall vertical structures (e.g. communication masts, industrial type farm buildings) which are visually prominent in places within the type and from surrounding lower lying areas.

Character

The character of *Dundry Settled Hill* is **moderate** in strength with a strong base of topography and views but some weak elements such as the mixed land use, the proliferation of masts, infill and ribbon development.

Condition

Condition is judged as **declining** due to the highly variable maintenance of the hedgerows, from gappy to overgrown and the deteriorating drystone walls.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Dundry Settled Hill* is to **conserve** the strong elements such as the stone built farmsteads and historic village core, the open pasture with low windblown hedgerow trees, and to **enhance** other aspects for instance by strengthening the field boundaries, mitigating visually intrusive village edges and creating new calcareous grasslands.

Landscape Guidelines

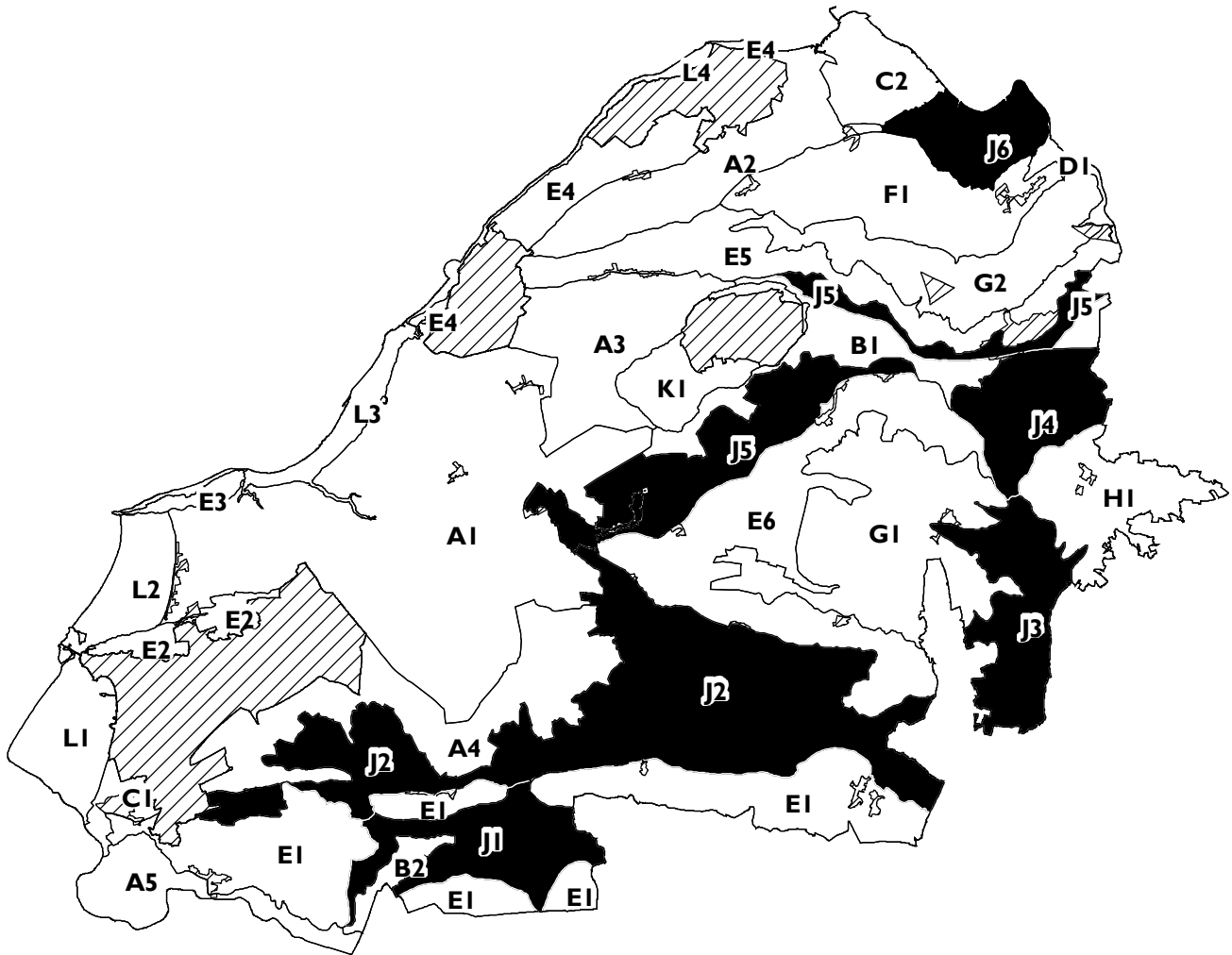
- Conserve the rural pastoral landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows.
- Maintain key local landscape features including the drystone walls and small hedgerow trees.

- Encourage creation of new and linkage of existing neutral and calcareous grassland habitats of ecological value such as those on Dundry Down and the southern Dundry slopes.
- Minimise the impact and encroachment of visually intrusive land uses such as tall masts, scrap yards and horse paddocks through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management such as grazing by sheep.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment with particular regard to the visual impact of new development in views up to the hill from the surrounding low lying areas.

LANDSCAPE TYPE J: ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND



J: ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- J1 Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
- J2 River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
- J3 Chew Rolling Valley Farmland
- J4 Colliters Brook Rolling Valley Farmland
- J5 Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland
- J6 Avon Rolling Valley Farmland

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE J: ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND

Landscape Character Areas

- J1: Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
- J2: River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
- J3: Chew Rolling Valley Farmland
- J4: Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland
- J5: Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland
- J6: Avon Rolling Valley Farmland

Location and Boundaries

The Rolling Valley Farmland Landscape Type covers a large area of transitional, undulating topography, from 10m to 135m AOD, formed predominantly on underlying Mercia Mudstone with Head. They relate to the pastoral landscape of the valleys formed by the Rivers; Lox Yeo, Yeo, Chew, Land Yeo, Avon and Colliter's Brook which wind their way between the limestone ridges.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying Mercia Mudstone geology.
- Small to medium scale peaceful landscape, with a feeling of partial enclosure from the surrounding ridges
- Rolling landform formed by numerous rivers and tributaries.
- Presence of variety of water bodies including rivers, streams, ponds, drainage ditches and reservoirs.
- Pastoral landscape with views to wooded ridges.
- Fields bounded by thick hedges with hedgerow trees.
- Occasional belts and clumps of ancient woodland and more recent plantations.
- Complex network of winding rural roads and deep sunken lanes.
- Nucleated villages on higher ground and numerous isolated traditional stone and render farmsteads.
- An area of essentially early medieval and medieval settlement and enclosure.

Physical Influences

Integral to the formation of this Landscape Type is the erosive force of the rivers and their tributaries, which cut shallow valleys through the relatively soft rock that lies between the limestone ridges. The underlying geology of the *Rolling Valley Farmland* is predominantly Triassic Mercia Mudstone, with some Clay Lias from the Jurassic period and localised superficial Head and River Terrace Deposits in the valley bottoms and on the lower hill slopes. The *Rolling Valley Farmland* Landscape Type is typified by gently rolling topography rather than by a strong valley form, although this is present in some of the areas.

Historic Environment

Excavated evidence from other parts of the District suggest that a thriving native population was farming the area and continued to do so into the earlier part of the Romano British period. It was later under this administration that the villa system of estate management was employed. The existing settlement at Gatcombe is based on a strongly defended villa or small town with the extensive earthwork remains of its fields still visible. Other villas are scattered about the county and will have no doubt reaped the agricultural benefit of this landscape type. Their effect on the present landscape, however, is limited.

The existing historic landscape is basically medieval though with probable Saxon antecedents. It is characterised by nucleated settlements with dispersed farms in an enclosed landscape with unenclosed common on the more exposed ground. Villages like Locking and Hutton have the appearance of planned medieval settlements implying a larger scale reorganisation of the countryside probably around the 12th century.

The areas of post medieval landscape are limited though there is the enclosure of unenclosed heath or commons south of Wrington. Two areas of post medieval parkland associated with Ashton Court and Tynesfield intrude marginally into the area but these are atypical.

Biodiversity

This extensive area is characterised by wide scale improved grazing land divided by tall hedgerows of varying quality. Across this landscape flows a network of rivers (Lox Yeo and Banwell) and their tributaries with associated marginal habitat.

Lakes and ponds are also a significant feature, notably Blagdon lake SSSI; a large freshwater reservoir with marginal habitats of reedbed, carr woodland and neutral grassland. The lake is an important overwintering site for birds, supporting internationally important populations of birds such as teal, as well as a diverse invertebrate fauna.

Semi-improved neutral grassland occurs throughout the type, many sites being designated SNCI's, to encourage appropriate management to ensure their continued survival in a largely agriculturally improved landscape.

Ancient woodland is a feature throughout the type, although often forming small areas within larger woodland blocks of more recent origin. One particularly extensive area is Barrow Tanks SNCI, comprising of ancient broad-leaved semi-natural woodland, mixed and broad-leaved plantation with areas of semi-improved neutral grassland.

Settlement Character

Settlement varies throughout the *Rolling Valley Farmland* Landscape Type from isolated farmsteads and large manor houses, to larger nucleated villages on higher ground and ribbon development along the network of winding rural roads. The majority of development is traditional, vernacular limestone buildings, often rendered either white or a dull pink, with reddish pan-tile roofs. More modern development is evident in the villages, forming a harsh edge that is often visible from the lower ground of the moors.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Peaceful remote pastoral landscape with areas of semi-improved neutral grassland.
- Presence of river, streams and ponds with considerable biodiversity interest.
- Thick hedgerows and numerous hedgerow trees.

- Important areas of ancient woodland.
- Network of rural roads and sunken lanes.
- Scattered stone farmsteads.
- Intact medieval landscape pattern.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. horse paddocks, tip sites, recreational uses) which are sometimes visually intrusive.
- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Encroachment of development along roads and in villages, particularly rising up the open slopes at the bases of the adjacent limestone ridges where it is highly visible from adjacent lowland areas.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges of Bristol and Weston-super-Mare and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful secluded character.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect archaeological remains, particularly earthworks.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Rolling Valley Farmland* Landscape type will generally be one of **conservation** and **enhancement**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote and rural nature of the pastoral landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of ditches and hedgerows.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be a presumption against arable in areas of archaeological landscapes defined by earthworks.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

J1: LOX YEO ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND

Location and Boundaries: *Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland* is situated to the south of the District beneath the southern slopes of *E1: Mendip Ridges and Combes*. The boundaries are defined by the 10m contour runs around the edge of *B2: Lox Yeo River Flood Plain* and the 35m contour and roads at the base of the ridges.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying Mercia Mudstone geology.
- Small to medium scale peaceful landscape, with a feeling of partial enclosure from the surrounding ridges
- Rolling landform formed by the Lox Yeo River.
- Pastoral landscape with view to wooded *Mendip Ridges and Combes*.
- Fields bounded by thick hedges with hedgerow trees
- Occasional belts and clumps of wet woodland.
- Complex network of winding rural roads and deep sunken lanes.
- Settlement takes the form of numerous traditional stone and render farmsteads plus the village of Winscombe on the higher ground.
- Transport corridor passing through gaps in the ridges.

DESCRIPTION

Creating a broad valley between the wooded limestone outcrops of *E1: Mendip Ridges and Combes*, *Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland* forms an undulating lowland with an underlying geology of Mercia Mudstone with areas of superficial Head and Tidal Deposits. Views of steep wooded ridges rising over the valley create an impressive backdrop and a feeling of partial enclosure.

The small Lox Yeo River that formed the valley flows in a southwest direction creating some wetland areas of high ecological importance such as Max Bog, a wet neutral grassland SSSI with nationally rare species of grass. The field pattern is characterised almost entirely by medieval enclosure and is divided by a network of hedgerows with trees and the occasional woodland belt.

Settlement is concentrated to the east of the area at Winscombe, which forms a large nucleated village and a centre of communication routes. Situated on an area of raised ground the rendered post war buildings on the edge of the village are highly visible. Elsewhere in the area, settlement is limited to dispersed farmsteads along the winding rural roads. These buildings are predominantly traditional in style, constructed from stone with red tile roofs.

The area is traversed by a number of transport links running north to south passing through breaks in the ridges, such as the M5, A371 and the disused railway. This, along with dominance of Winscombe gives the area a fragmented feel in parts.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. horse paddocks, tip sites, recreational uses) which are sometimes visually intrusive.

- Intensive farming methods and mechanical management of hedgerows are reducing visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges at Winscombe and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful secluded character.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect archaeological remains, particularly earthworks.

Character

The *Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland Area* has a remote and peaceful pastoral character. This is however disrupted in places by the M5, the A371 and the visible edge of the village of Winscombe, fragmenting the area. The overall character is therefore considered to be **moderate**.

Condition

The condition of the area is **good**, highlighted by the important ecological areas around the river, and the thick hedgerows and hedgerow trees. There are however, some poorer areas around the village which could be enhanced through improved management and considered screening planting to soften the urban edge.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland* is to **conserve** the peaceful and remote nature of the pastoral valley with its areas of ecological importance, its wet woodland and hedgerow network whilst **strengthening** areas that are weaker in character and affected by the urban edge and roadways.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote and rural nature of the pastoral landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of ditches and hedgerows.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses, such as the transport corridors, through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- Consider wet woodland planting for screening and enhanced biodiversity.
- There should be a presumption against arable in areas of archaeological landscapes defined by earthworks.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

J2: RIVER YEO ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND

Location and Boundaries: the *River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland* is an extensive area of undulating lowland running across the southern part of the District. The boundaries are based on the underlying geology and the landform and largely follow the 5m contour along the edge of the lowland area *A4 Locking and Banwell Moors* to the north and west and the contour (at 35m to 50m AOD) or roadway at the break of slope at the base of the *Limestone Ridges and Combes* that frame the area to south and north.

Key Characteristics

- Transitional area at 5m to 60m AOD with gentle rolling landform.
- Predominantly Mercia Mudstone geology with areas of Alluvium, Head and Lias.
- Presence of the River Yeo running from east to west through the area plus numerous tributaries, drainage channels, small ponds and at the far east of the area, Blagdon Lake.
- Strong valley feel particularly to the east of the area with enclosure given by the rising wooded limestone ridges to north and south.
- Rural pastoral landscape with sheep, cattle and horses grazing.
- Irregular medium sized fields of medieval enclosure along the river and on the hill sides.
- Full hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees.
- Riverside trees of willow and oak and modest bridges.
- Presence of small farm orchards with concentration of larger cider orchards around Sandford.
- Scattered farmsteads plus large villages on higher ground at the base of the ridges and along major routes.
- Traditional buildings of stone with red roof tiles including farms, churches and historic village centres plus modern infill and ribbon development of brick and render.
- Network of A roads, minor roads and winding rural lanes.

DESCRIPTION

The *River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland* is an extensive area of intermediate undulating land which forms a valley enclosed by ridges to the east and to the west extends along the north edge of the *Mendip Limestone Ridges and Combes*. The area is founded on Mercia Mudstone with a strip of Alluvium along the course of the River Yeo, areas of Head gravel to the south of the river, and an outcrop of Lias between Banwell and Locking to the west. The Yeo runs through the centre of the area to the east with many small tributary streams joining it from the east and south including the Langford Brook. The presence of the waterways is signalled by the tree lines of willow along the rivers and streams and in the small bridge crossings. There are also numerous small farm ponds and drainage ditches in this part of the area. To the far east the large open water body of Blagdon Lake is fringed with blocks of mixed woodland and coniferous planting. This peaceful, wide valley is pastoral and rural with sheep, cattle and horse grazing. Fields are medium or large and irregular in outline dating from medieval enclosure. The hedges are thick and well maintained with a large number of mature hedgerow trees including willow pollards in the valley floor and oaks.

As the area extends along the base of the ridge to the west the enclosed feel of the valley diminishes. Here there are more diverse land uses and more settlement with a string of villages along the trunk roads at the base of the ridge. Where the area extends northwards towards the lower ground of the *Moors* there are cider orchards north of Sandford and grazing land north of Banwell. However these areas are affected by the extensive settlements with ribbon development including paddocks, garden centres and caravan parks and at Locking the RAF base so that they feel less rural than the valley to the east.

The older scattered farmsteads and the older buildings at the centres of the villages are of stone, with red roof tiles, with more modern render and brick buildings at the edges of the villages and straggling along the A roads. The transport links vary from the M5 which passes through the area to the west, the A roads along the base of the *Mendip Ridges and Combes* to the network of small rural roads crossing the valley floor.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Some small orchards and pollards in poor condition and no longer maintained
- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. horse paddocks, caravan parks, recreational uses) which are sometimes visually intrusive.
- Ubiquitous development along roads particularly the A371 and A368 and as infill of historic villages.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful secluded character.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect archaeological remains, particularly earthworks.

Character

The *River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland* has many of the positive characteristics of the *Rolling Valley Farmland* Landscape Type, it is a peaceful pastoral landscape with intact hedgerows and hedgerow trees, a network of rural roads and scattered stone farmsteads, however the character is weakened by intrusive elements especially to the west, in particular the village infill, ribbon development and non-agricultural land uses such as caravan sites, making the overall character **moderate**.

