



Area 15

Patchway, Filton and the Stokes



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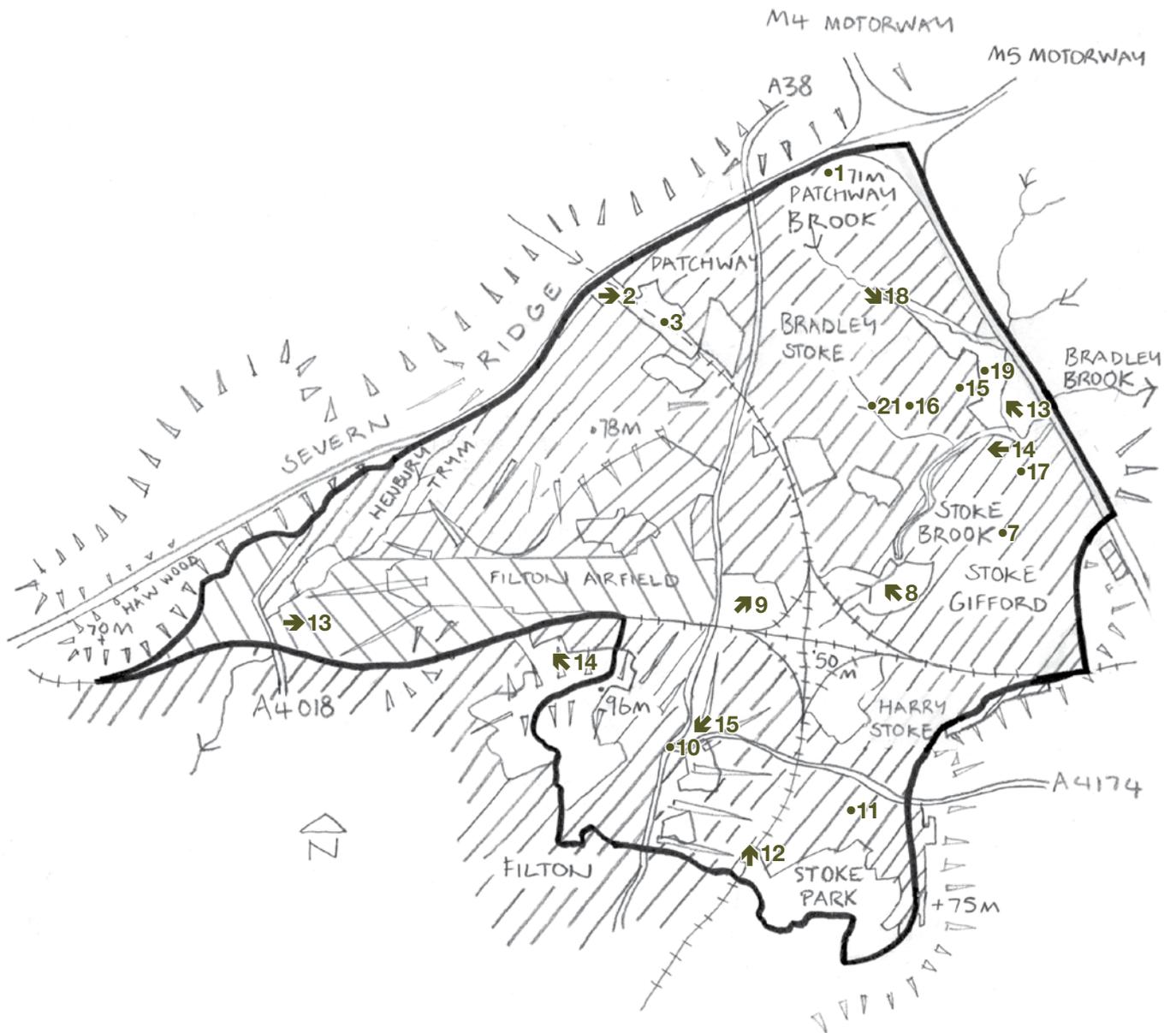


Figure 46
Patchway, Filton
and the Stokes

Sketch Map

Key

↖15 Photograph viewpoints

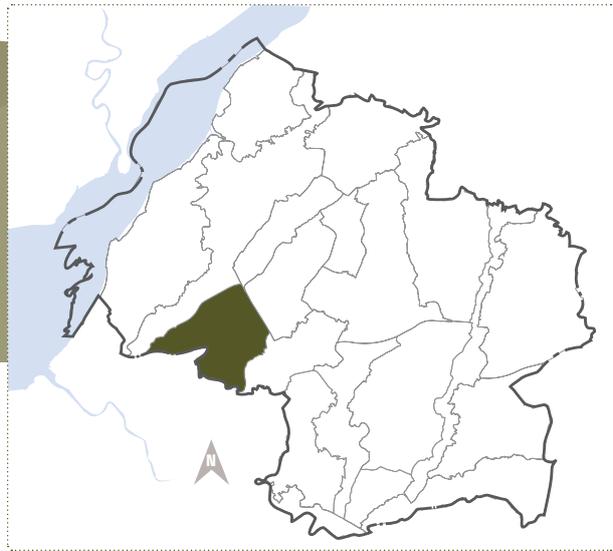
▨ Core strategy proposed new neighbourhood

Scale: not to scale

Area 15

Patchway, Filton and the Stokes

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



Key Characteristics

- This area includes the settlements of Patchway and Filton plus Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford, Harry Stoke and Stoke Park.
- Largely built up area, bounded by motorways to the north west and north east, with railway lines and roads dividing the area. Road network and high traffic levels are prominent features.
- Zoning of development within the area comprises commercial, industrial and residential areas of various ages, styles, building materials and densities. Large scale business, industrial and retail development is often highly visible within and beyond the area, with a number of prominent buildings such as the Cribbs Causeway shopping centre and the Brabazon hangar at Filton.
- More recent residential development occurs on fringes of an older housing core, and towards the M4 boundary, comprising uniform estates, with strategic landscape infrastructure, while Filton Northfield is currently being developed as a significant new neighbourhood, known as Charlton Hayes.
- Open space is diverse, currently including areas of Filton Airfield much of which is proposed for development, as well as within the railway junction, the courses of Patchway Brook and Stoke Brook, part of historic Stoke Park and remnant agricultural land. Smaller pockets of open space include playing fields, a golf course, allotments and common land. Much of the agricultural areas are allocated for development over the coming years.
- There are a range of important SNCI habitats scattered across this character area, including broadleaf, ancient and damp woodland which provides habitat for notable and European Protected Species. Also flowing water and bankside vegetation and areas of neutral, marshy and calcareous grassland, supporting a diverse range of flora including areas of species rich grassland.
- Areas of landscape change due to recent and proposed development, particularly at Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford and Filton/ Patchway, reducing the extent of open space and potentially the extent of wildlife habitat within and adjacent to the urban edge.

Location

The Patchway, Filton and the Stokes landscape character area is located on the south western boundary of the South Gloucestershire area and includes the northern fringes of the Bristol conurbation.

The area is contained to the north east by the M4, to the north west by the M5, beyond which the land rises to the Severn Ridges (Figure 55) and in the south west by the foot of the slope below Haw Wood. To the south, the boundary is marked by the limits of the Unitary Authority, the south west boundary following the railway line and eastwards, variously through Filton, crossing agricultural land and dividing Stoke Park. The south eastern boundary approximately follows a ridgeline, shared with the Frome Valley area and partly defined by the urban edge of Harry Stoke and Stoke Gifford. (See Figures 40).

Physical Influences

The geology of this character area is diverse with a ring of White and Blue Lias limestone and clays following the eastern boundary, before curving back to and beyond Filton. This encircles a broad bank of Lias clays. A further area of White and Blue Lias extends from Patchway, north eastwards beyond this area. Keuper marl clays and sandstones form a band, roughly following the western boundary. The soils are a mix of Pelo-stagnogley and typical Argillic Pelosols. The geology, together with the drainage pattern, has created a landform which is generally gently sloping to undulating.

A number of low ridges and higher ground provide containment to an elongated central bowl, 55m a.o.d. average, which largely dips gently north eastwards to the Bradley Brook, with a smaller proportion of this area to the west falling south westwards towards the River Avon.

Higher ground comprises Haw Wood ridgeline to the west, rising beyond this area's boundary, to 70m a.o.d. (merging with the Severn Ridges); a broad rounded hill at Filton in the south at 96m

a.o.d.; a curving ridgeline running between Stoke Park, 85m a.o.d. and Stoke Gifford 70m a.o.d. to the north east; and gently rising ground to the M5 in the north, up to 85m a.o.d.

There are a number of minor watercourses that run through the area. These include Henbury Trym in the west, which flows south westwards from Cribbs Causeway and Filton Airfield to the River Avon beyond this area. It flows within an open, gently sloping valley, contained to the west by Haw Wood ridge and to the east by more gently sloping ground.

Stoke Brook flows from the central railway intersection north eastwards, joining the Patchway and Hortham Brook near the boundary of this area, continuing as the Bradley Brook beyond. All three brooks meander through shallow, open low valley systems, draining eastwards into the adjacent area.

Within the Patchway Brook valley and adjacent to the M4, the natural landform has been largely reprofiled, following large scale land reclamation/spoil deposition. This, in places, has produced a broad plateau steep sided valley profile and steep slope profile next to the motorway edge.

The area's physical influences and characteristics are generally not that evident where covered by dense urban development, which limits the visibility of the landform beneath.

Land Cover

The majority of the area is dominated by settlement, but contains substantial open spaces.

The character area includes numerous sports fields, public open spaces and school grounds which service the main residential areas of Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford and Filton. Sports fields typically comprise open areas of amenity grassland (Photo 9) enclosed by housing, industrial development and intermittent trees/tree belts and hedgerows along boundaries.