Condition

This character area is generally in **good** condition in particular key landscape elements such as the hedges, hedgerow trees including willow pollards, and small bridges however other elements are less intact such as the farm orchards and there is room for enhancement of the woodland and grassland for increased biodiversity value.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland* is to **conserve** the peaceful, rural nature of the landscape with intact pasture and field boundaries and to **strengthen** the area of weaker character particularly where the landscape is affected by modern infill and ribbon development along roads.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rural, pastoral character of the area.
- Consider opportunities for grassland, woodland and wetland habitat creation, particularly in areas which are marginal for farming;
- Maintain the pollarded willows and encourage local uses for the cut material.
- Conserve historic hedgerows and nurture existing and new hedgerow trees particularly pollarded willows.
- Limit village infill and ribbon development, and where development does take place encourage sensitive use of materials and quality of design.
- Minimise visual effects of modern settlement along the A roads for instance through careful screening and replanting of hedgerows and or new woodland belts.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be a presumption against arable conversion in areas of archaeological landscapes defined by earthworks.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

J3: CHEW ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND

Location and Boundaries: *Chew Rolling Valley Farmland* is situated to the south east of the District around Winford. The boundaries are defined by the District border to the south, the 150m contour to the west and the 100m contour marking the base of *H1: Dundry Hill*.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying Mercia Mudstone geology.
- Small to medium scale rural, peaceful, and in places, remote landscape.
- Rolling landform with some steep slopes and knolls formed by the River Chew and its tributaries.
- Wet pastoral landscape with intermittent views to enclosing wooded ridges.
- Fields bounded by thick hedges with hedgerow trees
- Complex network of winding rural roads and deep sunken lanes.
- Occasional belts and clumps of wet woodland and small farm orchards.
- Nucleated village of Winford on higher ground and numerous isolated traditional stone and render farmsteads.

DESCRIPTION

The sometimes steeply rolling landform of the Chew Valley is shaped by the River Chew and its tributaries moulding the underlying Mercia Mudstone. The influence of water in forming this landscape is evident, not only from streams channelled along roadsides, but also from road names such as Watery Lane, Frog Lane and Spring Farm. To the north, tougher Lias bedrock causes the landform to rise.

This peaceful pastoral landscape is founded on a pattern of medieval enclosure. Small and medium sized irregular fields are bounded by thick and occasionally overgrown hedgerows, with numerous hedgerow trees and sporadic clumps of trees giving a wooded feel. There are also remnants of orchards around several farmsteads. Both dairy cattle and sheep graze the wet pasture; although some fields have been subdivided for horses.

A network of rural roads and deep sunken lanes links numerous traditional stone and clay tile farmsteads and houses, sometimes rendered pale pink. These vernacular dwellings nestle comfortably into the valley sides in contrast to some of the newer development on higher ground which is more visually intrusive. The nucleated village of Winford is located on higher ground to the north of the area, where the B3130 and rural roads intersect. The B3130 acts a main arterial route through the area and has a number of larger buildings along it such as the former Winford Livestock Centre.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses which are sometimes visually intrusive, for instance horse paddocks and large industrial style buildings along the B3130.
- Some hedgerows show signs of lack of management, with few new young hedgerow trees to replace the present mature population.
- Encroachment of development along roads and in villages, particularly on higher ground such as at the edges of Winford, where it is highly visible from adjacent lowland areas.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors (the B3130 in particular) impacting on the peaceful secluded character.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect archaeological remains, particularly earthworks.

Character

The peaceful rural landscape of the *Chew Rolling Valley Farmlands* exhibits a number of the positive key characteristics of the *Rolling Valley Farmland Landscape Type*, such as the rolling topography, the pastoral land cover and the sunken lanes.

Condition

The *Chew Rolling Valley Farmland* is considered to be in **good** condition with an intact network of hedgerows framing pastoral fields, rural lanes and stone farmsteads. Some minor elements, notably the farm orchards, are in decline.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Chew Rolling Valley Farmland* is to **conserve** the peaceful rural ambiance, with sensitive management of the existing strong features and restoration or enhancement of those weaker or declining elements such as the orchards and the occasionally abrupt village edge.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote and rural nature of the pastoral landscape.
- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows and nurture new and existing hedgerow trees.
- Promote active management and replanting of orchards using local fruit varieties.
- Consider opportunities for grassland, woodland and wetland habitat creation, particularly in areas which are marginal for farming.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management including sheep grazing of pasture and coppice in woodlands.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge, for instance at Winford, and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses, such as the transport corridor of the B3130, through design guidance and appropriate land management such as screening by hedgerow and woodland planting.

- Conserve the rural character of the winding lanes and tracks and limit upgrading by widening, kerbing.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be a presumption against arable conversion in areas of archaeological landscapes defined by earthworks and areas of historic parkland.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks management by light grazing is recommended.

J4: COLLITER'S BROOK ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND

Location and Boundaries: *Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland* is situated to the east of the district between numerous character areas. To the west is the limestone ridge of *E6: Cleeve Ridges and Combes* and high ground of *G1: Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau* and to the north is the low lying ground of *B1: Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Flood Plain*. The District boundary and the outskirts of Bristol are to the west and *H1: Dundry Hill* is to the south along with *J3: Chew Rolling Valley Farmland*. The boundaries of the area are defined along the B3130 and base of the slopes along the 55m/30m contours.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying Lias geology.
- Undulating landform formed by Colliter's Brook and numerous other streams including the upper part of Ashton Brook.
- Predominantly pastoral land cover with some arable fields.
- Presence of Colliter's Brook, tributaries, streams, springs, ponds and three large reservoirs which dominate the southern section of the area.
- Several large woods including areas of ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and mixed plantation at Barrow.
- Fields bounded by hedges with hedgerow trees.
- Crossed by the busy A370 and A38 and a few rural roads but large sections of the area inaccessible.
- Settlement clustered around the intersection between the main road and smaller rural roads for example at Barrow Common, plus a few scattered farmsteads, a hospital and water works.
- Views of Bristol and ribbon development along roads gives sense of urban encroachment. The northern edge adjoins the south side of Long Ashton which exerts a strong visual influence across the northern part of the area.

DESCRIPTION

The *Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland* character area has an underlying geology of Lias, forming undulating topography shaped by Colliter's Brook. Three large man-made reservoirs dominate the southern part of the area although these are shielded from view by large grassed bunds and coniferous shelter belts which create an enclosed channel carrying the A38 between the water bodies. Despite these large open water bodies and the other watercourses in the area the *Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland* does not have a strong valley feel.

Away from the main roads the area is largely inaccessible, with a few rural roads connecting a handful of farmsteads and a few public footpaths concentrated to the south. Medium and large fields bounded by variable hedgerows contain a mix of both pastoral and arable farmland. Large areas of ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with numerous SNCIs also survive, along with more recent mixed plantation surrounding a network of hospital buildings to the west of the area.

The urbanising influence of Bristol is prevalent in the *Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland* character area with numerous urban fringe activities including a golf course, water treatment works, a garage and a motel. Views northeast from higher ground look out over the city adding to the impression of an area at the rural/urban transition. The area is crossed by two of the District's main arterial

routes, the A370 and the A38, each with a proliferation of signage, markings, engineered structures and modern ribbon development.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Lack of management of the hedgerows.
- Diversification and urbanisation of land uses are leading to a lack of continuity within the landscape.
- Ribbon development along the arterial routes is adding to the feeling encroachment from the urban edge.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the rural character.

Character

The character of *J4: Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland* is influenced heavily by its close proximity to the city of Bristol and, in the northern part, its relationship to Long Ashton which is prominent on rising ground to the north. Views to the urban edge and the busy roads with increased signage, urban fringe and institutional activities and engineered changes in the landform disrupting any pattern of key characteristics consistent with the *Rolling Valley Farmland* Landscape Type. The overall character of the area is **weak**.

Condition

The condition of *J4: Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland* is considered to be **declining**. Despite having some areas of quality, such as the ancient woodland, the impact from the development along the A38 and the decline in agricultural management has had a negative impact.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *J4: Colliter's Brook Rolling Valley Farmland* is to **strengthen** the character of the area, weakened by urban fringe activities, **enhancing** the positive aspects of the area such as the woodland and pastoral farmland to build a sense of continuity and place and taking opportunities for improvement for instance by creating new grassland, wetland and woodland habitats and better public access to the woods and reservoirs.

Landscape Guidelines

- Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows and nurture new and existing hedgerow trees.
- Encourage public access to woodland and reservoirs but protect sensitive areas through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Consider opportunities for grassland, woodland and wetland habitat creation, particularly in areas which are marginal for farming.

- Minimise visual effects of modern settlement along the A roads for instance through careful screening and replanting of hedgerows and or new woodland belts.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge of Bristol and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- There should be a presumption against arable conversion in areas of archaeological landscapes defined by earthworks and areas of historic parkland.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

J5: LAND YEO AND KENN ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND

Location and Boundaries: The *Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley* Character Area consists of two sections of land that run east to west along the valley containing the Land Yeo and Kenn Rivers to the north east of the District. The boundaries are based on topography and follow the break of slope along the base of ridges, often along the 50m contour or roads, while the boundary with the level, low lying area *B1: Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Flood Plain* follows field boundaries, roads and the railway line.

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating land form based on Mercia Mudstone with Head and Alluvium.
- Rural pastoral landscape set in a wide valley framed by wooded ridges.
- Intact hedgerow network with hedgerow trees of oak.
- Areas of historic parkland with mature parkland trees rising up to the lower slopes of the ridges.
- Frequent large villages such as Long Ashton, Backwell and Claverham with historic stone buildings at centre and modern infill.
- Network of winding rural roads with major road and railway passing along the valley floor edge.
- Scattered stone farmsteads with stone outbuildings and walls.

DESCRIPTION

The *Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley* is the intermediate land (at 10m to 50m AOD) between the valley floor and the rising limestone ridges, formed mainly on Mercia Mudstone, there are significant areas of Head gravel and Alluvium which are reflected in the more gently shelving landform of the section to the south west. The area is predominantly grazed with small areas of horse paddocks and some small farm orchards now in poor condition. Fields are medium and small scale with the irregular outline of medieval enclosure. The rural, peaceful ambience is strongest in the southern sections of the area and is reinforced by the thick hedgerows, frequent mature hedgerow trees and the wooded backdrop of the Limestone ridges. The north of the area is rather different in character with significant area of historic parkland belonging to grand houses sited on the rising ridges of the adjacent character area. Here there are views up to the mansions, open grassland, parkland trees, a substantial stone lodge and walls at Ashton Court and a mature avenue along the drive up to the house at Tyntesfield.

The area is settled with scattered farmsteads and frequent villages linked by winding rural lanes. Farmsteads are often of stone, sheltered by coniferous planting such as yew which contrasts and intensifies the colour of the stone outbuildings and walls. Larger roads run along the base of the adjacent ridges with the A370 a dominant presence to the south west of the area. The villages such as Backwell, Cleeve and Flax Bourton, mainly on the higher ground at the base of the ridges, have churches and older dwellings of stone and red roof tiles, with more recent infill and ribbon development along the roads of brick and render painted pink or white. In some areas the urban edge is abrupt particularly when views from the adjacent lower ground of the *Moors*.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Some small farm orchards in poor condition and no longer maintained.

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. horse paddocks, recreational uses) which are sometimes visually intrusive.
- Ubiquitous development along roads such as the A370 and as infill of historic villages.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses or increase in noise associated with transport corridors impacting on the peaceful secluded character.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect archaeological remains, particularly earthworks.

Character

The *Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley* displays a **moderate** character due to the frequent villages with modern outskirts and ubiquitous ribbon development along major roads which weakens the rural character of the otherwise largely pastoral landscape.

Condition

The condition of this area is considered to be **good** with large areas of intact pasture with thick hedgerows and hedgerow trees and small winding rural roads. Some elements of the landscape are declining such as the small farm orchards.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley* is to **conserve** the intact pastoral landscape with hedgerow network, winding rural roads and stone farmsteads while **strengthening** the elements of weaker character such as the village edges and restoring elements of declining condition most notably the orchards.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rural nature of the pastoral landscape.
- Continue with sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows.
- Nurture new and existing hedgerow trees.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Promote active management and replanting of orchards using local fruit varieties.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements within the context of the landscape character assessment.
- There should be a presumption against arable in areas of archaeological landscapes defined by earthworks and areas of historic parkland.
- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

J6: AVON ROLLING VALLEY FARMLAND

Location and Boundaries: *Avon Rolling Valley Farmland* is situated to the far north of the District. Its boundaries are defined by the 60m contour where it meets the higher ground of *F1: Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands* to the south and by the edge of the District defined by the south bank of the River Avon to the north.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying Mercia Mudstone with superficial River Terrace Deposits, some of particular geological interest.
- Gently sloping topography shelving down to the north ending in steeper slopes down to banks of the River Avon.
- Numerous streams and ponds.
- Large open pastoral fields and areas of historic parkland.
- Woodland belt following line of a watercourse across the area, parkland trees and views to Leigh Woods creates a deceptively wooded feel.
- Strong urban influence from view to Bristol and the large settlement of Pill.
- Crossed by the busy arterial route of the A369.

DESCRIPTION

The *Avon Rolling Valley Farmland* is a transitional area, with gentle slopes falling away northward from 60m AOD to 10m AOD at the banks of the River Avon. The underlying geology of the area is predominantly Mercia Mudstone, although there are areas of Tidal Deposit, some of which are of particular note, and designated an SSSI as a rare good exposure of 'high' terrace deposits consisting of a selection of Pleistocene sediment.

The *Avon Rolling Valley Farmland* is a disjointed area, lacking unity and a coherent pattern. The busy A369 cuts through the area and, along with its associated ribbon development, effectively divides it into two. To the south of the road is a network of large fields bounded by low, gappy hedgerows and fences. North of the road is more complex with numerous landscape elements.

To the west of the area is a large swathe of historic parkland which provides the setting for the austere Leigh Court, standing proud against a backdrop of Leigh Woods (just outside the area in *D1: Avon Gorge*). The parkland has been divided into a number of very large pasture fields which extends to the edge of the River Avon and the Avon Walkway.

Arcing around between the fields is a tree lined and newly reinstated rail line that runs into the Avon Gorge. Another belt of woodland, following the line of a watercourse, which runs into a fishing lake at Ham Green, further divides the area. These wooded belts, the individual parkland trees and the views to Leigh Wood give the area a deceptively wooded feel.

The large settlement of Pill, which merges into Easton-in-Gordano along the A369, has a major urbanising influence on the area. New development of red brick residential properties and large office/institutional buildings to the east of the village are particularly visible. This new development has been built around a number of large mature trees and avenues, remnants of the historic parkland around Ham Green House. Other settlement is grouped along the A369 and varies in style, with traditional stone buildings and modern infill.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Ubiquitous development along roads particularly the A369 and as infill of historic villages.
- Division of historic parkland for intensive farming and by new development affecting both biodiversity of the grassland and the historic landscape.
- Encroachment of development along rural roads and villages, particularly around the periphery.
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Agricultural practices and changes in land use may affect archaeological remains, particularly earthworks.

Character

The character of the *Avon Rolling Valley Farmland* is fragmented. The urban influences of ribbon development along the busy A369, the sprawling village of Pill with visually intrusive development on its periphery and views across the Avon to Bristol largely dominate the remaining swathes of open pasture land and belts of woodland. The overall character for this area is therefore **weak**.

Condition

The condition of the area is **declining**, particularly around the periphery where there has been little management of the urban fringe. Intensive farming techniques employed on the large open expanses of pasture and run-off into the River Avon could also potentially have a negative impact.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Avon Rolling Valley Farmland* is to **strengthen** the positive landscape features, such as the parkland and belts of woodland, whilst **enhancing** areas that break the continuity of the landscape, such as the visually intrusive edge of Pill and the impact of the A369.

Landscape Guidelines

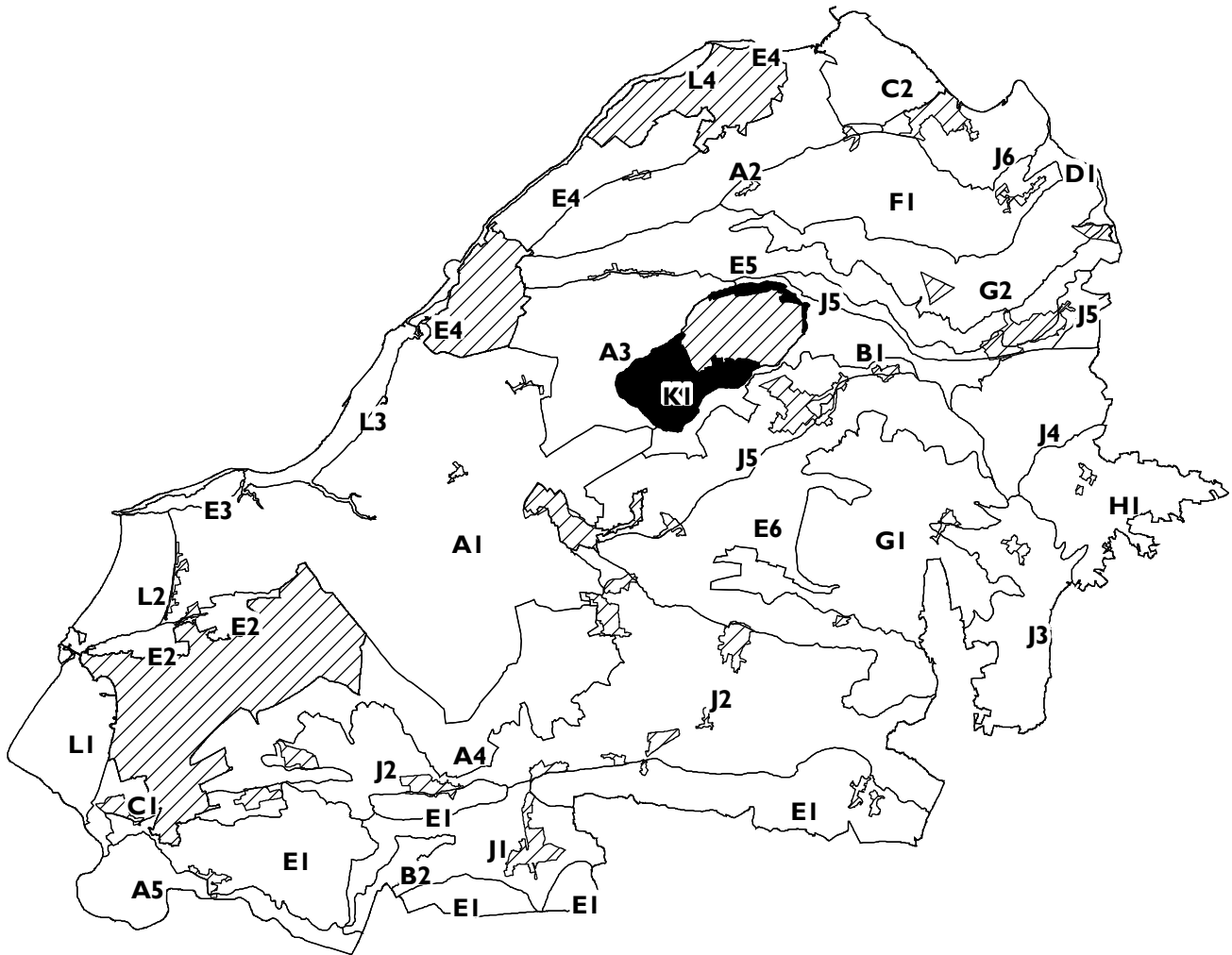
- Consider opportunities for grassland, woodland and wetland habitat creation, particularly in areas which are marginal for farming.
- Consider the restoration of the historic pattern of parkland trees.
- Limit village infill and ribbon development, and where development does take place encourage sensitive use of materials and quality of design and the integration of settlement into the landscape for instance by ensuring that new building is sensitive to the historic parkland pattern.
- Minimise the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses such as large scale office, institutional and light industrial development through design guidance and appropriate land management including screening by hedgerow and woodland planting.
- Promote preparation of Village Design Statements for Pill and Easton in Gordano within the context of the landscape character assessment with particular regard to minimising the impact of the urban edge of the settlements.
- There should be a presumption against arable in areas of archaeological landscapes defined by earthworks and areas of historic parkland.