Public open spaces within each of the principal

residential districts include:

- Bradley Stoke - playing fields; Patchway Brook valley, a linear, often organic space, with riparian trees and grassland contained within housing and road framework; Little Stoke Brook Park, with both mown and rough grassland and scrub/tree fringes (Photo 8 & 6). These two brooks and their open space corridors, converge at a pool near the M4, with an adjacent large plateau landform (a former landfill site) with rough grassland cover and maturing tree planting on steeper slopes, abutting the M4.
- Patchway includes several areas of public open space including The Tumps, adjacent to the M5 and above the railway tunnel, comprises a linear area of meadow/rough grass, remnant overgrown hedgerows and maturing tree planting along the motorway edge (Photo 3); Patchway Common, of similar land cover to the Tumps, with allotments (Photo 2) near the M5, Gorse Covert and Eagle Meadow..
- Filton - Filton Recreation Ground comprises open grass playing field, contained by residential development and road network (Photo 15); Northville Playing Fields comprises a grass playing field with a single tree avenue through its centre, also contained by housing; Lockleaze Playing Fields, with open grassland contained to the east by overgrown hedgerows of Abbey Wood MOD/Hewlett Packard (Photo 11) and to the south by housing and school grounds.
- Stoke Gifford - limited, small pockets of open space and school playing fields lie within this area of dense housing.
- Development at Stoke Park is structured around a large parkland that runs down to the motorway and is presided over by the prominent and elevated Dower House.

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

The open expanse of Filton Airfield currently includes an extensive area of open ground, comprising a tarmac runway fringed by a grassland corridor (Photo 14), a small area of woodland to the north eastern end of the runway and adjacent to a large scale hangar complex. The northern boundary largely comprises a dense linear edge of trees. Surrounding the western end of the now closed airfield, and within the Henbury Trym valley the currently landscape comprises small sized, regular and irregular shaped pastoral fields, defined by overgrown hedgerows with intermittent hedgerow trees including dead elm (photo 13).

Filton airfield, the agricultural land to the south and the triangle of land between Wyck Beck Road and M5 to the west form the new Cribbs Patchway new neighbourhood (CPNN). This is a new neighbourhood of up to 5700 dwellings allocated with the core strategy.

The ongoing Charlton Hayes development at Northfield has seen partial closure of Highwood Road to become a high quality tree lined linear park, and the development of a new neighbourhood comprising block development punctuated by a combination of smaller parks and linear open spaces.

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

To the east at Bradley Stoke, the area of reclaimed land adjacent to the Bradley Brook and M4 includes open areas of rough grass, scrub and peripheral deciduous woodland with recent woodland planting on some of the steeper slopes.

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

Expansion at UWE, including proposals for a football stadium, will be likely to result in the loss of wildlife and open space links between the ancient woodlands of Splatts Abbey Wood and hermitage and Long Wood in Stoke Park.

Biodiversity

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

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

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

which may limit their movements.

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

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

Settlement and Infrastructure

The area is dominated by distinct areas of development types, including the now closed airfield, railways, road network, industrial and commercial areas, together with housing. There have been several phases of development since the First World War.

Adjacent to the M4/M5 interchange and junction off the M5, there is a concentrated corridor of light industry and business park development, at Aztec West and Almondsbury Business Park. Aztec West comprises a large planned business park, including large modern office and warehouse buildings and road infrastructure within a designed, now mature, ornamental landscape framework. The motorway, with no landscape framework, forms its northern boundary. Almondsbury Business Park to the east includes the RAC building and tower (Photo 1).

South of Bristol Parkway Station there is a

concentration of large commercial buildings/ complexes and retail sheds, some within robust landscaped grounds, as seen at Abbey Wood MOD offices (Photo 11), AXA Sun Life offices, Hewlett Packard and part of the University of the West of England campus (largely lying within the adjacent character area).

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

Filton Airfield, located to the south of Cribbs Causeway, currently comprises a runway, and a complex of light coloured hangars, occupying an extensive area of land fringed by grassland, with a small pocket of woodland. Its westerly expansion in 1946 removed the village of Charlton. The airfield currently forms a large corridor of open space which is contained by chain link fencing, beyond which lies residential, industrial retail development and farmland. The area is however proposed for the development of a new neighbourhood that includes the retention of a relatively small emergency services helicopter facility.

The adjacent concentration of industrial works at Rolls Royce and British Aerospace, together with the Royal Mail sorting sheds, fringe the A38, their location and pattern of development historically associated with and related to the airfield. Notably, the recently restored Pegasus House forms an important landmark building in local views. A significant area of formerly developed land alongside the west side of the A38 currently awaits redevelopment.

The majority of the remaining built environment is covered by often dense residential areas, incorporating strategic open spaces. The original hamlets of Filton, Stoke Gifford and Harry Stoke are medieval in origin, with the more recent housing pattern closely related to the economic development of this area and its proximity to

Bristol. Patchway served the aircraft works/ railways and the northern part of Filton, acting as a commuter belt development, dating from the early 20th century.

The majority of Patchway, Filton and Stoke Gifford consist of a diverse mix of housing areas, with a variety of styles and ages, which include limestone, render, brick and painted houses.

The A38 includes some intermixing of residential groups and small scale works, industry and institutional buildings. At the time of writing a new neighbourhood is under construction. This takes the name of Charlton Hayes - reflecting that of the village previously lost to the development of the airfield. It comprises extensive residential and employment uses along with community infrastructure. The construction of a new main road has provided the opportunity to transform the existing Highwood Road into a linear park.