- To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.

LANDSCAPE TYPE K: FARMED COAL MEASURES



K: FARMED COAL MEASURES



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

KI Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE K: FARMED COAL MEASURES

Landscape Character Areas

K1: Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures

Location and Boundaries

Farmed Coal Measures Landscape Types occur where the underlying geology is predominantly formed by the Carboniferous Coal Measures Group. There is one major outcrop of this in the District (at Nailsea) although smaller areas of Coal Measures are included within other character areas. It forms a distinct upstanding 'island' rising from the surrounding levels. Boundaries follow the change in geology and topography at the edge of the outcrop.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying Coal Measures geology.
- Elevated, gently undulating landform rising from 5m to approximately 30m AOD.
- Remote intimate scale landscape with peaceful ambiance.
- Pastoral with both cattle and sheep grazing.
- Small to medium irregular and sinuous fields bounded by drystone walls, hedgerows and ditches on the lower lying land.
- Traditional stone and render farmsteads linked by narrow rural roads.
- Intermittent views out over level pastoral moors.
- Coherent, distinctive and well defined block of medieval landscape.

Physical Influences

Although Coal Measures formed in the Upper Carboniferous period underlie most of the District they are largely concealed by later strata. The main outcrop forms the single area included in the *Farmed Coal Measures* Landscape Type. The actual coal seams form a small proportion of the *Coal Measures* with most of the formation consisting of *Pennant Sandstone*. The *Farmed Coal Measures* are elevated above the surrounding landscape and have a distinctive island feel, emphasised by the views down into the *Moors* and *River Floodplain*.

Historic Environment

This area comprises a well preserved medieval landscape, with probable Saxon antecedents, of small irregular fields, some of which suggest that they may have been created from open strip fields. The settlements comprise dispersed farmsteads with lanes leading off the higher ground accessing the common land of the levels back fen, A3: *Kenn and Tickenham Moor*, where valuable seasonal grazing and other wetland resources could be acquired.

Biodiversity

Neutral and marshy grassland predominate throughout this type, used mainly for grazing. Ditches frequently border the fields and the aquatic plants and invertebrates associated with them hold the most interest. A number of small ponds are located throughout the type, generally found within the grazing fields and consequently are often damaged through trampling and effluent run off.

Settlement Character

Settlement, in the form of dispersed groups of farmsteads with associated out buildings and some residential properties, follows the winding narrow rural roads. Constructed predominately from stone, the cottages and farmhouses are vernacular in appearance and sit comfortably in the landscape, adding to the peaceful rural ambiance.

POSITIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Remote intimate scale landscape with peaceful ambiance.
- Small to medium irregular and sinuous fields bounded drystone walls, hedgerows and ditches on the lower lying land.
- Stone and rendered farm buildings and houses.
- Narrow winding roads and lanes.
- Coherent and distinctive survival of medieval landscape.
- Visual and functional connection with the *Moors*.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. horse paddocks) which are often visually intrusive.
- Encroachment of development along rural roads and villages, particularly around the periphery.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses impacting on the rural, remote character.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Farmed Coal Measures* Landscape type will be one of **conservation**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote and rural nature of the pastoral landscape.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management.
- Maintain key local landscape features including the distinctive drystone walls and stone buildings.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.
- It is important that this area should be managed as a complete unit and not as unconnected, individual medieval sites. The routes to and from its wetland resources should be recognised as an integral element of this agricultural system.

KI: NAILSEA FARMED COAL MEASURES

Location and Boundaries: The *Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures* character area forms a raised plateau, defined by the 5 and 10m contours, rising from the low lying A3: *Kenn and Tickenham Moor* to the west and B1: *Land Yeo, Kenn River and River Avon Flood Plain* to the east. The town of Nailsea sits across the northern section of the outcrop splitting the area in two, leaving a thin strip of rural land around the north with the majority of the area to the south.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying Coal Measures geology.
- Elevated, gently undulating landform rising from 5m to approximately 30m AOD. Occasional views out over the extensive *Moors*.
- Generally a remote intimate scale landscape with peaceful ambiance although the urban edge of Nailsea can be harsh and highly visible in places.
- Pastoral with both cattle and sheep grazing.
- Small to medium irregular and sinuous fields bounded drystone walls, hedgerows, often overgrown, and ditches on the lower lying land.
- Traditional stone and render farmsteads along narrow rural roads.
- Intermittent views out over flat pastoral moors.
- Well preserved medieval landscape.

DESCRIPTION

The Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures outcrop at Nailsea forms an area of raised land that has a highly distinct character. Although it only reaches a maximum elevation of 29m AOD the area has the feel of an island set in the surrounding lowlands of the *Moors* and *River Floodplain* with extensive views out over these areas. The *Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures Landscape Area* is a remote and intimate pastoral landscape which has largely survived from medieval times.

The small to medium sized irregular and sinuous fields typical of early medieval enclosure cover most of the area and are used for grazing both sheep and cattle. This has broken down in places where horse paddocks have been introduced. On the lower land within the area, where *Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures* meets A3: *Kenn and Tickenham Moors* the fields are bounded by a series of ditches and rhynes, with rich biodiversity, holding the most ecological interest in the area. Further up the slopes a network of drystone walls divide the fields, which are frequently overgrown with ash and in some places look like and are being managed as hedgerows. There are also numerous trees along the field boundaries throughout the area.

The stone walls around properties are by contrast well maintained and strengthen the vernacular character of the area. The majority of the settlement and farm buildings are also constructed with local stone and often rendered. Farms and residential properties are generally dispersed or in small groups, such as West End, along the narrow rural roads. Small rural roads leading off the higher ground to give access from the farms to the former common land of the *Moors* for seasonal grazing, an ancient pattern still in place and in use.

Although concealed from the main body of the area, the large settlement of Nailsea contrasts starkly with the intimate character of the area. This is particularly evident to the north and west of the town where the 1970s brick properties are prominent on higher ground. Vehicular access in the

area is limited, which heightens the sense of isolation. There are however a number of footpaths and tracks across the area that potentially perform an important recreational role.

There is little evidence of the coal mining today. Only three of the 14 coal seams were excavated to any extent, with the workings abandoned between 1880 and 1890 due to heavily watered measures and poor quality coal.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Pressure for diversification of land uses (e.g. horse paddocks) which are often visually intrusive.
- Encroachment of development along rural roads and villages, particularly around the periphery of Nailsea.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses impacting on the rural, remote character.
- Lack of management of ditches, drystone walls and hedges in places.
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of the coherent medieval landscape pattern may lead to fragmented management of the archaeological resource.

Character

The intimate sense of peace within the *Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures* formed through the combination of limited access, the dispersed vernacular stone settlement, the sinuous pastoral fields bounded by stone walls and the gentle topography form a character that is considered **strong**, and is almost unique within the district. This does however, break down around the north and west of Nailsea where the area has less breadth and the prominent urban edge sits harshly on the raised ground.

Condition

On the whole the *Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures* are in **good** condition. The drystone walls are becoming overgrown and worn in places and could benefit from sensitive restoration.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

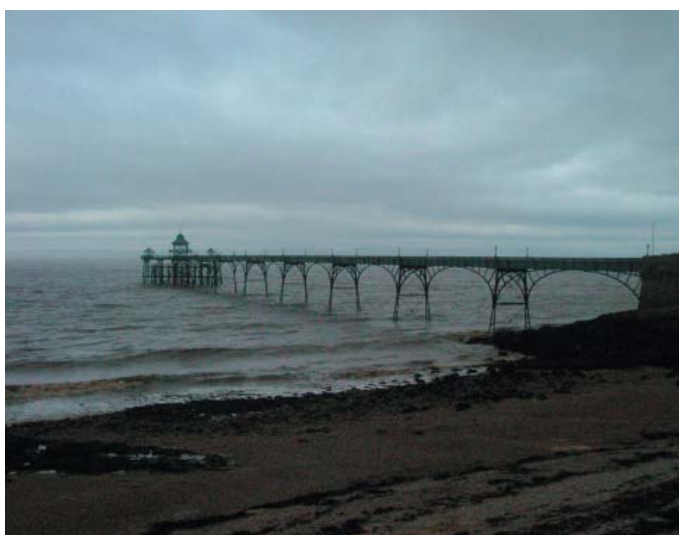
The landscape strategy for *Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures* is to **conserve** the intact medieval landscape of pastoral fields and scattered stone farmsteads, and to restore those minor elements that are declining, most notably the drystone walls.

Landscape Guidelines

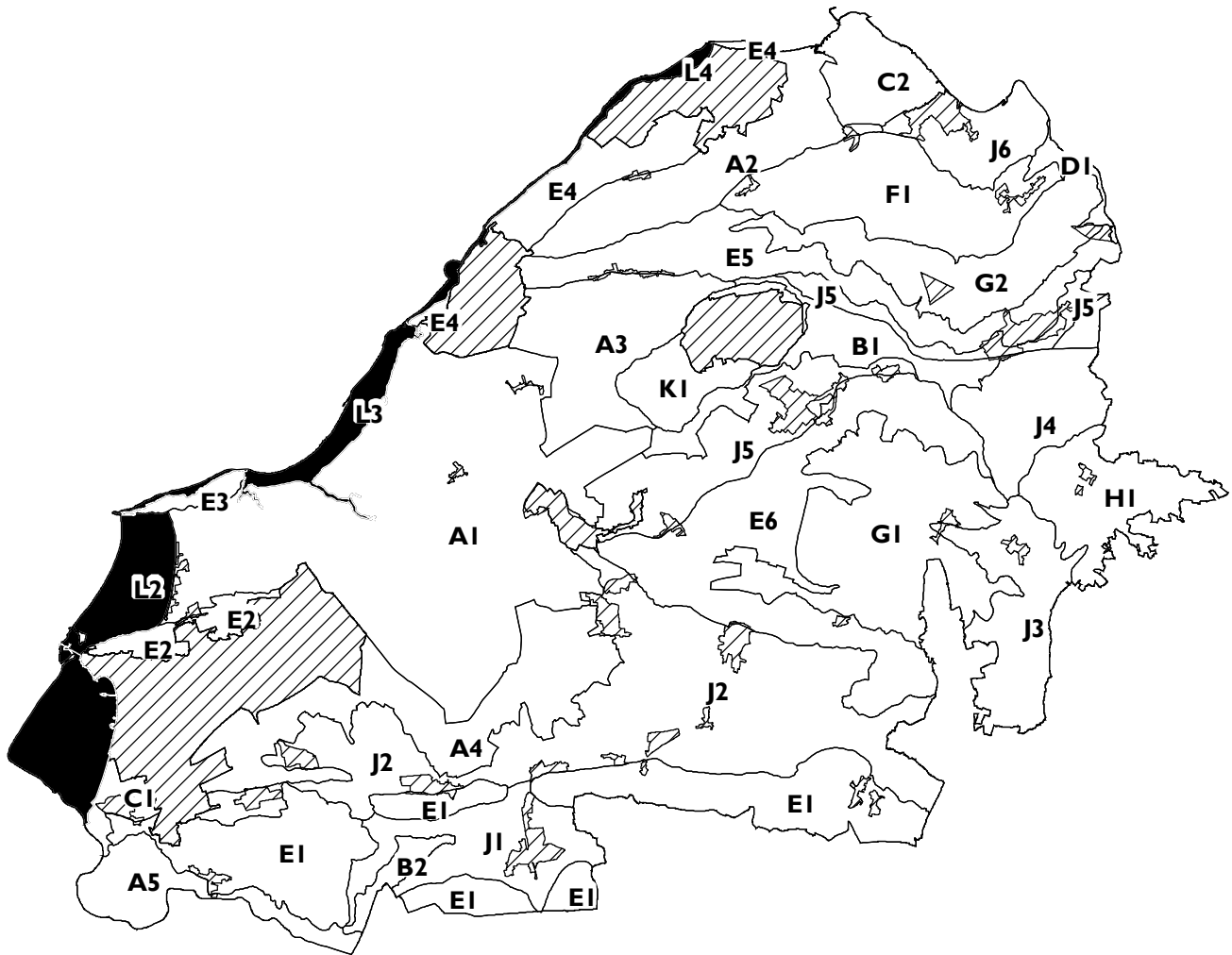
- Conserve the remote and rural nature of the pastoral landscape.
- Encourage traditional methods of land management (grazing).
- Maintain key local landscape features including the distinctive drystone walls.
- Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management.

- Ensure management of the area as a complete unit of historic landscape rather than as unconnected, individual medieval sites. The routes to and from the areas wetland resources should be recognised as an integral element of this agricultural system.

LANDSCAPE TYPE L: INTER-TIDAL BAYS



L: INTER-TIDAL BAYS



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

L1 Weston Bay

L2 Sand Bay

L3 Woodspring Bay

L4 Clevedon-Portishead Bay

 Settlement

LANDSCAPE TYPE L: INTER-TIDAL BAYS

Landscape Character Areas

- L1: Weston Bay
- L2: Sand Bay
- L3: Woodspring Bay
- L4: Clevedon-Portishead Bay

Location and Boundaries

The *Inter-tidal Bays* landscape type occurs along the Severn Estuary coast, to the west of the District, and the areas lie between the Mean High Water level and the Mean Low Water level and are separated by limestone ridges.

Key Characteristics

- Inter-tidal expanses of, often inaccessible, mudflats.
- Dramatic changing character with the tide and seasons.
- Defined edge against the land with a soft transitional edge to the sea
- Open and exposed with wide views across the Bristol Channel to the shores and hills of Wales.
- Framed by dramatically rising limestone ridges.
- Low lying and flat.
- The visible historic features in this landscape type are 19th century, often of a distinctive 'seaside' character such as the piers at Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon.
- Immense intertidal archaeological interest.

DESCRIPTION

Physical Influences

Physical influences have played a major role in the shaping of the North Somerset coastline and the creation of the inter-tidal bays. The perpetual motion of the tide and bombardment of the waves of the Severn Estuary slowly erodes away the bedrock, producing the long sweeping arcs of the bays. The topography of the shore profile determines the extent of the bay; in some places a shallow, gently sloping shoreline reveals a wide expanse of mud and sand at low tide, whereas in other areas the slope is more pronounced and the bays are narrower.

Historic Environment

The presence of Romano British sea walling can be inferred from the extensive settlement and enclosure of the levels though the location and structures have yet to be identified.

Evidence for the earliest use of these inter-tidal areas lies in the remains of medieval, wooden fish traps in Woodspring Bay. There are many undated wooden stakes associated with fishing throughout the inter-tidal zone and many more are likely to date from this time.

Early post medieval marine traffic will have used the natural haven at the mouth of what is now the Blind Yeo, the Yeo Estuary and the site where Knightstone harbour was developed. Knightstone harbour, Clevedon, Birnbeck and Weston piers were all developed in the 19th century. There is also the remains of a navigational marker (isolated danger), indicating the position where a Trans-Atlantic Cable came ashore in Weston Bay.

The Department of Miscellaneous Weapons Development used this area during the Second World War with a small station being built at St Thomas's Head. The remains of two steam ships are easily visible in the centre of Woodspring Bay where they were used as targets on a bombing and gunnery range during the Second World War.

Biodiversity

The inter-tidal bays form part of the Severn Estuary SPA, Ramsar; an area of international importance for over wintering and passage waders. Inter-tidal mudflats surround the coastline, which support a diverse invertebrate fauna providing waders with the food they require to survive the winter.

Between the mudflats and coastline, areas of saltmarsh have established, with continuous stretches present at Woodspring Bay (south of Clevedon) and to the west of Portishead docks. Species such as glasswort and annual sea blite colonise bare mud on the lower saltmarshes while in more established marsh a range of species grow including; common cord grass, sea aster, greater sea-spurrey and common salt-marsh grass.

Beds of eel-grass (a UK BAP habitat) occur on sheltered mud and sand banks which provide shelter for fish.

Settlement Character

The *Inter-tidal Bays* themselves hold very little settlement; with only the occasional pier on stilts or boat launch jutting out into them. Their character is however, strongly influenced by the settlement that has grown up around them. This varies from a solid frontage of Victorian terraces to areas completely isolated and devoid of human activity. Those that do have settlement around the periphery follow a similar pattern (although it changes in nature and scale); sea defences (a wall or mound) define the edge of the bay, with a road beyond. Houses and/or resort development lines these roads facing onto the bays.

POSITIVE FEATURES OF KEY SIGNIFICANCE

- Strong sense of exposure and remoteness, particularly at low tide.
- Wide open skies and views to sea.
- Character changes with the changing tide and seasons.
- Framed by limestone ridges.
- Defined edge separating the area from others inland, usually a sea wall.
- Survival of Victorian and Edwardian seaside structures such as piers, stone sea walls, seating and shelters.
- High ecological value particularly as habitat for over wintering birds.
- Likely high buried archaeological potential.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Potential adverse impacts from heavy recreational use, particularly in summer.
- Potential impacts of geomorphic degradation and aggradation.
- Affect of agricultural and urban run-off.
- Loss of typical Victorian and Edwardian seaside feature such as piers and shelters due to lack of use and susceptibility to vandalism.
- Introduction of unsympathetic signage, handrails, lighting and other landscape furniture along the inland edges of the bays.
- Increased encroachment of settlement up the limestone ridges that overlook the bays.
- Archaeological resource vulnerable to damage due to lack of information on nature and location of remains.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Inter-tidal Bays* Landscape type will generally be one of **conservation**.

Landscape Guidelines

- Retain the sense of exposure and isolation.
- Conserve the important ecological resource of the mud flats.
- Maintain sensitive sea defences where appropriate, limiting the negative impacts on ecology and landscape of geomorphic change where possible.
- Conserve the typical historic seaside structures such as piers, stone sea walls seats and shelters and integrate new landscape furniture sensitively taking into account the varying characters of the individual bays.
- Ensure that open areas between the edge of the bays and the townscape is preserved and that tall elements such as lighting do not become intrusive in views inland from the bays.
- Undertake an Integrated Marine Management Plan to ensure comprehensive and sustainable management of the resource, covering, archaeology, biodiversity, recreation and economic interests.
- Systematic archaeological field survey is required of these areas, particularly of the buried archaeological potential.
- The archaeological component of the Shore Line Management Plan should be updated.

LI: WESTON BAY

Location and Boundaries: Weston Bay gently arcs from the District boundary at the mouth of the river Axe in the south, for approximately 3.5km along the Severn Estuary to the Worlebury Ridge to the north. The shallow shoreline gradient gives a wide inter-tidal range, extending for over 2km between Mean High Water and Mean Low Water levels. The sea wall at Weston-super-Mare forms the boundary with the urban areas.

Key Characteristics

- Wider inter-tidal range exposing vast expanses of mudflats at low tide creating a sense of isolation and remoteness, particularly to the south of the area.
- Varying character with the movement of the tide and through the seasons.
- Gently arching bay framed between two limestone ridges, with wide views across the Bristol Channel, punctuated by the islands of Flatholm and Steepholm.
- Stone sea wall defines the boundary with the town of Weston-super-Mare.
- Victorian frontage of Weston-super-Mare and seaside buildings form a backdrop to the bay and dominate views back to shore.
- Southern end of the shoreline is more natural with sand dunes protecting the golf course inland.
- Lines of wooden poles jut out into the bay.
- A number of civic amenity buildings and structures fringe the bay including piers, a modern sealife centre and a marine lake.

DESCRIPTION

The changing level of the tide plays a major role in shaping the character of *Weston Bay*. Due to the gently sloping topography, low tide exposes a wide expanse of mudflats stretching for some 2km to the water's edge. This vast uninterrupted and inaccessible flat area creates a strong sense of exposure and isolation with wide, open skies, on the edge of Weston-super-Mare. Steep limestone ridges on either side of the bay frame the expansive views out to sea.

The sandy beach stretching the length of the bay has a typical 'seaside holiday' character. It is interrupted with increasing frequency towards its northern end by series of wooden post jutting out into the sea, the two 19th century piers, a modern sealife centre and a concrete model boat lake. The beach and its attractions are heavily used in summer. This however, greatly reduces in the winter months leaving the beach feeling peaceful, empty and, especially in bad weather, somewhat bleak.

The predominantly Victorian town of Weston-super-Mare with its hotels, bars and flashing lights of amusement arcades provides the backdrop to the bay, along with the substantial Victorian stone esplanade wall incorporating sheltered seating. The town is separated from the beach by a wide promenade and road network, which aids the open character of the bay although the tall modern light posts are visually intrusive in the views towards land. To the northeast the town creeps up the wooded ridge overlooking the bay.

In contrast to the activity at the northern end of the bay, the southern section, beyond the limits of Weston-super-Mare, feels much more natural. The large grassed bund along the line of the sea wall prevents views inland increasing the sense of isolation which is reinforced by views to the uninhabited ridge of Brean Down to the south.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Modern street furniture, such as tall lamp posts along the promenade tend to detract from the sense of openness, particularly at the northern end of the bay.
- Potential pollution from urban run-off.
- Potential impacts of geomorphic degradation and aggradation could change the shape of the bay and damage the beach.
- Increased encroachment of settlement up the south side of Worlebury Ridge affecting the views to the enclosing wooded ridge top.
- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses impacting on the openness and exposure.
- Archaeological resource vulnerable to damage due to lack of information on nature and location of remains.

Character

Weston Bay exhibits a number of the positive characteristics typical of the *Bays* type. The wide inter-tidal range exposes vast inaccessible mudflats with wide sea views, and the Victorian terraces fringing the land and rising up the ridge form the landward backdrop. The character differs from other areas in the *Inter-tidal Bays* as a result of its use as a functioning holiday resort. Some of the infrastructure elements such as the tall modern lights along the promenade detract from the natural and the historic landscape however the overall character of this area remains **strong**.

Condition

Weston Bay is generally considered to be in **good** to **moderate** condition. However, the pressure on the bay as a recreational facility is evident in places, litter is prevalent and the reduction in visitor numbers in winter forces the extended closure of some facilities which become vulnerable to vandalism.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Weston Bay* is to **conserve** the openness of the bay with opportunities to **enhance** the setting through careful management of the urban edge of Weston-super-Mare.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect the ecologically important mudflats and sand dunes and investigate methods of managing geological degradation.
- Location and design of landscape furnishings, such as lamps, bus shelters and seating should be carefully considered to fit in with the surviving Victorian infrastructure and townscape.
- Minimise the impact of settlement edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses by maintaining space between the buildings and the sea wall.
- Maintain the 'undeveloped' wooded ridges as the setting to the Bay.

- Undertake an Integrated Marine Management Plan to ensure comprehensive and sustainable management of the resource, covering, archaeology, biodiversity, recreation and economic interests.
- Systematic archaeological field survey is required of these areas.
- The archaeological component of the Shore Line Management Plan should be updated.

L2: SAND BAY

Location and Boundaries: *Sand Bay* arcs around in a deep 'U' shape between the enclosing limestone ridges (Worlebury Ridge to the south and Middle Hope Ridge to the north). The shallow gradient creates a large inter-tidal range stretching westwards from the coastline for approximately 1.5km. Beach Road forms the boundary to the east.

Key Characteristics

- Shallow low-lying bay of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits with a wide inter-tidal range exposing expanses of mudflats.
- Contained between dramatically rising limestone ridges to north and south which frame the views to sea.
- Band of golden sand running along the shoreline with sand dunes rising over the sea defences at the edge of the area.
- Exposed, remote and natural feel, with fringe of settlement largely concealed by the vegetated sea defences.
- Heavily used for recreation particularly in summer, but with minimal infrastructure to support this.

DESCRIPTION

Sand Bay is a large 'U' shaped bay with a wide inter-tidal range and flanked on either side by limestone ridges. The gently sloping, low-lying landform creates a wide inter-tidal range that exposes a vast inaccessible mudflat at low tide. A strip of sand hugs the shoreline and rises up into grassy dunes over sea defences, creating a raised natural promenade. In the more sheltered northeast corner of this open and exposed landscape, an area of saltmarsh extends out into the bay on slightly higher ground.

Lining the boundary of the area is a narrow road, beyond which is a line of 20th century rendered houses and bungalows. The buildings are generally low level and largely hidden behind the raised grassy bank of the sea defences, helping to retain the strong natural and remote feeling of this bay. There is an informal route for visitors along the top of the raised vegetated sea defences, and this is sensitively designed with just a few seats along the route. The line of telegraph poles running parallel to the road is however more visually intrusive. Large visitor numbers in the summer months also have an impact on the isolated character of the bay and put a strain on the limited resources surrounding it.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Geomorphic degradation could potentially change the structure and nature of the mudflats, the saltmarsh, the beach and sand dunes.
- Pressure to increase the size and number of properties along the shore, and to provide facilities to visitors may affect the natural, low key character of the bay.
- Archaeological resource vulnerable to damage due to lack of information on nature and location of remains.

Character

Sand Bay is considered to have a **strong** character as a natural, exposed bay with the shallow sloping landform creating a wide inter-tidal range and the expansive views framed by limestone ridges. The

settlement fringing the landward boundary has minimal impact on the character due to the raised edge but increasing visitor numbers may threaten the continued natural feel of the area through pressure for more facilities.

Condition

Overall the condition of *Sand Bay* is **good**. Despite a relatively large number of recreational users, impacts are minimal. The footpaths are worn paths in the vegetation of the raised sea defences rather than made up paths and this is in keeping with the informal, natural character of the bay, but pressure of visitor numbers may impact on grassland habitats in the long term.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *Sand Bay* is to **conserve** the natural character and the sense of remoteness, protecting key ecological features and providing visitor facilities in a low key style, sensitive to the remote feel and natural habitats of the bay.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the natural, remote character of the bay.
- Protect the views framed by the ridges, and prevent disruption by development.
- Encourage public access to the shore side but retain sense of remoteness and minimise the pressure on the sand dunes through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Protect the areas of salt marsh and ecologically important mudflats and investigate methods to manage geological degradation.
- Minimise the impact of settlement edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses by maintaining space between the buildings and the raised sea defences.
- Undertake an Integrated Marine Management Plan to ensure comprehensive and sustainable management of the resource, covering, archaeology, biodiversity, recreation and economic interests.
- Systematic archaeological field survey is required of these areas to ascertain the extent of the buried archaeological resource.
- The archaeological component of the Shore Line Management Plan should be updated.

L3: WOODSPRING BAY

Location and Boundaries: *Woodspring Bay* is a long narrow *Inter-tidal Bay* stretching approximately 5km. It extends from the tip of Middlehope Ridge to the south east and arcs around to High Cliff at Clevedon to the north. The landform falls away more rapidly than at the bays to the south, creating a relatively narrow inter-tidal range of 0.5km. The boundary follows the 5m contour along the edge of the *Moors*, generally following the line of the sea defences, although the inter-tidal zone also extends up the lower reaches of the River Yeo.

Key Characteristics

- Gently arching bay of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits between two limestone ridges with wide views of the Bristol Channel and shores of Wales.
- Long and narrow inter-tidal range exposing large expanses of rocky mudflats at low tide and creating a wave cut platform on the north side of the limestone ridge of Middle Hope.
- The inter-tidal range extends up the mouth of the River Yeo, which emerges in the bay along with various other rivers.
- Expansive and flat low lying area with a strong sense of exposure and openness, especially as the landform rises only a couple of metres at the edge of the wide level *A1: Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors Character Area*.
- Natural ambience due to uninhabited and inaccessible coastal edge, fringed by a grassy sea wall and the edge of the highly rural *Moors* landscape.

DESCRIPTION

L3: Woodspring Bay forms a long and narrow bay defined by limestone ridges at either end. At low tide a dark muddy band of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits is exposed which adds to the sense of openness and exposure created by the surrounding level topography and wide views out to sea. The limited access to this area amplifies the strong feeling of remoteness, with a few small boats moored by the Yeo Estuary practically the only sign of human occupation.

To landward the ground rises just a few metres above High Water Level, making for a gradual transition between the bay and *A1: Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors*. Along the High Water Level areas of marshy grassland have developed and there are grassy raised sea walls. This shoreline is divided by numerous rivers; the River Yeo, Blind Yeo and Kingston Pill, which, revealed at low tide, flow into the bay.

The few visible features in this area include low posts associated with medieval, inter-tidal fish weirs and the remains of two steam ships in the centre of the area which were used as targets on a bombing and gunnery range during the Second World War. There is also a large freestanding limestone outcrop, Blackstone Rock, to the north of the area.

Where the sea meets the limestone ridge to the south of the area, the erosive action has formed wave cut platforms.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Geomorphic degradation caused by the numerous rivers and the tide, could potentially change the structure and nature of the mudflats and the saltmarsh.

- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage associated with development, and recreational uses impacting on the rural, remote character.
- Archaeological resource vulnerable to damage due to lack of information on nature and location of remains.

Character

The character of *L3: Woodspring Bay* is **strong** as an exposed and rugged expanse of open tidal flats, with its inaccessibility reinforcing the isolated and natural ambience of the area.

Condition

The condition of *L3: Woodspring Bay* is considered to be **good** as a large area of mud flats fringed by marshy grassland, largely unaffected by development or public access.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *L3: Woodspring Bay* is to **conserve** the remote and open and rugged character of the area while increasing access for the public.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the remote and open character.
- Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure.
- Conserve the maritime landscape of waterways and small boats.
- Protect the areas of salt marsh and ecologically important mudflats and investigate methods to manage geological degradation.
- Undertake an Integrated Marine Management Plan to ensure comprehensive and sustainable management of the resource, covering, archaeology, biodiversity, recreation and economic interests.
- Systematic archaeological field survey is required of these areas.
- The archaeological component of the Shore Line Management Plan should be updated.

L4: CLEVEDON-PORTISHEAD BAYS

Location and Boundaries: L4: *Clevedon-Portishead Bays* forms the longest and narrowest of all the *Inter-tidal* character areas. It stretches for approximately 11 km forming a number of small bays along the length of F4: *Portishead Ridges and Combes* to the north of the District. Its boundaries are defined as lying between the Mean High and the Mean Low Water levels.

Key Characteristics

- Narrow inter-tidal range, exposing areas of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits.
- Variety in textures, the mud-flats form a smooth surface broken up by rough rocks and cliffs.
- Numerous bays and wave cut platforms along the length of F4: *Portishead Ridges and Combes*, the majority of which are small and secluded.
- Two larger bays at Portishead and Clevedon, with a back drop of the seaside towns.
- Distant views out to sea and across to Wales.

DESCRIPTION

L4: Clevedon-Portishead Bays is a long and narrow character area of sandy bays and wave cut platforms. The majority of the bays, such as Pigeon House Bay and Walton Bay, are small and secluded areas of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits exposed at low tide, which contrast with the rugged rock formations of the wave cut platforms and cliffs to landward. A caravan park at Farley overlooks these smaller bays and a path runs along the ridge top but the bays remain fairly inaccessible.

The two largest bays are located at Clevedon and Portishead and are more heavily influenced by the settlement around them. Sea walls define the edge of these bays with towns rising on ridge slopes beyond. Clevedon is a predominantly a Victorian settlement with numerous large stone villas and an ornate pier (built in 1896 and recently restored) jutting out into the bay. Portishead is less prominent in views from the bay, with areas of open ground between the shore and the predominantly 20th century housing and municipal buildings that look over the bay to the north.

Despite their close proximity to settlement, the two large bays retain much of the sense of rugged exposure of the more secluded smaller bays. The bays are rocky and pebbled, with occasional areas of marshy grassland. At low tide the uncovered mud forms a wide expanse of inaccessible flats which increase the feeling of openness and exposure.

EVALUATION

Forces for Change

- Small scale incremental changes e.g. proliferation of clutter, signage and hand rails associated with the ridge top path, and other recreational uses impacting on the openness and exposure.
- Potential pollution from urban and agricultural run-off
- Visual impact of unsympathetic urban edges and urban fringe influences within the immediately adjacent landscapes.
- Increasing amounts of landscape furniture, such as bus shelters and tall lamp posts along the promenade of the urban areas are detracting from the sense of openness.
- Archaeological resource vulnerable to damage due to lack of information on nature and location of remains.

Character

The character of *L4: Portishead and Clevedon Bays* varies throughout the area with the size and location of the bays, but is inextricably linked by a sense of natural ruggedness. Overall this character of this area is **strong**.

Condition

L4: Portishead and Clevedon Bays is generally in **good** condition. Heavy recreational use does however, place pressure on the larger bays.

STRATEGY

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for *L4: Portishead and Clevedon Bays* is to **conserve** the sense of natural ruggedness and remote feel of the area.



Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the rugged character that is intrinsic to all the bays and retain the sense of seclusion in the smaller bays.
- Encourage public access to the shore side but retain sense of remoteness through careful design of routes and infrastructure such as handrails, signage and path surfaces.
- Protect the ecologically important mudflats and investigate methods to manage geological degradation.
- Location and design of landscape furnishings, such as lamps, bus shelters and seating should be carefully considered so as not to detract from the Victorian seaside town backdrop at Clevedon and the more low key open views to shore at Portishead.
- Minimise the impact of settlement edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses by maintaining space between the buildings and the sea walls at Portishead and Clevedon.
- Undertake an Integrated Marine Management Plan to ensure comprehensive and sustainable management of the resource, covering, archaeology, biodiversity, recreation and economic interests.
- Systematic archaeological field survey is required of these areas.
- The archaeological component of the Shore Line Management Plan should be updated.