Bradley Stoke is a relatively recent residential development, of largely brick housing, with some local facilities including a retail centre, leisure centre and school. The most recent area of development abuts the M4 (Photo 6). These dense estate developments are based around a network of broad roads, roundabout junctions and strategic open spaces. Contained within and on the edges of these urban areas are old farmhouses. They have either become integrated within adjacent development, following the change in land use (Photo 7), or remain isolated features dominated by adjacent dissimilar development (Photo 12).

Land to the south of the UWE campus area has consent for the development of a stadium next to the new housing development, at Wallscourt Farm. Playing fields on the boundary with Bristol are an important resource.

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

Coal mining was previously evident at Harry Stoke Colliery. The last remaining working colliery in the Bristol area, it closed in 1963, with spoil remains evident at the surface into the 1980s. The site is now occupied by a car park at MOD Abbey Wood.

The area is served by a very dense network of roads, the pattern of which in many places determines the edges of residential development and open spaces. The first part of the Avon Ring Road, the A4174, extending through or along the eastern periphery of the Bristol conurbation, was built in 1962.

Generally the M4 and M5, on the boundaries of this area, delineate the urban edge. Development in Bradley Stoke extends the M4, with the exception of a large break, formed by a plateau of open space adjacent to the Patchway and Bradley Brooks. The completion of the Willow Brook Centre has created a town centre for the surrounding neighbourhood, replacing the previous open and undeveloped land. The development of the Jubilee Centre site in Savages Wood Road includes a Beacon Play Scheme facility, while the adoption of the Jubilee Green as a Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust site and the building of the new town council office, has made the site a focal point for the surrounding area.

The motorways largely contain the urban edge, creating a linear barrier between them and the countryside beyond. The M4/M5 interchange comprises large scale earthworks, elevated slip roads and overbridges, flanked by rough grassland and some scrub. This feature straddles the boundary of this area and two adjacent character areas. The prominence of these features has increased over recent years as widening, lighting and gantries have squeezed the associated planting and introduced new urbanising features.

The A38 and A4174 radiate from Filton, north to the M5 and eastwards to the M32 and M4, with the B4057 providing an easterly link to Winterbourne, beyond this area.

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

There are a few public rights of way which cross both undeveloped open space and public open spaces and elsewhere are absorbed within the built environment.

Around the western end of the airfield, footpaths currently pass over farmland, their direct route halted and diverted around the airfield and its perimeter fence. The network within Stoke Gifford, north of the railway, is quite intricate, absorbed within the housing and road layout.

Only one Local Plan designated major recreational route crosses the area. The Community Forest Path passes roughly south east from Patchway to Stoke Gifford, crossing the M5 in the west, along the green corridor of the Tumps, by the lakes at Aztec West, small lanes of Patchway, the Patchway Brook and Stoke Brook valleys, through the urban areas of Bradley Stoke and Stoke Gifford. However the Patchway Greenway also plays a role in connecting a number of smaller open spaces within the urban area

Landscape Character

Overall, the landscape of strategic open spaces and remnant farmland is largely dominated by the urban framework of settlement, roads and high traffic levels.

Settlement abuts most of the M4 and M5 motorways along the area's boundary, and includes extensive areas of residential, business and retail development. This creates an often abrupt contrast between the urban and rural areas beyond. Towards the more open areas to the west, however, the landscape currently retains a more rural pattern of fields and boundaries extending into the adjacent area.

Green spaces and landscape structure within the area are diverse in form, content and character, variously comprising small linear spaces of remnant common land and allotments; amenity sports fields, a golf course and school grounds; informal public open spaces, which utilise the small river valleys and their drainage areas, often containing semi-natural vegetation and occasional woodland; formal parks; grounds of business, retail and commercial complexes; open grassland currently surrounding the airfield corridor along with remnant farmland, defined typically by tall overgrown hedgerows. The character of these spaces varies enormously from enclosed, naturalistic rural pockets to stark open playing fields. There are also areas of derelict land including a significant swathe along the western side of the A38 and land within the railway junction.

Tree belts are a frequent feature along the boundaries between recreational open spaces/ industrial and commercial areas, with some poplars forming prominent features. All contribute greatly to punctuating the urban fabric, especially from slightly elevated view points.

Many of these areas which are overlooked by adjacent housing provide distinctive local character and form a physical break within the urban fabric. The following are particularly significant :

- Filton Airfield, its runway fringed by a grassland corridor, small woodland and dispersed light coloured hangars currently forms a distinct open area, although this is allocated in the Core Strategy for future development. This open area is visually prominent from the local road network, elevated ground to the south, Filton Golf Course, adjacent residential properties and views from around Haw Wood and open countryside to the west.

A visual watershed created by slightly higher landform cuts across the centre of the airfield, north to south, blocking views between the east and west of this open area. To the east, the open area contrasts greatly with the adjacent

industrial construction and housing fringe, whilst to the west, the open area merges with open land around Fishpool Hill, creating an increased sense of openness and linkage with open countryside. The former Northfield sector of the airfield is currently under development as a high density new development. This is formal in character, comprising perimeter block residential development with avenue planting. The commercial element is intended to be set within a robust landscape setting, and providing a landscape framework to the south of Hayes Way.

- Pastoral landscape is increasingly limited within the area, but where it still exists it significantly influences the urban fringe context.