APPENDIX I

NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Appendix I: Landscape Character

Key
 North Somerset Boundary
 Settlement

A: Moors
 A1 Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors
 A2 Clapton Moor
 A3 Kenn and Tickenham Moors
 A4 Locking and Banwell Moors
 A5 Bleadon Moor

B: River Floodplains
 B1 Land Yeo and Kenn River Floodplain
 B2 Lox Yeo River Floodplain

C: Settled Coastal Edge
 C1 Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge
 C2 Portbury Settled Coastal Edge

D: Limestone Gorges
 D1 Avon Gorge

E: Limestone Ridges and Combes
 E1 Mendip Ridge
 E2 Worlebury Ridge
 E3 Middlehope Ridge
 E4 Portishead Ridge
 E5 Tickenham Ridge
 E6 Cleeve Ridge

F: Sandstone Uplands
 F1 Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands

G: Settled Limestone Plateau
 G1 Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau
 G2 Falland Settled Limestone Plateau

H: Settled Hills
 H1 Dundry Hill

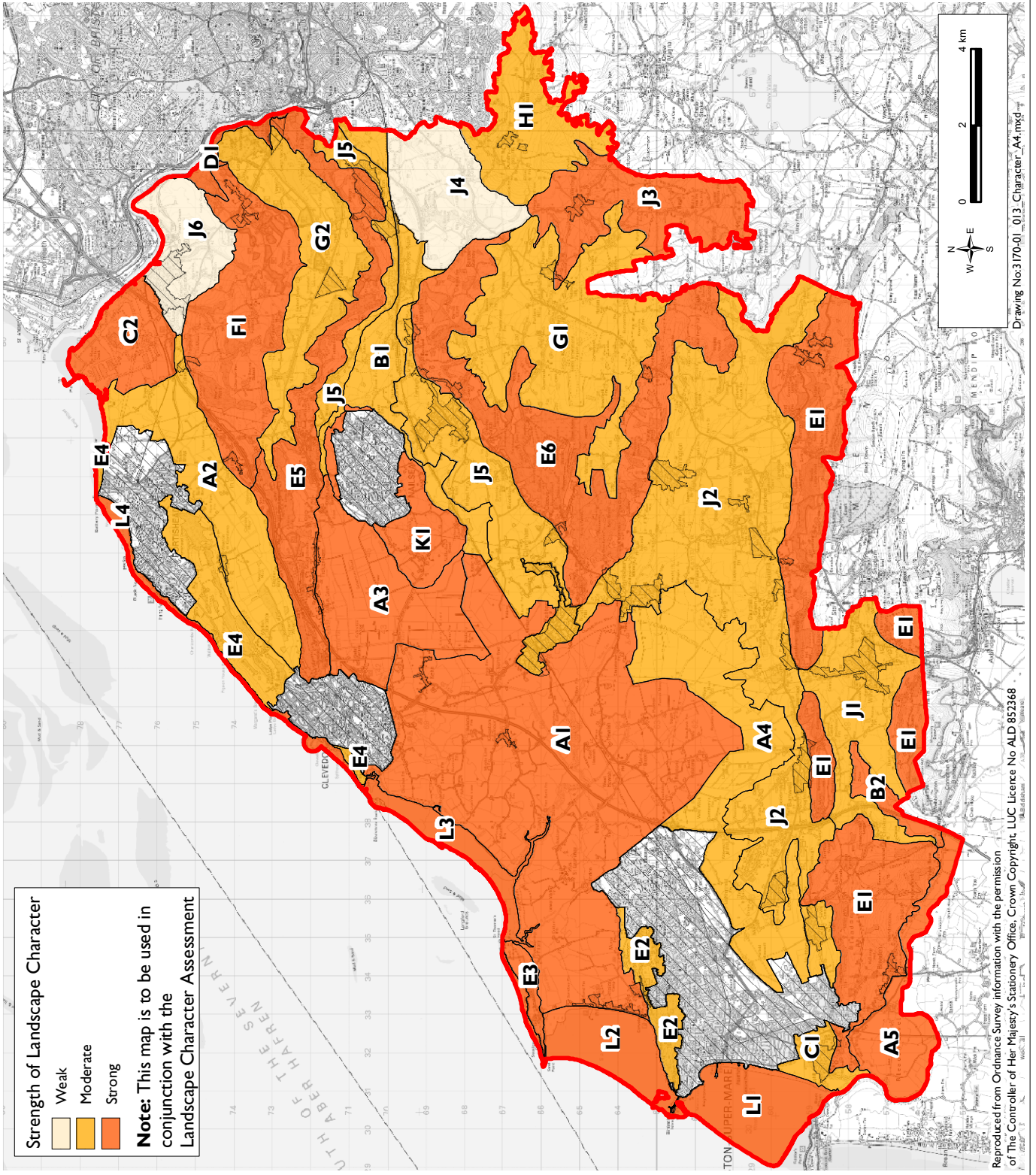
J: Rolling Valley Farmland
 J1 Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
 J2 River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
 J3 Chew Rolling Valley Farmland
 J4 Colliers Brook Rolling Valley Farmland
 J5 Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland
 J6 Avon Rolling Valley Farmland




K: Farmed Coal Measures
 K1 Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures

L: Inter-tidal Bays
 L1 Weston Bay
 L2 Sand Bay
 L3 Woodspring Bay
 L4 Clevedon-Portishead Bays



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Strength of Landscape Character
 Weak
 Moderate
 Strong



Note: This map is to be used in conjunction with the Landscape Character Assessment

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NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Appendix I: Landscape Condition

Key
 North Somerset Boundary
 Settlement

A: Moors

- A1 Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors
- A2 Clapton Moor
- A3 Kenn and Tickenham Moors
- A4 Locking and Banwell Moors
- A5 Bleadon Moor

B: River Floodplains

- B1 Land Yeo and Kenn River Floodplain
- B2 Lox Yeo River Floodplain

C: Settled Coastal Edge

- C1 Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge
- C2 Portbury Settled Coastal Edge

D: Limestone Gorges

- D1 Avon Gorge

E: Limestone Ridges and Combes

- E1 Mendip Ridge
- E2 Worlebury Ridge
- E3 Middlehope Ridge
- E4 Portlishope Ridge
- E5 Tickenham Ridge
- E6 Cleeve Ridge

F: Sandstone Uplands

- F1 Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands

G: Settled Limestone Plateau

- G1 Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau
- G2 Faland Settled Limestone Plateau

H: Settled Hills

- H1 Dundry Hill

J: Rolling Valley Farmland

- J1 Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
- J2 River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
- J3 Chew Rolling Valley Farmland
- J4 Colliers Brook Rolling Valley Farmland
- J5 Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland
- J6 Avon Rolling Valley Farmland

K: Farmed Coal Measures

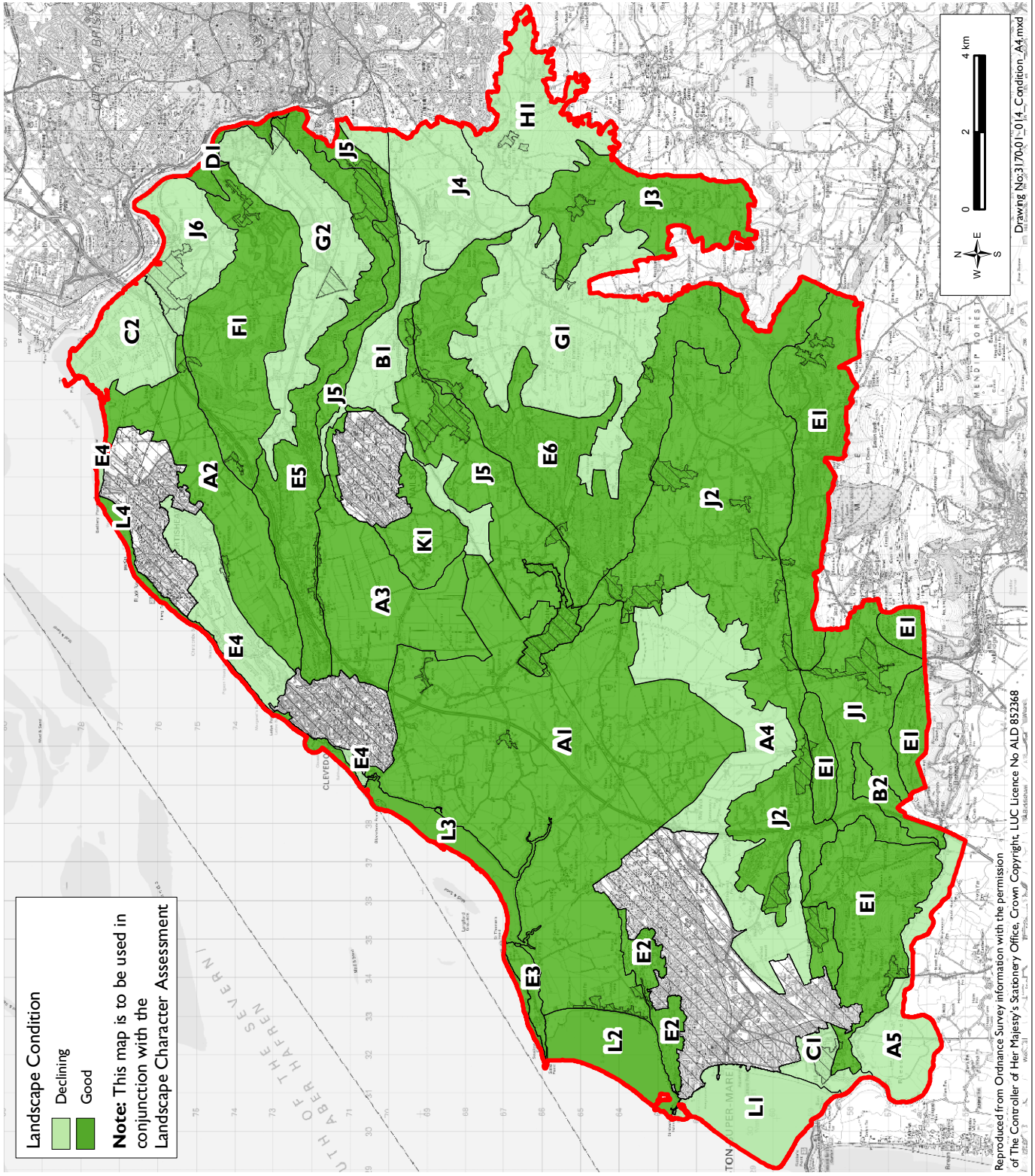
- K1 Nalsea Farmed Coal Measures



L: Inter-tidal Bays

- L1 Weston Bay
- L2 Sand Bay
- L3 Woodspring Bay
- L4 Clevedon-Portishead Bays

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Landscape Condition
 Declining
 Good
Note: This map is to be used in conjunction with the Landscape Character Assessment

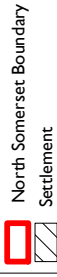
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1:140,000

NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Appendix I: Landscape Strategy

Key



- A: Moors**
- A1 Kingston Seymour and Puxton Moors
 - A2 Clapton Moor
 - A3 Kenn and Trickenham Moors
 - A4 Locking and Banwell Moors
 - A5 Bleadon Moor

- B: River Floodplains**
- B1 Land Yeo and Kenn River Floodplain
 - B2 Lox Yeo River Floodplain

- C: Settled Coastal Edge**
- C1 Weston Bay Settled Coastal Edge
 - C2 Portbury Settled Coastal Edge

- D: Limestone Gorges**
- D1 Avon Gorge

- E: Limestone Ridges and Combes**
- E1 Mendip Ridge
 - E2 Worlebury Ridge
 - E3 Middlehope Ridge
 - E4 Portishead Ridge
 - E5 Trickenham Ridge
 - E6 Cleve Ridge

- F: Sandstone Uplands**
- F1 Abbots Leigh Sandstone Uplands

- G: Settled Limestone Plateau**
- G1 Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau
 - G2 Faland Settled Limestone Plateau

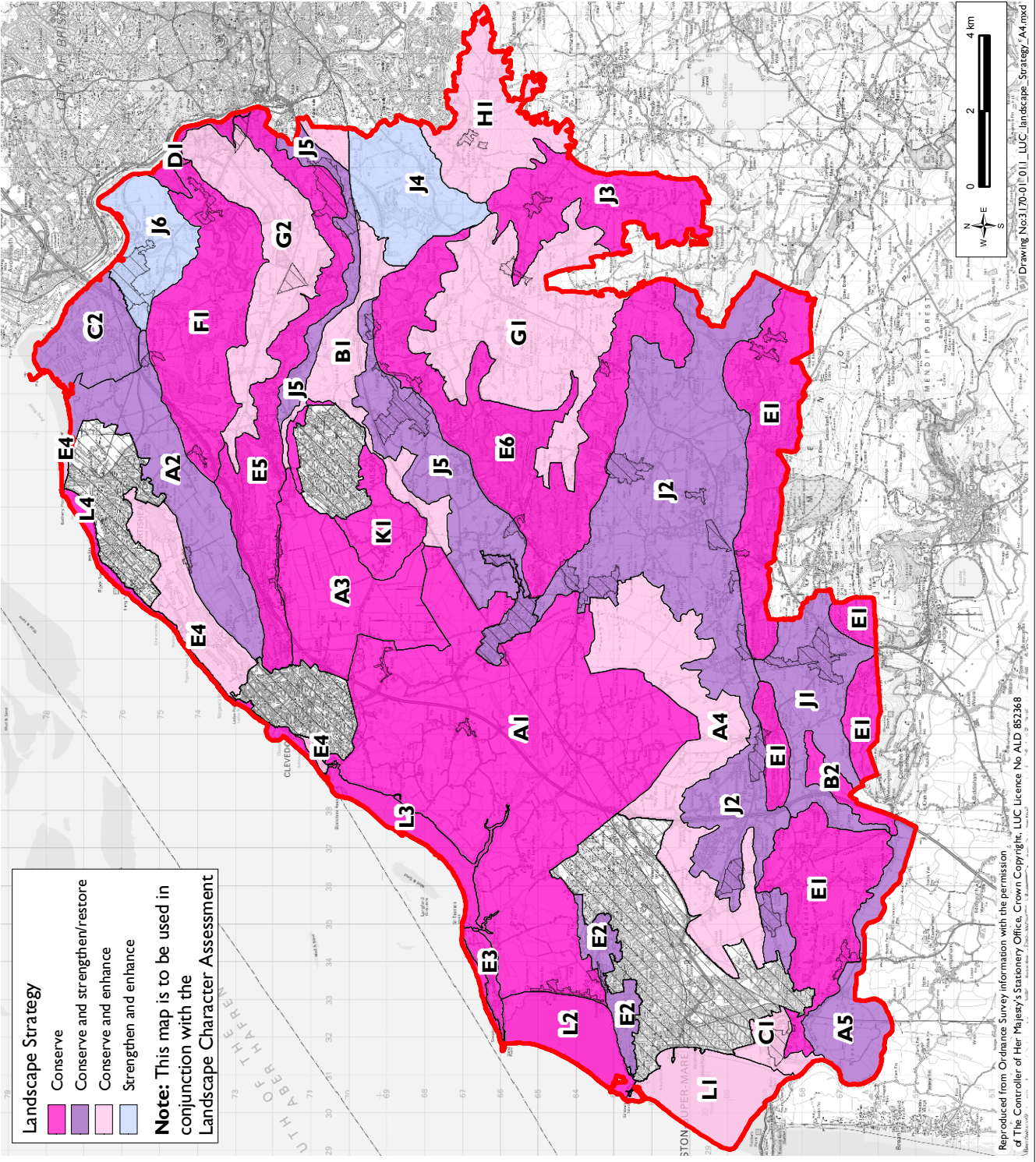
- H: Settled Hills**
- H1 Dundry Hill

- J: Rolling Valley Farmland**
- J1 Lox Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
 - J2 River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland
 - J3 Chew Rolling Valley Farmland
 - J4 Colliers Brook Rolling Valley Farmland
 - J5 Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland
 - J6 Avon Rolling Valley Farmland

- K: Farmed Coal Measures**
- K1 Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures

- L: Inter-tidal Bays**
- L1 Weston Bay
 - L2 Sand Bay
 - L3 Woodspring Bay
 - L4 Clevedon-Portishead Bays

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Landscape Strategy

- Conserve
- Conserve and strengthen/restore
- Conserve and enhance
- Strengthen and enhance

Note: This map is to be used in conjunction with the Landscape Character Assessment

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Drawing No:3170-0111_LUC_landscape_Strategy_A4.mxd

APPENDIX 2

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APPENDIX 3

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- A. The method for undertaking the landscape character assessment follows the current accepted method promoted by the Countryside Agency as set out in the document *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002)*.
- B. The District-wide assessment has been prepared within the framework of the Countryside Agency and English Nature's Countryside Character Initiative as shown on the *Character of England Map* and it also considers the context provided by the Agency's *National Landscape Typology* and the Local Authority scale assessments of the Mendip Hills and the adjacent districts (where these have been undertaken and have been published).
- C. The process for undertaking the study involved five main stages, described below, namely:
- Data Collation
 - Characterisation
 - Field survey
 - Evaluation
 - Consultation
- D. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data.

Data Collation

- E. **Baseline Data:** This stage involved the collation and mapping of a wide range of existing information on the characteristics of North Somerset from a variety of sources including baseline maps of geology, topography, soils and hydrology; schedules of designated and protected areas and features; and a review of technical literature including Environment Agency information, English Nature's Natural Area Profiles etc. It also included collation of information relating to the 'perceptual' characteristics of the landscape, such as literary references or as a source of artistic inspiration.
- F. **National Context:** The context provided by the framework of the four joint Character Areas and the national Landscape Typology was reviewed and boundaries mapped to place the county in the context of the national hierarchy. **Figure 2** indicates the National Character Area Context.
- G. **Local Context:** Existing local character assessments including the *The Mendip Hills Landscape* and studies undertaken in adjacent districts and counties were reviewed and their boundaries mapped: *Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset, A Landscape Character Assessment 2003*, *Sedgemoor Landscape Assessment and Countryside Design Summary 1997*, *Landscape Assessment of the Mendip District 1997*.

Characterisation

- H. The process of characterisation drew together all the information outlined above, to develop a draft classification. The approach follows best practice as promoted by the Countryside Agency in the *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002)* in maintaining a distinction between landscape types and character areas, and developing a hierarchical approach as follows:

- **Landscape Types** - which are generic and share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences, e.g. 'Inter-tidal Bays' or 'Settled Hills';
 - **Character Areas** - which are single and unique, discrete geographical areas of the landscape type, e.g. 'Weston Bay' or 'Dundry Hill'.
- I. For the purposes of this District-wide assessment emphasis has been placed upon the definition and subdivision of the landscape at a scale of 1:25 000 and at the Landscape Character Area scale i.e. the identification of particular geographical areas of distinctive landscape.
- J. The classification was informed by specialist studies, including an outline appraisal of the historic character of the landscape undertaken by Richard McDonnell and tailored ecological studies. The emphasis has been on the integration of this information within the landscape character assessment.
- K. The study specifically **excluded** an analysis of the area within development limits. Therefore, although the smaller villages were considered as a part of a wider landscape context and character, no specific townscape or urban character assessments were undertaken of the more built-up areas such as Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, and Nailsea.