Fields adjacent to the MOD and Hewlett Packard complexes, have either been built on or are allocated for development. Remaining sports pitches are also under pressure from development and intensification. Planned new development at UWE will result in further loss of trees and open space within the campus.

The extensive area of fields at Cribbs Farm, currently surrounding the western end of Filton Airfield are defined by overgrown hedgerows with hedgerow trees and a limited number of clipped hedgerows, some containing dead elm trees, with open views of the surrounding and enclosing urban development. The open area currently forms an important buffer between Cribbs Causeway and Brentry (to the south in the Bristol City area), the edges of which are prominent, with traffic visible and audible along the A4018 and M5 and occasionally from air traffic.

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

- The rising open hillside covered by Filton Golf Course to the south, forms a similar, though smaller scale, break within the urban fabric. It is prominent within long views from the north west and east and visually reduces the coalescence and dominance of built forms. The elevated location of the golf course often gives open views of the airfield and wider urban area.
- Areas of woodland, where present, are prominent features with a significant influence on local character and are often located on the edge of former agricultural land, or are now partly contained by development.

Long Wood and Hermitage Wood are the largest remaining areas of woodland in the area and are visible on the skyline in southerly views from Filton. Splatts Abbey Wood is a small remnant woodland, following part of its removal during the construction of the MOD offices and forms an important physical feature, segregating the MOD and Hewlett Packard sites. A small area of woodland on the hillside at Filton Airfield partly reduces the visual prominence of adjacent buildings. Similarly Filton Wood now forms an important feature at the edge of the Charlton Hayes development that is currently under construction.

Savage's Wood, Webb's Wood and Sherbourne's Brake are prominent from within the Patchway Brook and Stoke Brook valleys. Here they combine with the open, small scale valley landscapes to provide visual enclosure and screening of adjacent residential development, often maintaining strong rural characteristics and seclusion within these spaces.

- Bradley Stoke includes strategic open space, comprising small pockets of open space amongst housing and more natural vegetated corridors, with small woodlands, along the Patchway and Stoke Brooks. Near the convergence of the brooks large scale earthworks have formed an unnatural steep sided valley to the Bradley Brook and a large open plateau of poor grass cover. Peripheral

scrub development and local areas of woodland provide better integration in places (Photo 5). These landscape elements are visible from the M4 and adjacent area of new housing development.

- The large railway junction, although not prominent within the urban fabric, is a visually significant urban fringe landscape seen on rail journeys to Wales and the South West. Although forming a break in the surrounding urban fabric, the segmented site contains a disturbed landscape with areas of natural scrub, woodland, rough grassland and earthworks, mounds, large scale re-grading works and ballast storage. A rail depot has been developed in the south east quadrant.
- The extensive rolling grassland of Stoke Park, with its peripheral woodland, visually dominant Dower House and associated features within the parkland, although largely within Bristol contributes significantly to the character and amenity of the more recent housing development that is structured around it.

The zoning of built areas into often distinct types of development, plus the presence of landmark architecture, is evident from roads, open spaces and often within more distant views, both from within and beyond this area. These both influence visual character and contribute to local identity:

- The distinctive large scale development at Cribbs Causeway, its strong ornamental landscape framework and the adjacent motorway (the M5 in places is on embankment) creates a visibly distinct boundary, which can be seen from the motorway and in views from the south. Cribbs Causeway is also partly visible within long distance views from the Pilning Levels to the west, due to the scale of its buildings and its elevated location.
- The extensive concentration of industrial sheds and hangars associated with the airfield, Rolls-Royce and British Aerospace,

form a distinct built character. The roofs of these buildings are sometimes visible above the adjacent residential area, and are also prominent within long distance views from as far as the Pucklechurch Ridge to the east.

- Some individual buildings form prominent landmarks: the RAC control tower is visible for some distance from higher ground in the south and also adjacent areas to the north east; in the adjacent character area, the tower at the University of the West of England is visible from Filton to the north west, as well as beyond this area to the east, due to its skyline location; the Abbey Wood MOD offices, rural fields and wooded ridgeline of Stoke Park beyond, are a prominent backdrop from Filton; the rotunda building at AXA Sun Life, is prominent from along the eastern boundary at Harry Stoke, seen against a foreground of agricultural fields.

Views are typically limited by adjacent dense urban development and the generally low, undulating landform. Some views are however possible from open spaces and the higher ground at Filton. From these vantage points, residential development generally predominates.

The M4 and M5 create physical barriers to this area, with the visible and audible effects of high traffic volumes increasingly influencing the adjacent landscape as motorway widening, lighting and gantry infrastructure is implemented. These effects are most noticeable at the elevated M4/M5 interchange and M5 junctions to the west. The M4 provides views largely into the adjacent Earthcott Vale and of limited areas of Bradley Stoke. The M5 has views of most of the northern urban fringe, with views to the north largely screened by the steep grass embankments of the Bristol Golf Course in the adjoining area. The road network and key road corridors are a visually prominent feature of the area (Photo 10).

Housing at Bradley Stoke, along the eastern boundary, is partially screened by tall timber fencing, earth mounding and planting in places. Rooflines, a harsh edge created by the timber

fence and artificial ground raising operations, are however prominent from sections of the M4 and beyond this character area. Roadside vegetation has been reduced due to motorway improvements/widening.