Survey

- L. A field survey was undertaken to appraise the draft characterisation. This specifically focussed on:
- verification and fine-tuning of the classification of the landscape character areas (and types) identified;
 - making refinements to landscape character area (and type) boundaries and names;
 - recording landscape character,
 - assessing condition, key trends and forces for change.
- M. A systematic and rigorous approach was adopted for the survey, with information recorded on 1:25,000 scale maps and a Field Record Sheet: see Appendix 4. A comprehensive photo record was also made. The final classification encompasses eleven landscape types, including a total of thirty one character area subdivisions.
- N. **A note on boundary lines:** The precision of boundaries drawn around landscape character areas and types varies with the scale and level of detail of the assessment. This assessment has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 which means that it is suitable for use at this scale.
- O. In reality landscape character rarely changes abruptly and the boundaries indicated in the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment therefore sometimes represent zones of transition in character relating to changes in topography, geology soils, cultural patterns, land use etc. rather than marked changes on the ground. In practice boundaries of this nature have frequently been drawn to follow physical or mappable features such as roads, lanes or field boundaries which provide 'best fit', for example between *A2 Clapton Moor* and *E4 Portishead Ridges and Combes* which follow the line of the B3124.
- P. **A note on character areas:** Character Types and Areas and have been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 and are suitable for use at this scale.

- Q. The Character Areas share generic characteristics with other areas of the same Landscape Type but have a particular 'sense of place'. Therefore Character Areas defined and described in this report have distinct patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern etc. which contribute to their particular character. However, it is important to be aware that Character Areas are not homogeneous and that there is variation within them, for example an area of parkland found within a character area would have different characteristics to, say, an adjoining pastoral field but the Character Area overall may be unified by the presence of a number of parklands set within pastoral fields or a distinctive landform.
- R. **A note on built areas:** This is an assessment of the rural landscape. The land within the development limits of villages and settlements was not studied in detail as part of the LCA. The smaller villages have been considered and form part of the description on landscape character. However, no specific townscape or urban character assessments were undertaken of the more built-up areas such as Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea and where these occur within the boundaries of Character Areas it is the undeveloped area surrounding the settlement to which the description is referring.

Method for the Evaluation

Introduction

- S. There is no current accepted methodology for evaluating Landscape Character. As the Countryside Agency's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland states '*The use of Landscape Character Assessment in making judgements is a fast-moving scene amongst practitioners*'. The approach for the evaluation undertaken as part of the North Somerset LCA aims to follow current best practice and is set out below.
- T. The purposes of the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment Evaluation are to assist in the development control response by providing a more informed response to development proposals affecting the landscape and to provide the basis for strategic landscape planning and management. In order to achieve these aims the evaluation needs to develop judgements on:
- (i) the **condition** and **strength of character** of the landscape.
 - (ii) an overall guiding **landscape strategy**.
 - (iii) the ongoing processes that are/will affect the future landscape and **recommendations for managing change**.
- U. The logic, terminology (as set out by the Countryside Agency guidance, where possible) and rationale behind the evaluation in this assessment are set out below.
- V. The judgements draw on the following:
- **Strength of Character:** A description of how the combination of individual components and their contribution to landscape character. It is connected to distinctiveness and landscape integrity. Strength of character is determined by judging how distinct and recognisable the pattern of elements is that defines the character of the landscape. This includes the combination of physical and cultural attributes and the sense of place that they evoke. It is defined on a three-point scale of weak, moderate or strong.

- **Condition:** A description of how the condition and intactness of the different components create a perception of the overall condition of the landscape. It is defined on a three-point scale of poor, moderate or good.

Landscape Strategy

W. The following table is used to determine an overall landscape strategy for the character area. It is based on a consideration of strength of character and condition.

CONDITION	Good	Strengthen	Conserve and Strengthen	Conserve
	declining	Strengthen and Enhance	Conserve and Enhance	Conserve and Restore
	poor	Creation	Restore and Enhance	Restore
		Weak	moderate	strong
		STRENGTH OF CHARACTER		

X. The strategy is presented for the character area as a whole and identifies any particular management needs for specific elements. These are developed further in the guidelines. The aim is not just to give a blunt prescription for the whole area, but to identify the specific features to which the strategy applies. The aim is to set out broad principles to manage and direct landscape change for example in order to protect the highest quality and most sensitive landscapes from adverse change and to encourage positive change in weak or degraded landscapes. The strategy objectives are combinations of different aims ranging from preserving the current landscape (conservation) in the areas of strong character and good condition to encouraging positive change (creation) in the landscapes of weak character and poor condition. These are illustrated in the box below.

Landscape Strategies

Conserve: Landscapes of strong character in good condition and therefore judged to be of high quality where emphasis should be on conservation of existing character and of particular features that contribute to this character. The aim should be to continue the current management regime/adopt best practice approaches. Great care will need to be taken in the introduction of new characteristics.

Enhance/restore: Landscape character is strong/positive but becoming weakened and individual features may have suffered decline or damage. Within these landscapes the emphasis should be on restoring elements that have been lost or declined and on enhancing character. This may include improvements to landscape management practices and the introduction of positive new elements or features.

Create: Landscape character is weak and is not highly valued and its condition is declining/poor. Here the objective is to form a new and different landscape or accelerate

change towards a new character with positive benefits for people and the environment. This should be proactive rather than reactive and it may be appropriate to develop plans or strategies in consultation with stakeholders to determine appropriate new character.

Forces for Change

- Y. The purpose of this section is to identify the factors affecting landscape change (or likely to do so in the future) and to determine appropriate landscape guidelines for managing change to help ensure that local character is conserved and enhanced. It is not intended to provide an implementation strategy.

Change: These are both positive and negative forces for change that are known to or have potential to act on the landscape, including agricultural management issues, policy and development pressures. The list has been determined in discussion with the client and stakeholders.

Landscape Guidelines: For each character area a set of guidelines has been developed based upon the changes identified. The guidelines indicate the actions required, with reference to the overall landscape objective in order to ensure that distinctive character is maintained.

APPENDIX 4

NORTH SOMERSET LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT: FIELD SURVEY SHEET

Sheet No: 6 Photograph Nos: 126-130
 Location: End of Marsh Lane Date: 19/1/9
 Direction of view: South West Time: 11.30
 OS Grid Reference: 50/77 Weather: overcast

FINAL APPRAISAL (To be determined on completion of field and desk survey)

FINAL LANDSCAPE TYPE: <u>C</u>	FINAL CHARACTER AREA: <u>C2</u>
-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

DRAFT LANDSCAPE TYPE C

DRAFT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA: C3

Keywords describing the landscape: Flat, industrial damaged/degraded?
large scale / small - eye + enclosed v. contrasting areas, complicated
tarmac, cars, hard

PHYSICAL FEATURES

GEOLOGY

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estuarine Alluvium | <input type="checkbox"/> Carb. Limestone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mercia Mudstone ^(small area) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lias |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peat | <input type="checkbox"/> Old Red Sandstone | <input type="checkbox"/> Coal Measures | <input type="checkbox"/> Inferior Oolite |

ELEVATION

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lowland (<10m) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low/Transitional
(10-50) ← | <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional
(50-85) | <input type="checkbox"/> Upland (>85m) |
|---|---|--|--|

LANDFORM

- | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flat | <input type="checkbox"/> Steep slopes | <input type="checkbox"/> Cliffs | <input type="checkbox"/> Gorge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelving | <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle slopes | <input type="checkbox"/> Escarpment | <input type="checkbox"/> Broad valley |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rolling | <input type="checkbox"/> Floodplain | <input type="checkbox"/> Knoll | <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow valley |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Undulating | <input type="checkbox"/> Hills | <input type="checkbox"/> Plateau | <input type="checkbox"/> Shallow valley |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Coomb Valley | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep valley |

WATER/HYDROLOGY

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> River (S/M/L) | <input type="checkbox"/> Stream/tributary | <input type="checkbox"/> Flooded gravel pits | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineered/artificial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speed (F/M/S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drainage channels | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Locks/Weirs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clarity (C/M) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drainage ditches | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ponds <u>- enclosure</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Meanders? | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring | <input type="checkbox"/> Bog | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

LAND COVER

LAND USE

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural
<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry/woodland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Military
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure/Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Working	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

LAND/VEGETATION COVER (INDICATE RELATIVE %)

<input type="checkbox"/> Arable	<input type="checkbox"/> Amenity grassland	<input type="checkbox"/> Small farm woods	<input type="checkbox"/> Heathland
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perm. pasture	<input type="checkbox"/> Scrub	<input type="checkbox"/> Shelterbelts	<input type="checkbox"/> Acid grassland
<input type="checkbox"/> Pasture	<input type="checkbox"/> Withies	<input type="checkbox"/> Copses/ clumps	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetland/Aquatics
<input type="checkbox"/> Ley/improved	<input type="checkbox"/> Decid. woodland	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodland belt	<input type="checkbox"/> Gardens
<input type="checkbox"/> Rough grazing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mixed woodland	<input type="checkbox"/> Hanging woodland	<input type="checkbox"/> Common
<input type="checkbox"/> Wet Meadow	<input type="checkbox"/> Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/> Scattered Trees	<input type="checkbox"/> Green
<input type="checkbox"/> Calc. grassland	<input type="checkbox"/> Avenues	<input type="checkbox"/> Hedgerow trees	<input type="checkbox"/> Paddocks
<input type="checkbox"/> Set-aside	<input type="checkbox"/> Orchards (type..)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hedgerows <i>acorn</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ditchline trees

Notes on ecological character _____

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS/FEATURES Subtle Evident Conspicuous

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motorway	<input type="checkbox"/> Farm buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/> Nucleated settlem.
<input type="checkbox"/> Dual Carriageway	<input type="checkbox"/> Manor/Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/> Moats	<input type="checkbox"/> Linear settlement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Road	<input type="checkbox"/> Landmark Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Ridge and furrow	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed settlem. <i>(is hotel?)</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Lanes Track	<input type="checkbox"/> Mills	<input type="checkbox"/> Tumuli	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial workings
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunken Lane	<input type="checkbox"/> Church	<input type="checkbox"/> Hamlet	<input type="checkbox"/> Mast/poles
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridleway	<input type="checkbox"/> Fortifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Village	<input type="checkbox"/> Telecom. Masts.
<input type="checkbox"/> Footpath	<input type="checkbox"/> Hill forts	<input type="checkbox"/> Town Edge	<input type="checkbox"/> Dry stone walls
<input type="checkbox"/> Railway	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Suburb	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE

Size..... *large scale industrial + common path + isolated farms*

Pattern..... *settlement industrial*

Density..... *Dense - large buildings + hard surfaces*

Age, style and materials..... *(20) industrial, corrugated iron, built shared large sheds*

Relationship to the landscape..... *Dominate completely*

Settlement edge character..... *isolated buildings => large scale + large areas of towers => scrubby facing / scrubby, => imposed on landscape*

LAND USE CONSULTANTS

20 be not sensitive

BUILT/ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

<input type="checkbox"/>	Timber-frame	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brick - traditional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tile
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weatherboard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brick - modern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flint	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conglomerate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	other

Notes on built/settlement character Large industrial sheds, early + late
(20, + cranes, large scale industrial common parts, v. tall bays
(lighting at night!?) views to porthead or ridge.

FIELD PATTERNS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Banks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fence - rural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geometric	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ditch/Rhyne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fence - 'urban'	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sinuuous	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ditchline trees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hedge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irregular	<input type="checkbox"/>	Large
<input type="checkbox"/>	Walls - rural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hedgerow trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wall - 'urban'	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drove <i>Sunday</i>				

PERCEPTION

VIEWES	distant	← <u>framed</u>	intermittent	panoramic	corridor
SCALE	intimate	small	medium	<u>large</u> - + some small enclosed areas	
ENCLOSURE	confined	enclosed	semi-enclosed	<u>open</u> →	exposed
VARIETY	<u>complex</u>	varied	simple	uniform	
TEXTURE	smooth	textured	<u>rough</u>	very rough	
COLOUR	monochrome	muted	<u>colourful</u>	garish	
MOVEMENT	remote	vacant	peaceful	<u>active</u>	
UNITY	unified	interrupted	<u>fragmented</u>	chaotic	(but with unity of colours / industrial sites)
NATURALNESS	undisturbed	restrained	tamed	<u>disturbed</u>	walking landscape

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION AND ADDITIONAL NOTES

Industrial landscape with remnants of old town style i.e.
 Cox House Farm, MS highly dominant ⇒ at high level.
 Spectacular industrial - dark / crane / large scale on poles
 bright + colorful - changing ⇒ with ships coming + going.
 long views to water + porthead ridge.
 contrasts sky ⇒ large ships - view to hills,
 degraded i.e. common park, edges of areas - giving with
 boxed view, degraded hedges.
 along brick ~~remnants~~ - small scale
 industrial.

Large scale fences,

Remnant rhynes amongst industrial sites

pylons + lights - v. prominent

pylon shelter belts

avenues / roads / ie paths - large scale

willow / dogwood, alder, poplar, ash
roads all long edged, kerbs / lighting

FEATURES OF KEY SIGNIFICANCE

- Large scale industrial sites (ships/corves/buildings/sheds)
- Flatness
- Vent to hills + ~~water~~ water
- View of river / open water
- Sundry hangars / industrial fences
- Large areas tarmac
- ~~at~~ cars parking - huge scale - chaotic
- Chaotic cars / ships - chaotic scene
- pylons + lights doms v. dominant + signs in built clays
- grey and red water large led buildings
- white, yellow.
-
-

STRENGTH OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Very strong character \Rightarrow industrial!

CONDITION OF THE LANDSCAPE

mixed. good condition tarmac!

hedges neglected?

New plants \Rightarrow gully well retained

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

(highlight condition/survival, threats/pressures, fragility/vulnerability, management issues and opportunities)

Agriculture

v. little agriculture in area \Rightarrow squeezed out

Field patterns/boundaries

Small remnants of Ryhes \Rightarrow could be used as fences
remnant hedges \Rightarrow scrub - not watered? "

Trees and woodland

Tree plantings \Rightarrow risky young \Rightarrow larger scale plantings for screening
on gradients? \Rightarrow jangled up plants for water corridors \Rightarrow using rhododendrons/
hedges + young trees
rather than all ~~the~~ metal fencing

Archaeology/historic components

Industrial Archaeology \Rightarrow opportunities for
public access? pressure on wet sites
 \Rightarrow loss of archaeology

Buildings/settlement/development

Large scale bright colored ind. buildings \Rightarrow + some brick,
not sympathetic to landscape?

Linear features

roads \Rightarrow with kerbs + lighting

Quarrying/mineral reclamation

mineral water / quarrying?

Other land uses

storage of cars, post

General Notes on Management

Parcels well covered - green corridors \Rightarrow
 \Rightarrow make net of ryhes
+ remnant hedges

NOTES ON OTHER AREAS/FEATURES WITHIN DRAFT CHARACTER
AREA

Small area of farmland - Cart Horse Farm.
~~See~~ Ruins of oven - access v. difficult!

Wildlife Corridor notice at Sheepy Lane
- edges - screening v. important.