Further south (and forming the eastern boundary) the built edge of Stoke Gifford and Harry Stoke, currently set along the skyline above the adjacent lower lying character area, has various visual influences over this landscape, however this will change when the adjacent proposed new neighbourhood is implemented. Currently sections of the settlement edge at Harry Stoke are relatively well integrated within views due to the mature garden and other intervening vegetation.

Along the edge of Stoke Gifford the roofscape of large commercial buildings are prominent along the skyline. Although set beyond the ridgeline, the scale of these buildings and lack of planting provides limited planting to provide integration on this open hillside. Similarly the more recent accommodation blocks at the University of the West of England have introduced visually prominent and substantial skyline blocks to the south of the A4174, just beyond the boundary of this character area.

Development at Hillside Farm, comprising town houses, has formed a stark, new built edge and prominent skyline, with no planting to provide integration on this open hillside.

The Changing Landscape

Overall, the Patchway, Filton and the Stokes character area consists of dense and diverse urban development, contained by major road and rail corridors, amongst which some strategic areas of open space remain, including remnant woodland and agricultural land, however the large open areas in the vicinity of the airfield are proposed for development.

The landscape framework here, however, is typically in a poor condition. Many boundaries subdividing landholdings and non-agricultural use

are overgrown hedgerows, some containing dead elm trees, or hedgerows have been removed and replaced by fencing.

The lack of active management of hedgerows has contributed to their decline, whilst the continued encroachment of the urban edge has eroded the margins of the remaining agricultural landscape, reducing the extent of the buffer between developed areas.

Development at Bradley Stoke, comprising housing adjacent to the M4 and Bradley Stoke School and within Stoke Gifford at Hillside Farm, has created abrupt urban/rural boundaries. The regular pattern and continuity of housing, lack of boundary planting to provide integration, relatively limited provision of formal open space and street trees, tends to create a continuous roofscape and abrupt built edge, visually prominent locally, and in places from the wider countryside beyond this area.

The remaining areas or pockets of remnant agricultural areas on the fringes of recent urban development and also now enclosed within the expanded urban area, are in a state of flux. With the potential for future change, they are either developed, proposed for development or no longer actively managed. Resultant overgrown hedgerows and long, rough grass are signs of a landscape in transition and the erosion of rural/agricultural characteristics.

The retention of landscape features and habitats within urban development can do much to enhance the character and biodiversity value of new settlement as well as providing connectivity of habitat, as seen along the courses of the Stoke Brook and Patchway Brook, and as is proposed at the new neighbourhoods of at Cribbs Causeway and Harry Stoke. These features however, require sufficient space within the development and long term management to ensure their longevity.

Woodland cover is relatively rare, typically found near the area's boundaries, although some is retained or proposed to be retained within

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

The lack of active management of landscape and vegetation features would eventually contribute to their decline or loss, with implications upon visual amenity, biodiversity and character of open spaces and urban streetscape. With the exception of new development schemes, where appropriate planting measures are required as part of the approved scheme, there is little evidence of new planting to provide some succession or sustain this structure in the long term. Where active management has taken place, such as hedge laying along the boundary of a public open space adjacent to the A4174 in Filton, has however made a positive contribution to both local character and its longevity, as have the improvement of open spaces in terms of both planting and management seen at Patchway, which enhanced both the landscape structure and ecological diversity of the sites. A community garden is being developed at Elm Park, Filton.

Dead elms are evident within overgrown hedgerows which divide fields to the west of Filton Airfield, within the Henbury Trym valley. The cyclical pattern of growth, decline and regeneration of elm, influences the condition, integrity and appearance of the landscape framework in the locality, affecting local character and the degree of openness. Active management of these hedgerows would similarly help to conserve these features and contribute to the landscape framework and connectivity of habitat within new development and for the long term.

Open space pockets within the area are also sensitive to change. Due to the extent of urban development, all open spaces provide valuable visual, biodiversity and recreational amenity and create physical breaks within the urban fabric, contributing to the distinctive character of the locality or wider area.

The ongoing development of part of Filton Airfield (Northfield) for employment and residential purposes is resulting in a significant change in landscape character to the north eastern corner of the airfield, north of the existing runway. As a high density development of formal character and with relatively modest open space provision within much of the urban fabric, street trees and robust landscape schemes associated with new development is increasingly important to provide visual relief to the dense built form. Sections of the existing landscape and Filton Wood are incorporated into the development. As a result of the development the character of local views is changing significantly.

Following the closure of Filton airfield the area is proposed for redevelopment as a new neighbourhood incorporating mixed uses and strategic green infrastructure. This will result in significant further change in the character of the locality including in views from the adjacent road network, existing residential properties and elevated views from Filton Golf Course.

The newly completed development at Wallscourt Farm of 800 houses occupies land between the MOD and Hewlett Packard sites, largely retains the strong vegetation structure that was associated with the former agricultural landscape. Hermitage Wood forms a visually prominent mature wooded ridge at Stoke Park and is sensitive to change, given its elevation and visibility from the urban edge.

The wooded ridgeline at Stoke Park and, to a lesser extent the upper slopes of the Filton Golf Course, are the only remaining landscape skylines within this area not interrupted by built development. These sites are therefore sensitive to change, particularly from the encroachment of

built features.

Infill development affects those parts of this character area that historically had larger gardens and open spaces, often impacting on visual amenity and physical breaks within the urban fabric, as well as softening the urban form. Loss of such spaces may therefore reduce the openness within the area, increasing the density of the built environment. In addition, it may also introduce a variation in architectural style, form, massing and colour, which could affect the distinctiveness of the locality. However, policies are included in the Local Plan which seek to ensure that any development proposals take account of the need to protect the character, amenity and distinctiveness of the locality and wider landscape.

There are also pressures for intensification of use at a larger scale, such as the proposal for expansion of the Mall, where an extension could impact on the robust landscape structure of this development, and where decked parking is proposed at Sainsbury's.

High traffic levels along the intensive road network are a prominent influence. Road connections east to west are generally poor, with traffic congestion typical, adding to the visual intrusion resulting from the road network. Continuing development within this area is likely to increase traffic levels on the road network. This is further compounded by the widening of roads and the introduction of lighting and gantries that often squeeze or eliminate the planting that previously screened or integrated the transport infrastructure with its surroundings. At Bradley Stoke the potential implementation of a Rapid Transport Link could result in the loss of a green corridor through the town.

Landscape Strategy

- Active management of the landscape framework of hedges, hedgerow trees and woodland blocks to ensure the conservation of these key features and connectivity of habitat for the long term. As many of the hedgerows are currently overgrown, bringing them back into management could result in some areas becoming more or less open, dependent on the number of hedgerow trees allowed to develop, or new trees planted.
- Protect skylines such as Stoke Park and Filton Golf course and frame key views that contribute to the distinctive character of the locality, whether within this or adjacent character areas.
- Replanting of hedgerow trees to replace elm that are affected by Dutch Elm disease will help improve the landscape character of the area, by reducing the negative visual influence that dead trees can have on landscape character of the locality.
- Ensure a cohesive approach to the landscape structure of different neighbourhoods and developments within the character area, for example extending the 'urban forest' character imparted by street trees and other tree cover within the urban fabric of the adjacent landscape character area, and as is emerging at Charlton Hayes.
- Where key to the character of the locality, ensure that the critical balance between the existing urban built form and green open space is maintained and enhanced including to enhance both landscape character and biodiversity values. Recognise the particular importance that residential gardens can contribute to the character and biodiversity value of an area.
- Ensure that any new development including transport infrastructure incorporates a suitably robust landscape framework and open space network to provide relief to the urban environment, to respect the setting of heritage assets, to promote wildlife habitats and connectivity and a high quality appropriate scale of buffering to transport infrastructure.
- Ensure that infrastructure projects include a robust landscape framework and thereafter maintain and enhance the landscape structure to achieve adequate buffering to and / or integration with the surrounding landscape and/ or townscape
- Ensure that retained landscape features within development areas are set within adequate space to ensure effective protection and management,
- Within the areas of dense development, careful planning of any new developments is particularly important to ensure that proposed levels, service runs etc do not damage existing retained trees and proposed new landscape schemes
- Where opportunities become available, increase planting to provide an effective buffer between the motorways and adjacent development and landscapes, and contribute towards the creation of wildlife links.
- Secure the enhancement and management of existing open spaces to improve their natural beauty, recreational function, sustainability and biodiversity value, and their resilience to the pressures of increased use.
- Carefully control boundary treatments and surfacing including road facing gardens to protect the character of place, biodiversity and quality of the public realm within both



1 Commercial and light industrial development close to Woodlands Lane. RAC building forms a local landmark.



2 View from footbridge over M5 - allotments in foreground and Aztec West beyond.



3 The Tumps - towards Waterside Drive - the railway tunnel below this patch. Grass and trees have been successfully grown despite very poor soil quality. This open space was originally provided in compensation for the loss of Charlton Common, when Filton Airfield was expanded in 1946.



4 Baileys Court Inn - old farmhouse finds new role in modern residential area.



5 A low earth bank forms this flood water retention tank. This site has become a habitat for wildlife. It has also prevented annual flooding of the adjacent houses.



6 Originally part of Broadmead Common parish pasture, the northern boundary is blocked off by Rolls Royce buildings to the north and by the A38 to the west.



7 Filton roundabout with new sculpture 'The Spirit of Flight', Cleve residential development and industrial buildings of British Aerospace.



8 MOD Abbey Wood offices dominate many views within the Filton area.



9 Stanley Farm with Abbey Wood development beyond. Stoke Gifford village is in the distance.



10 View from Wyckbeck Road bridge, of fields which extend eastwards to the edge of Filton Airfield. The railway line forms the boundary with Bristol.



11 View from Filton Golf Course across Filton Airfield, with Concord in the middle distance and part of Cribbs Causeway retail centre visible behind the hanger.



12 Recently laid hedge along the edge of Filton Recreation Ground and the A4174. An unusual example of countryside practices within the urban environment.