APPENDIX 5

NATURE CONSERVATION DESIGNATIONS BY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Severn Estuary	RAMSAR, SPA SSSI	AI	Estuary and associated intertidal zone of mud flats, sand banks, rocky platforms and salt marsh. Supports internationally important populations of waterfowl and large populations of migratory fish including a nationally rare species. A diverse invertebrate population exists within the intertidal zone.
Middle Hope	SSSI	AI	A calcareous grassland community with a restricted British distribution. Of great geological interest for its carbonate exposures
Puxton Moor	SSSI	AI	Agricultural land with a network of species rich ditches containing locally and nationally scarce plants. Reeds, rushes and sedges form the emergent vegetation, including two species which are declining in the south-west and the ditches support a diverse invertebrate fauna including molluscs, coleopteran and hydracarina (water mites).
Tickenham, Nailsea and Kenn Moors	SSSI	AI	ltural land with a network of large rhynes and smaller ditches containing a rich diversity of aquatic, emergent and marginal plants including several nationally scarce species. A diverse invertebrate fauna is present with 12 nationally scarce species and 2 nationally rare (RDB3). Large numbers of Coleoptera, Molluscs and Odonatas are supported within these water ways.
Kenn Church, Kenn Pier, and Yew tree Farm	SSSI	AI	A site of geological interest containing coarse glacial outwash gravels and a complex of freshwater, estuarine and marine sands. A diverse fossil assemblage provides evidence of two interglacial periods.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Cheddar Valley Railway Walk	LNR	A1	No information available
Wains and Church Hills, Clevedon	LNR	A1	No information available
Severn Estuary	RAMSAR SPA SSSI	A2	Estuary and associated intertidal zone of mud flats, sand banks, rocky platforms and salt marsh. Supports internationally important populations of waterfowl and large populations of migratory fish including a nationally rare species. A diverse invertebrate population exists within the intertidal zone.
Gordano Valley	NNR SSSI	A2	Peat moorland containing unimproved wet-meadow, reed bed, and wet woodland. The woodland, dominated by hazel contains ground flora indicative of ancient woodland. A nationally rare plant grows in the wet-meadow. A network of ditches and rhynes support a diverse invertebrate fauna including nationally rare and scarce species. The site is important for breeding wetland birds.
Weston-in-Gordano	SSSI	A2	A geological site containing freshwater and marine interglacial deposits with rich molluscan faunas.
Fields west of Lower Caswell House		A2	Marshy grassland.
Gordano Valley, Clapton Moor, Middle Bridge and rhynes	(R)WS	A2	Unimproved and semi-improved grassland, marshy grassland and associated marginal habitats, with semi-natural broad-leaved woodland (inc carr)

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Land adjacent to Severn Estuary RAMSAR and SPA	(R)WS	A2	Marshy grassland
Tickenham, Nailsea and Kenn Moors	SSSI	A3	Agricultural land with a network of large rhynes and smaller ditches containing a rich diversity of aquatic, emergent and marginal plants including several nationally scarce species. A diverse invertebrate fauna is present with 12 nationally scarce species and 2 nationally rare (RDB3). Large numbers of Coleoptera, Molluscs and Odonatas are supported. within these water ways.
Kenn Church, Kenn Pier, and Yew tree Farm	SSSI	A3	A site of geological interest containing coarse glacial outwash gravels and a complex of freshwater, estuarine and marine sands. A diverse fossil assemblage provides evidence of two interglacial periods.
Biddle St Yatton	SSSI	A4	Agricultural land underlain by silty clays and peat, drained by a series of rhynes and ditches. Species indicative of calcareous soils grow in the ditches and two nationally scarce aquatic plants are supported here. Reeds and umbellifers comprise the emergent vegetation and dominate in those ditches less frequently managed. Nationally scarce invertebrates and aquatic molluscs are supported within this habitat.
Yanal Bog	SSSI	A4	A calcicolous lowland mire supporting nationally rare plant communities.
Cheddar Valley Railway Walk	LNR	A4	No information available
Congresbury Station Dismantled Railway south of Moor Bridge, Congresbury	(R)WS	A4	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Congresbury Yeo, adjacent land and rhynes	(R)WS	A4	Running and standing water with associated marginal habitats, unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, unimproved calcareous grassland and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Fields and rhynes west of Moorland Farm	(R)WS	A4	Semi-improved neutral grassland and standing water (ditches) with associated marginal habitats.
Grumplepill Rhyme (part of)	(R)WS	A4	Standing water (ditch) with associated marginal habitats.
Pond and marshy field south east of Locking	(R)WS	A4	Semi-improved neutral grassland, and semi-improved neutral grassland.
Rhynes south of Dolemoor Lane	(R)WS	A4	Standing water (ditches), semi-improved neutral grassland and marginal habitats.
River Banwell (part of)	(R)WS	A4	Running water (river) with associated marginal habitats.
Severn Estuary	RAMSAR SPA SSSI	A5	Estuary and associated intertidal zone of mud flats, sand banks, rocky platforms and salt marsh. Supports internationally important populations of waterfowl and large populations of migratory fish including a nationally rare species. A diverse invertebrate population exists within the intertidal zone.
Walborough Common	LNIR	A5	No information available
Coombe Farm drains and adjacent land	(R)WS	A5	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, semi-improved calcareous grassland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Ditch south of the Grange, near Uphill	(R)WS	A5	Standing water (ditch), with associated marginal habitats.
Ditches to the west of Purn Farm	(R)WS	A5	Standing water (ditch) and associated marginal habitats.
Lox Yeo River	(R)WS	A5	Running water (river) with associated marginal habitats.
Ponds at Summerways Bridge	(R)WS	A5	Standing water (ponds) and associated marginal habitats.
River Axe (part of)	(R)WS	A5	Running water (river) and associated marginal habitats.
Bucklands Pool/Backwell Lake, Nailsea	LNR	BI	No information available
A370 (Long Ashton By-pass) and Ashton Brook	(R)WS	BI	Semi-improved neutral grassland, with geological interest, running water (stream) and standing water (reservoir), with semi-natural broad leaved woodland and scrub.
Cambridge Batch road verges	(R)WS	BI	Semi-improved neutral grassland.
Gable Wood	(R)WS AW	BI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Lodge Lane (pond and adjacent fields)	(R)WS	BI	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, and standing water.
Nailsea and Tickenham Moors	(R)WS	BI	Marshy and semi-improved neutral grassland.
Towerhouse Wood and adjacent fields	(R)WS AW	BI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Watercress Wood	(R)WS	BI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaf woodland
Lox Yeo River	(R)WS	B2	Running water (river) with associated marginal habitats.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Mendip Limestone grasslands	SAC SSSI	CI	Comprises coastal and inland sections of the Carboniferous Limestone Outcrops of the Mendips. Supports extensive area of sheeps fescue <i>Festuca ovina-Carlina vulgaris</i> grassland and rare and scarce plants such as white rock rose <i>Helianthemum apenninum</i> , Somerset hair-grass <i>Koeleria vallesiana</i> and honewort <i>Trinia glauca</i> . Uphill Cliff consists of species rich calcareous grassland and rock-face with a number of rare plants including rock hutchinsia <i>Hornungia petraea</i> and Curtis's mouse-ear chickweed <i>Cerastium pumilum</i>
Walborough Common	LNR	CI	No information available
Bridgwater Road verge and Oldmixon Bridge Tips	(R)WS	CI	Semi-improved neutral grassland, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and standing water (ditch) habitats
Salt Marsh and fields	(R)WS	CI	Salt marsh and wet grassland.
Uphill Great Rhyme (part of) and meadow east of Uphill Manor	(R)WS	CI	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and standing water (ditch) habitats
Weston Golf Course and fields below uphill	(R)WS	CI	Semi-improved calcareous and neutral grassland, with unimproved neutral grassland, saltmarsh, sand dunes, and scrub
Meadows and rhynes at Kewstoke	(R)WS	C2	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, with marshy grassland, standing water (ditches) with associated marginal habitats
Drove Rhyme and adjacent fields	(R)WS	C2	Swamp, standing water (ditches), and semi-improved neutral grassland
Field east of Court House	(R)WS	C2	Unimproved neutral grassland.
Field east of M5 Motorway, Lodway	(R)WS	C2	Unimproved neutral grassland.
Fields between A396 and M5 Motorway, Portbury	(R)WS	C2	Marshy grassland.
Fields between railway line and A369, Portbury	(R)WS	C2	Marshy grassland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Land adjacent to Royal Portbury Dock	(R)WS	C2	Marshy Grassland
Land adjacent to Severn Estuary SPA	(R)WS	C2	Marshy grassland
Avon Gorge Woodlands	SAC SSSI	DI	Natural cliffs and quarry exposures of carboniferous limestone of great geological interest. Lime – maple <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forest on limestone cliffs and screes of a large river gorge. The woodland contains two species of whitebeam <i>Sorbus bristolensis</i> and <i>S. wilmottiana</i> . which are only found in the Avon Gorge and a number of nationally rare plants are supported here. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland on calcareous substrates are also contained within the site.
Leigh Woods	NNR	DI	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaf woodland, with mixed and broad-leaved plantation, unimproved and semi-improved calcareous and neutral grasslands. Areas of open grassland support rare plants such as Bristol rockcress <i>Arabis scabra</i> and western spiked speedwell <i>Veronica spicata</i> .
Mendip Limestone grasslands	SAC	EI	Comprises coastal and inland sections of the Carboniferous Limestone Outcrops of the Mendips. Supports extensive area of sheeps fescue- <i>Festuca ovina-Carlina vulgaris</i> grassland and rare and scarce plants such as white rock rose <i>Helianthemum apenninum</i> , Somerset hair-grass <i>Koeleria vallesiana</i> and honewort <i>Trinia glauca</i> . Crook Peak to Shute Shelve Hill comprises of ancient and secondary semi-natural broadleaved woodland, unimproved calcareous grassland and acidic dry dwarf-shrub heath. These habitats support nationally rare plants and UK BAP species greater horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> .
North Somerset and Mendip Bats	SAC	EI	Semi-natural dry grassland supporting numerous rare plants including an endemic species. lime –maple <i>Tilio -Acerion</i> forest grows on the steep slopes and ravines and has a rich ground flora. Banwell Ochre Caves contain the most extensive and accessible yellow ochre workings in the Mendip area.
Uphill, Weston-super-mare	LNR	EI	No information available
Walborough Common	LNR	EI	No information available

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Bleadon Hill	SSSI	E1	A site of geological interest consisting of a low ridge of calcite-cemented Pleistocene sand and gravel providing evidence of marine or glacial origins.
Burrington Combe	SSSI	E1	Main habitats of interest are associated with the steep sides of the gorge. The sparse calcareous grasslands on thin stony soils have a diverse flora which supports a large number of insects. More acidic grassland occurs higher up the gorge with narrow bands of limestone heath. Of geological interest for its limestone features
Dolebury Warren	SSSI	E1	Carboniferous limestone hill supporting a continuous gradation of communities from species – rich calcareous grassland, through acid grassland to limestone heathland and bracken, with large areas of mixed scrub.
Purn Hill	SSSI	E1	Unimproved calcareous grassland containing 3 nationally rare species on Carboniferous limestone. Large stands of mixed scrub and immature secondary woodland the latter dominated by Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> and field maple <i>A. campestre</i> . Areas of taller under-grazed limestone are valuable for invertebrates particularly butterflies.
Shiplate Slait	SSSI	E1	Unimproved calcicolous grassland in part mixed with dwarf-shrub and mosaics of calcicolous grassland and scrub and woodland. Four nationally rare types of vegetation form most of the grassland.
Uphill Cliff	SSSI	E1	Uphill Cliff consists of species rich calcareous grassland and rock-face with a number of rare plants including rock hutchinsia <i>Homungia petraea</i> and Curtis's mouse-ear chickweed <i>Cerastium pumilum</i> .
Fields north of Balmoral Way, Milton	(R)WS	E2	Semi-improved and unimproved calcareous grassland, bare ground, scrub.
Worle Hill and Worlebury Golf Course	(R)WS	E2	Semi-improved and unimproved calcareous grassland, ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Middle Hope	SSSI	E3	A calcareous grassland community with a restricted British distribution. Of great geological interest for its carbonate exposures

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Middlehope fields	(R)WS	E3	Unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, with semi-improved neutral grassland, and scrub.
Holly Lane	SSSI	E4	A site of geological interest consisting of deep subaerial sands and breccias burying a fossil cliff, shore-platform, wave-cut notch and cave. A large mammalian fauna has been found here, one of the best sites in south-west England.
Nightingale Valley	SSSI	E4	A site of geological interest containing 'plateau-deposits', 'cannon shot' gravels, fine sandy gravels and silty gravels. Plio-Pleistocene fluvial and marine, and Pleistocene glacial environments have in the past been postulated for the origin of these sediments
Portishead Pier to Black Nore	SSSI	E4	Alluvial sandstones providing the best exposure of Upper Carboniferous rocks in the Avonmouth coalfield. Cliff and foreshore exposures consist of layers of limestone and shale of high quality. Fossils rarely found on Upper Old Red sandstone are found here, notably the Woodhill Bay fish bed which contains the species <i>Groenlandaspis</i> , providing the only English record of this genus.
Walton Common	SSSI	E4	A Carboniferous limestone ridge supporting a complex mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland of high botanical and entomological interest. Lichens and mosses form a significant component of the grassland community including the nationally rare <i>Cheilothela chloropus</i> and the nationally scarce <i>Pleurochaete squarrosa</i>
Weston Big Wood	SSSI	E4	Mixed deciduous woodland on Carboniferous limestone likely to be a remnant of ancient forest containing a rich variety of plant species. The canopy is dominated by pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i> with ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> . Species indicative of ancient woodlands include small-leaved lime <i>Tilia cordata</i> , wild service tree <i>Sorbus torminalis</i> , the rare whitebeams <i>Sorbus rupicola</i> and <i>S. eminens</i> . The ground flora includes 2 colonies of the Red Data Book species, purple gromwell <i>Buglossoides purpurocaerulea</i> .
Weston-in-Gordano	SSSI	E4	A geological site containing freshwater and marine interglacial deposits with rich molluscan faunas.
Church Hill LNR, Clevedon	LNR	E4	Unimproved neutral grassland and scrub.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Fore Hill, Portishead	(R)WS	E4	Semi-improved neutral grassland.
Land adjacent to Severn Estuary SSSI	(R)WS	E4	Marshy grassland.
Portishead Down (Police H.Q.)	(R)WS	E4	Semi-improved neutral grassland and scrub
Wain's Hill LNR	(R)WS	E4	Semi-natural woodland, semi-natural grassland and scrub
Walton Castle area	(R)WS	E4	Replanted ancient semi-natural woodland, mixed woodland plantation and semi-improved neutral grassland with scrub.
Walton Common to Severn Acre Wood Weston Big Wood - Nightingale Valley area	(R)WS	E4	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, unimproved neutral and calcareous grassland with scrub. Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, and semi-improved neutral grassland, with unimproved calcareous grassland.
Eastwood and Battery Point, Portishead	LNR	E4	No information available
Middle Hill	LNR	E4	No information available
Wains and Church Hill Hills, Clevedon	LNR	E4	Semi-natural woodland, semi-natural grassland and scrub
Leigh Woods	NNR	E5	Predominantly mixed broadleaved woodland on carboniferous limestone with areas of open grassland which support rare plants such as Bristol rockcress <i>Arabis scabra</i> and western spiked speedwell <i>Veronica spicata</i> .
Ashton Court	SSSI	E5	Parkland and woodland containing rich saproxylic invertebrate fauna including many nationally scarce species, particularly within Clarkencombe Wood which contains a significant concentration of ancient oak <i>Quercus robur</i> pollards.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Avon Gorge	SSSI	E5	The gorge has natural cliffs and quarry exposures of Carboniferous limestone, which are of great geological interest and together with the screes, scrub, pockets of grassland and adjacent woodland, support an exceptional number of nationally rare and scarce plant species such as round-headed leek <i>Allium sphaerocephalon</i> , Bristol rock cress <i>Arabis stricta</i> , nit-grass <i>Gastridium ventricosum</i> and dwarf sedge <i>Carex humilis</i> . Leigh Woods cover's the gorges western side, consisting of semi-natural, broadleaved woodland and areas of mixed and broadleaved plantation. Species present include pedunculate and sessile oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and <i>Q. petraea</i> , ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , wych elm <i>Ulmus glabra</i> and small-leaved lime <i>Tilia cordata</i> . Two whitebeams grow here which are unique to the Avon Gorge <i>Sorbus bristolensis</i> and <i>S. wilmottiana</i> . Other habitats include small areas of herb-rich calcareous grassland, patches of bracken and the strandline saltmarsh along the river Avon.
Court Hill	SSSI	E5	A site of geological interest consisting of a deep channel cut in the Carboniferous Limestone of the Failand Ridge containing Pleistocene deposits. Provides evidence for the glaciation of the Kenn lowlands (during the Anglian cold stage 250,000 years ago and is the only example of this type of glacial landform in southern England.
Abbot's Horn	(R)WS	E5	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Ashton Hill Plantation	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with unimproved and semi-improved neutral grasslands.
Clevedon Court Estate	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with mixed woodland plantation.
Cockheap Wood, Dunhill Wood and Pasonage Wood complex	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Dawsons Walk and Lye Brook	(R)WS	F5	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, running water and unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland.
Fenn's Wood	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Gordano Valley, Clapton Moor, Middle Bridge and rhynes	(R)WS	E5	Unimproved and semi-improved grassland, marshy grassland and associated marginal habitats, with semi-natural broad-leaved woodland (inc carr)
Leigh Woods	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaf woodland, with mixed and broad-leaved plantation, unimproved and semi-improved calcareous and neutral grasslands.
Long Ashton Golf Course	(R)WS	E5	Unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, standing water; and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Summerhouse Wood	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
The Sidelands, Wraxall	(R)WS	E5	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Tickenham Hill - Cadbury Camp - Chummock Wood Complex	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, with semi-improved neutral grassland, dense scrub
Towerhouse Wood and adjacent fields	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
West Park Wood - north of M5	(R)WS	E5	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Woodland east of Clapton Wick	(R)WS	F5	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland
North Somerset and Mendip Bats	SAC	E6	Semi-natural dry grassland supporting numerous rare plants including an endemic species. lime –maple <i>Tilio -Acerion</i> forest grows on the steep slopes and ravines and has a rich ground flora. Kings Wood and Urchin wood are extensive ancient woodlands with associated woodland flora. The nationally rare purple gromwell <i>Lithospermum purpurocaeruleum</i> grows here and the national BAP species dormouse
Cadbury Hill/ Henley Quarry, Yatton	LNR	E6	No information available
Goblin Combe	SSSI	E6	A steep sided dry valley with extensive areas of limestone scree supporting the nationally scarce stinking hellebore <i>Helleborus foetidus</i> . The gorge contains semi-natural ancient woodland and areas of unimproved calcareous grassland and limestone heath. The nationally scarce species limestone fern <i>Gymnocarpium robertianum</i> grows here and the area is nationally important for invertebrates, particularly butterflies.
King's Wood and Urchin Wood	SSSI	E6	Kings Wood and Urchin wood are extensive ancient woodlands with associated woodland flora. The nationally rare purple gromwell <i>Lithospermum purpurocaeruleum</i> grows here as does the national BAP species dormouse
Ball Wood and Corporation Woods	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with mixed woodland plantation.
Batches Wood	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland
Bourton Combe	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural & semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with mixed woodland plantation & scrub.
Breach Wood	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Brockley Combe, Cleeve Hill and Goblin Combe	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Butcombe Bottom	(R)WS	E6	Neutral grassland with scrub, stream and mire/bats
Cadbury Hill Fort, Congresbury	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and unimproved neutral grassland, with scrub
Chelvey Wood	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Cheston Combe and Backwell Hill	(R)WS	E6	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with semi-improved neutral grassland.
Garleys Wood	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaf woodland.
Hanging Wood and adjacent field	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with semi-improved neutral grassland.
Heall's Scars	(R)WS	E6	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with semi-improved neutral grassland.
Horts Wood	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with coniferous plantation
Little Horts Wood	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Littler Plantation	(R)WS	E6	Semi-natural mixed woodland.
Long Wood	(R)WS	E6	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Prestow Wood and Shippenhays Wood	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Round Wood	(R)WS	E6	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with dense scrub.
Sage's Farm Fields	(R)WS	E6	Neutral grassland.
Scars Wood and adjacent field	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland.
Simshill Wood	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Steven's Farm Fields	(R)WS	E6	Neutral grassland.
Sutton Long Ground and Pole Ground	(R)WS	E6	Neutral grassland.
Tucker's Grove and Whitley Coppice	(R)WS	E6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Woodland south of Broadfield Farm	(R)WS	E6	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and coniferous plantation.
Alder Bed Wood	(R)WS	F1	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Birch Wood and Prior's Wood	(R)WS	FI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with mixed and coniferous plantation.
Black Horse field	(R)WS	FI	Semi-improved acidic grassland with scattered scrub
Breach Wood	(R)WS	FI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Bristol and Clifton Golf Course and Fifty Acre Wood	(R)WS	FI	Unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, with semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and mixed and coniferous woodland plantation
Buddings Wood and Windmill Hill	(R)WS	FI	Ancient broad-leaved woodland.
Bulling's Wood	(R)WS	FI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with mixed woodland plantation.
Cockheap Wood, Dunhill Wood and Pasonage Wood complex	(R)WS	FI	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Conygar Hill and stream	(R)WS	FI	Unimproved calcareous grassland, and intact species-rich hedge.
Field east of Sandy Lane, Lower Failand	(R)WS	FI	Unimproved acid grassland, with dense scrub.
Field north of Clevedon Lane, Clapton-in-Gordano	(R)WS	FI	Unimproved calcareous grassland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Field west of Sandy Lane, Lower Failand	(R)WS	FI	Unimproved neutral grassland, with hedge and running water (stream)
Leigh Woods	(R)WS	FI	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaf woodland, with mixed and broad-leaved plantation, unimproved and semi-improved calcareous and neutral grasslands.
Longlands Wood	(R)WS	FI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with mixed woodland plantation.
Nicholas Wood	(R)WS	FI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Old Hill and New Forest	(R)WS	FI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Old Park Wood and Vowles Bottom	(R)WS	FI	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaf woodland, with unimproved neutral grasslands.
Ox House Bottom and Markham Brook	(R)WS	FI	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, coniferous woodland plantation and semi-improved neutral grassland.
Sandy Lane and Fish Pond Wood	(R)WS	FI	Species rich hedge with trees, standing water (pond) and running water (stream), with semi improved neutral grassland and mixed woodland plantation.
The Mount, Portbury	(R)WS	FI	Semi-improved neutral grassland.
Hartcliff Rocks Quarry	SSSI	GI	A site of geological interest containing excellent exposures of Triassic Dolomitic Conglomerate unconformably overlying Carboniferous Limestone.
Lulsgate Quarry	SSSI	GI	A site of geological interest renowned for its excellent exposure of an irregular unconformity surface lying between inclined Lower Carboniferous black rock limestones and flat-bedded Upper Triassic strata.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Felton Common	LNR	GI	No information available
Ball Wood and Corporation Woods	(R)WS	GI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with mixed woodland plantation.
Barrow and Rock Lane Fields	(R)WS	GI	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Bourton Combe	(R)WS	GI	Ancient semi-natural & semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with mixed woodland plantation & scrub.
Cheston Combe and Backwell Hill	(R)WS	GI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with semi-improved neutral grassland.
Felton Hill and Common	(R)WS	GI	Semi-improved and unimproved acidic grassland, with unimproved calcareous grassland and scrub.
Garleys Wood	(R)WS	GI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaf woodland.
Heall's Scars	(R)WS	GI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with semi-improved neutral grassland.
High Wood, Luisgate	(R)WS	GI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Hyatt's Wood	(R)WS	GI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaf woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Land around Redding Pit Lane	(R)WS	GI	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and bats
Lye Wood	(R)WS	GI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
May's Grove Coppice and adjacent field	(R)WS	GI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland
Oatfield Pool	(R)WS	GI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland (carr), and swamp, with standing water and scrub
Prestow Wood and Shippenhays Wood	(R)WS	GI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Steven's Farm Fields	(R)WS	GI	Neutral grassland.
Woodland south of Broadfield Farm	(R)WS	GI	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and coniferous plantation.
Ashton Court	SSSI (R)WS	G2	Parkland and woodland containing rich saproxylic invertebrate fauna including many nationally scarce species, particularly within Clarkencombe Wood which contains a significant concentration of ancient oak <i>Quercus robur</i> pollards.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Avon Gorge	SSSI	G2	The gorge has natural cliffs and quarry exposures of Carboniferous limestone, which are of great geological interest and together with the screes, scrub, pockets of grassland and adjacent woodland, support an exceptional number of nationally rare and scarce plant species such as round-headed leek <i>Allium sphaerocephalon</i> , Bristol rock cress <i>Arabis stricta</i> , nit-grass <i>Gastridium ventricosum</i> and dwarf sedge <i>Carex humilis</i> . Leigh Woods cover's the gorges western side, consisting of semi-natural, broadleaved woodland and areas of mixed and broadleaved plantation. Species present include pedunculate and sessile oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and <i>Q. petraea</i> , ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , wych elm <i>Ulmus glabra</i> and small-leaved lime <i>Tilia cordata</i> . Two whitebeams grow here which are unique to the Avon Gorge <i>Sorbus bristolensis</i> and <i>S. wilmottiana</i> . Other habitats include small areas of herb-rich calcareous grassland, patches of bracken and the strandline saltmarsh along the river Avon.
Avon Gorge Woodlands	SAC	G2	Natural cliffs and quarry exposures of carboniferous limestone of great geological interest. Lime – maple <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forest on limestone cliffs and screes of a large river gorge. The woodland contains two species of whitebeam <i>Sorbus bristolensis</i> and <i>S. wilmottiana</i> . which are only found in the Avon Gorge and a number of nationally rare plants are supported here. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland on calcareous substrates are also contained within the site.
Ashton Court Estate	(R)WS	G2	Unimproved and semi-improved calcareous and neutral grassland, with semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, mixed and broad-leaved woodland plantation.
Ashton Hill Fields	(R)WS	G2	Translocated semi-natural neutral grassland.
Ashton Hill Plantation	(R)WS	G2	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with unimproved and semi-improved neutral grasslands.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Bristol and Clifton Golf Course and Fifty Acre Wood	(R)WS	G2	Unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, with semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and mixed and coniferous woodland plantation
Cockheap Wood, Dunhill Wood and Pasonage Wood complex	(R)WS	G2	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Leigh Woods	(R)WS	G2	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaf woodland, with mixed and broad-leaved plantation, unimproved and semi-improved calcareous and neutral grasslands.
Long Ashton Golf Course	(R)WS	G2	Unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, standing water; and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Old Hill and New Forest	(R)WS	G2	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
The Sidelands, Wraxall	(R)WS	GH2	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Tickenham Hill - Cadbury Camp - Chummock Wood Complex	(R)WS	G2	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, with semi-improved neutral grassland, dense scrub
Barns Batch Spinney	SSSI	HI	A site of geological interest containing rocks of the Inferior Oolite, of great importance for studying the <i>discites</i> zone
Dundry Main Road South Quarry	SSSI	HI	A site of geological interest and one of the world's most fossiliferous exposures. Comprises a section of Middle and Upper Inferior Oolite and the site provides direct evidence for movements of the Mendip Axis in Middle Jurassic times.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Bitham's Wood and meadows	(R)WS	HI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, calcareous grassland, running water (stream) and associated marginal habitats.
South Dundry Slopes	(R)WS	HI	Neutral grassland.
Fields south of East Dundry	(R)WS	HI	Semi-improved neutral grassland.
South Dundry Slopes	(R)WS	HI	Neutral grassland.
Field south-west of Castle Farm	(R)WS	HI	Semi-improved neutral grassland.
Dundry Down and adjacent land	(R)WS	HI	Semi-improved neutral grassland, with unimproved calcareous grassland, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Dundry Hill Grasslands	(R)WS	HI	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, unimproved calcareous grassland and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Barrow Tanks	(R)WS	HI	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with mixed and broad-leaved plantation, standing water (reservoir) and semi-improved neutral grassland
Dundry Down and adjacent land	(R)WS	HI	Semi-improved neutral grassland, with unimproved calcareous grassland, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Fields east of Barrow Tanks	(R)WS	HI	Semi-improved neutral grassland, with standing water (pond).