13 Open space fringed by residential development of Bradley Stoke and the M4 Motorway.



14 Bradley Stoke with Filton on the horizon (Sherbourne's Brake to the right) Lake marks meeting of Stoke, Hortham and Patchway Brooks - new bridge made from old farmhouse stone. Urban and rural meet.



15 Bradley Stoke Town Centre 'square' incorporating a French antique granite and wrought iron gateway symbolising the town's twinning with Champs-sur-Marne as well as accommodating public transport via a bus lane on the right.



16 View of Brook Way Activity Centre showing mature and recently planted trees and large scale open space providing setting to community buildings and housing.



17 The Bradley Stoke Community School area which has a variety of landscapes: some car dominated and others more landscaped, as well as an important open space network that fulfils a variety of functions



18 The mature landscape of Bradley Stoke Way providing an effective screen to adjacent area, and including a corridor reserved for public transport use.



19 Green open space provides an important resource for residents and wildlife in Bradley Stoke.

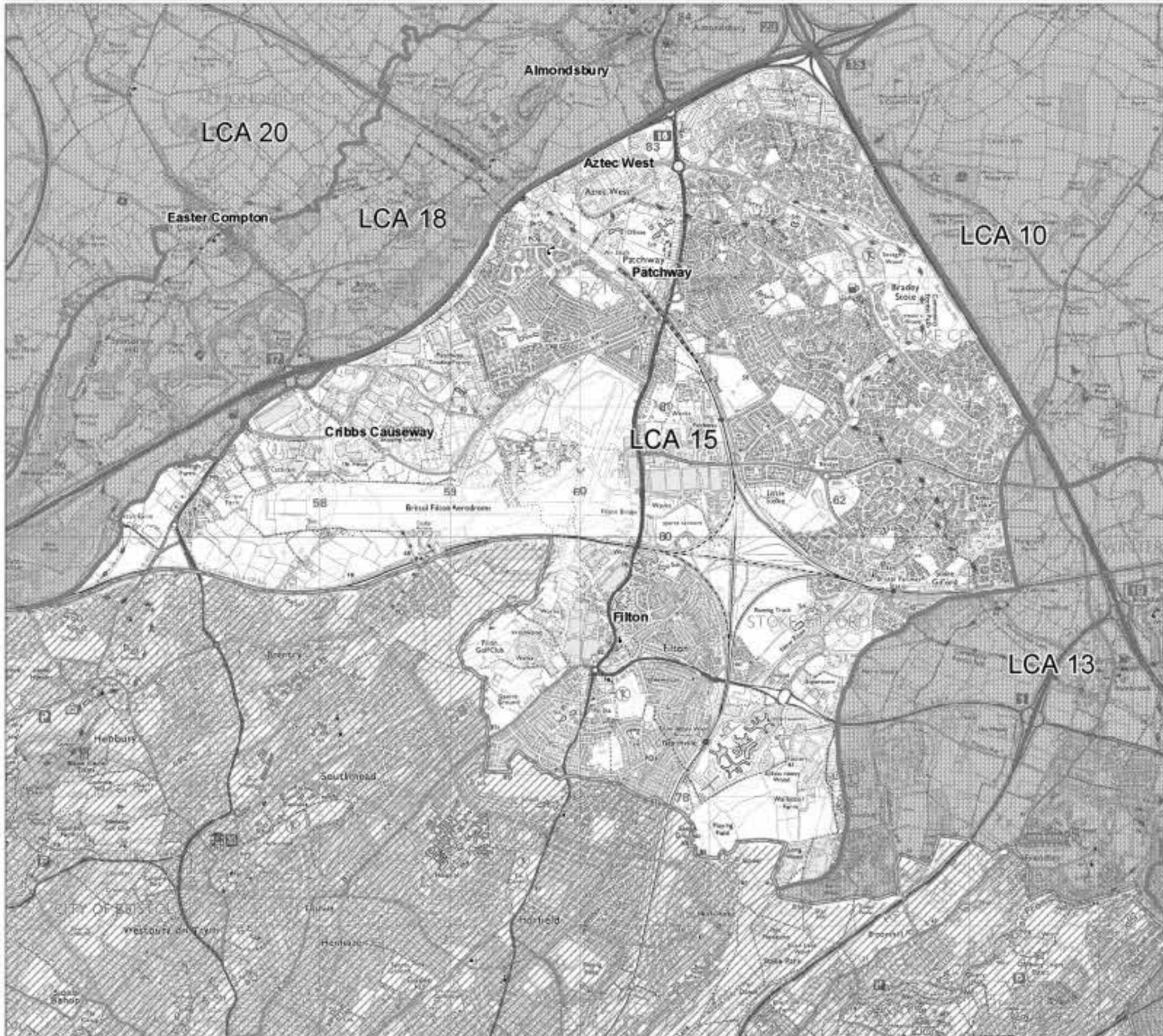


20 Roundabouts are a feature of Bradley Stoke, some have less landscaping and are car dominated, while others incorporate robust planting that provides a greener setting to roads and adjacent development. Most housing does not front onto the roads.



21 Jubilee Green and play area at Bradley Stoke, with the Jubilee Centre and housing behind.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



Legend

- South Gloucestershire Boundary
- Landscape Character Area

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

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



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Figure 48

Area 15

Patchway and Filton