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Valley View Fields	(R)WS	HI	Neutral grassland.
Max Bog	SSSI	J1	A calcicolous lowland mire with wet neutral grassland containing the nationally rare grass <i>Gauidia fragilis</i> and numerous notable herb species such as meadow thistle <i>Cirsium dissectum</i> , dyer's greenweed <i>Genista tinctoria</i> and marsh valerian <i>Valeriana dioica</i>
Barleycombe and M5 motorway cutting	(R)WS	J1	Broad leaved and coniferous plantation, a spring, and unimproved neutral grassland.
Cheddar Valley Railway Walk	LNR	J1	No information available
Dismantled railway and adjacent fields, Winscombe	(R)WS	J1	Ephemeral/short perennial habitat, with semi-improved neutral grassland and scrub
Fields from Whitley Head to Winthill House	(R)WS	J1	Unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, with exposed rock and broad-leaved plantation
Lox Yeo River	(R)WS	J1	Running water (river) with associated marginal habitats.
Mooseheart Wood	(R)WS	J1	Mixed woodland plantation.
Towerhead Brook (part of) and adjacent land Winscombe Brook and adjacent fields	(R)WS	J1	Running water (river) with associated marginal habitats, unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland. Marshy grassland and running water habitat, with ancient semi-natural broad leaved woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Blagdon Lake	SSSI	J2	A large freshwater reservoir with peripheral areas of reedbed, carr woodland and natural grassland. The lake supports a diverse invertebrate fauna including snails, water beetles and the local dragonfly the ruddy darter <i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i> and large numbers of wintering waterfowl use the lake, including nationally important populations of teal <i>Anas crecca</i> . The neutral grasslands bordering the lake support a species-rich meadow flora, with saw – wort <i>Serratula tinctoria</i> , wild carrot <i>Daucus carota</i> and pepper saxifrage <i>Silvaum silaus</i> .
Cheddar Valley Railway Walk	LNR	J2	No information available
Bourne	SSSI	J2	A site of geological interest consisting of highly weathered gravels overlain by sandy silts and clay loams representing a considerable period of Pleistocene time.
Aldwick Wood	(R)WS	J2	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Blagdon Lake tributaries	(R)WS	J2	Running water and associated marginal habitats
Congresbury Station Dismantled Railway south of Moor Bridge, Congresbury	(R)WS	J2	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Congresbury Yeo, adjacent land and rhynes	(R)WS	J2	Running and standing water with associated marginal habitats, unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, unimproved calcareous grassland and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Dismantled railway and adjacent fields, Winscombe	(R)WS	J2	Ephemeral/short perennial habitat, with semi-improved neutral grassland and scrub

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Elborough Wood	(R)WS	J2	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with semi-improved calcareous grassland, and scrub.
Grumplemill Rhyne (part of)	(R)WS	J2	Standing water (ditch) with associated marginal habitats.
Oldmixon to Upper Canada Scarp	(R)WS	J2	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with planted mixed and coniferous woodland, scrub, unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland.
River Banwell (part of)	(R)WS	J2	Running water (river) with associated marginal habitats.
Sage's Farm Fields	(R)WS	J2	Neutral grassland.
Towerhead Brook (part of) and adjacent land	(R)WS	J2	Running water (river) with associated marginal habitats, unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland.
Windmill Farm Fields and Woods	(R)WS	J2	Neutral grassland.
Plaster's Green Meadows	SSSI	J3	Unimproved neutral grassland lying on permeable clays of a slightly calcareous nature. Species present include sweet vernal <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> , crested dog's-tail <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> and Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> and saw-wort <i>Serratula tinctoria</i> , dyer's greenweed <i>Genista tinctoria</i> , pepper saxifrage <i>Silaum silaus</i> and spiny restharrow <i>Ononis spinosa</i> . The calcareous nature of the soil is reflected by the presence of cowslip <i>Primula veris</i> , fairy flax <i>Linum catharticum</i> and lady's bedstraw <i>Galium verum</i> .
Babylon Brook	(R)WS	J3	Running water (stream) and associated marginal habitats and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Chewstoke Brook (part of)	(R)WS	J3	Running water (stream) and associated marginal habitats and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Court Farm Field	(R)WS	J3	Semi-improved neutral grassland.
Field east of Whitling Street	(R)WS	J3	Unimproved neutral grassland
Fields west of Lower Strode	(R)WS	J3	Unimproved neutral grassland
Land around Redding Pit Lane	(R)WS	J3	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and bats
Plaster's Green Grasslands	(R)WS	J3	Neutral grassland.
Spring Farm Grasslands	(R)WS	J3	Marshy and acid grassland.
Upper Strode Meadows	(R)WS	J3	Neutral grassland.
Winford Brook and adjacent land (part of)	(R)WS	J3	Running water (stream) and standing water (reservoir) and associated marginal habitats with semi-improved neutral grassland, and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
A370 (Long Ashton By-pass) and Ashton Brook	(R)WS	J4	Semi-improved neutral grassland, with geological interest, running water (stream) and standing water (reservoir), with semi-natural broad leaved woodland and scrub.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Barrow Tanks	(R)WS	J4	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with mixed and broad-leaved plantation, standing water (reservoir) and semi-improved neutral grassland
Crossgrove Wood	(R)WS	J4	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Fields east of Barrow Tanks	(R)WS	J4	Semi-improved neutral grassland, with standing water (pond).
Hanging Hill Wood	(R)WS	J4	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
South Bank Meadow, Yanley	(R)WS	J4	Neutral grassland.
Valley View Fields	(R)WS	J4	Neutral grassland.
North Somerset and Mendip Bats	SAC SSSI	J5	Semi-natural dry grassland supporting numerous rare plants including an endemic species. lime –maple <i>Tilio -Acerion</i> forest grows on the steep slopes and ravines and has a rich ground flora. Brockley Hall Stables is used as a summer breeding roost by a substantial colony of greater horseshoe bats <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> .
Brockley Combe, Cleeve Hill and Goblin Combe	(R)WS	J5	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.
Cadbury Hill Fort, Congresbury	(R)WS	J5	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and unimproved neutral grassland, with scrub
Dawsons Walk and Lye Brook	(R)WS	J5	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, running water and unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Field south west of Chelvey	(R)WS	J5	Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and standing water (ditch).
Fields west of Littlewood Lane	(R)WS	J5	Unimproved neutral grassland with standing water (pond).
Ham Green	SSSI	J6	A site of geological interest consisting of a section of Pleistocene sediments of red-brown, gritty, stony silts with abundant Greensand chert and other far-travelled rock types. This site is one of the last good exposures of 'high' terrace deposits along the Bristol Avon.
Fields west of Blackmoor Road	(R)WS	J6	Unimproved neutral grassland.
Old Park Wood and Vowles Bottom	(R)WS	J6	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaf woodland, with unimproved neutral grasslands.
Ox House Bottom and Markham Brook	(R)WS	J6	Ancient semi-natural and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, coniferous woodland plantation and semi-improved neutral grassland.
River Avon (part of)	(R)WS	J6	Running water (river) and associated marginal habitats.
Summer House Wood, Hails Wood and A369 road verge	(R)WS	J6	Ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and unimproved neutral grassland.
Batch Farm Meadow	(R)WS	KI	Semi-improved neutral grassland, and marshy grassland.

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Fields along Youngwood Lane	(R)WS	KI	Marshy grassland and standing water.
Lodge Lane (pond and adjacent fields)	(R)WS	KI	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, and standing water.
Nailsea and Tickenham Moors	(R)WS	KI	Marshy and semi-improved neutral grassland.
Nursebatch Farm Fields	(R)WS	KI	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, and marshy grassland.
West End Meadows, Nailsea	(R)WS	KI	Acid grassland.
Severn Estuary	SPA RAMSAR SSSI	L1	Estuary and associated intertidal zone of mud flats, sand banks, rocky platforms and salt marsh. Supports internationally important populations of waterfowl and large populations of migratory fish including a nationally rare species. A diverse invertebrate population exists within the intertidal zone.
Severn Estuary	SPA RAMSAR SSSI	L2	Estuary and associated intertidal zone of mud flats, sand banks, rocky platforms and salt marsh. Supports internationally important populations of waterfowl and large populations of migratory fish including a nationally rare species. A diverse invertebrate population exists within the intertidal zone.
Middle Hope	SSSI	L2	A calcareous grassland community with a restricted British distribution. Of great geological interest for its carbonate exposures
Spring Cove Cliffs	SSSI	L2	A site of geological interest consisting of a stratigraphical sequence of rock forming part of the Burrington Oolite group and providing evidence of localized, penecontemporaneous volcanic activity.
Middle Hope	SSSI	L3	A calcareous grassland community with a restricted British distribution. Of great geological interest for its carbonate exposures

Site name	Designation	Area	Summary of importance
Severn Estuary	SAC RAMSAR SSSI	L4	Estuary and associated intertidal zone of mud flats, sand banks, rocky platforms and salt marsh. Supports internationally important populations of waterfowl and large populations of migratory fish including a nationally rare species. A diverse invertebrate population exists within the intertidal zone.
Clevedon Shore	SSSI	L4	A mineralized fault forming a small cliff feature in Dolomitic Conglomerate. A detailed paragenetic sequence of ore minerals has been established and several of the minerals here are rare, in particular the beaudantite and the presence of copper and arsenic is unusual for the Mendip-Avon district.
Portishead Pier to Black Nore	SSSI	L4	Alluvial sandstones providing the best exposure of Upper Carboniferous rocks in the Avonmouth coalfield. Cliff and foreshore exposures consist of layers of limestone and shale of high quality. Fossils rarely found on Upper Old Red sandstone are found here, notably the Woodhill Bay fish bed which contains the species <i>Groenlandaspis</i> , providing the only English record of this genus.
Eastwood and Battery Point, Portishead	LNR	L4	No information available
Wains and Church Hill Hills, Clevedon	LNR	L4	Semi-natural woodland, semi-natural grassland and scrub
Land adjacent to Severn Estuary SSSI	(R)WS	L4	Marshy grassland.