



Area 6

Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley



Contents

Sketch map	82
Key characteristics	83
Location	84
Physical influences	84
Land cover	85
Settlement and infrastructure	86
Landscape character	88
The changing landscape	90
Landscape strategy	93
Photographs	
Landscape character area boundary	

Key

➔ 16 Photograph viewpoints

Scale: not to scale

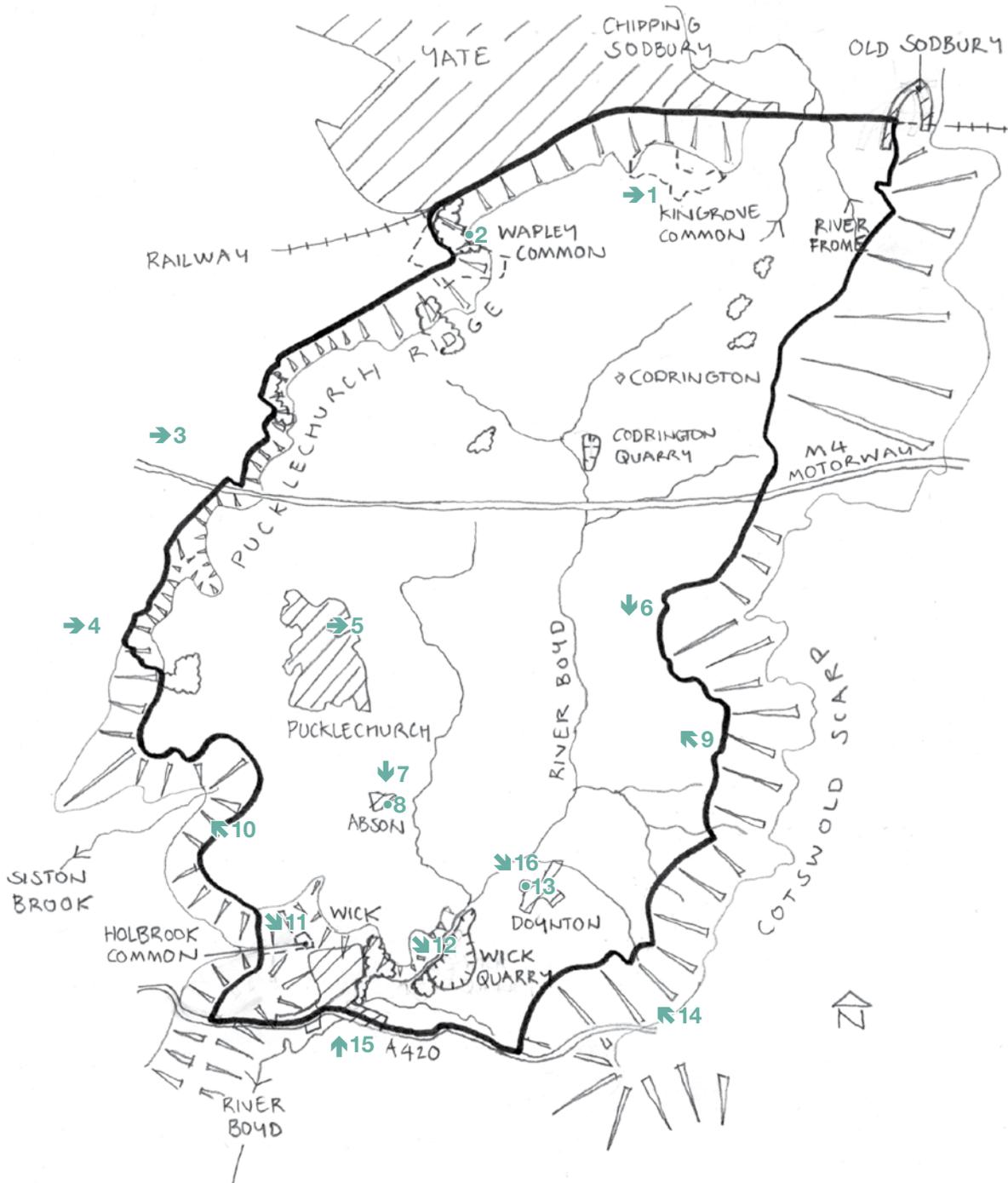


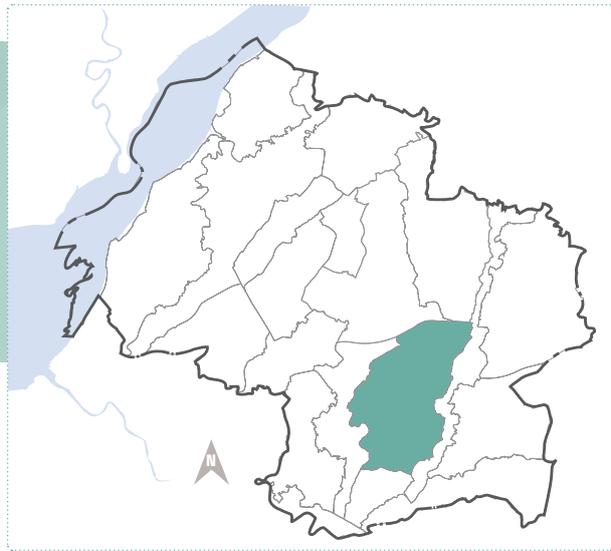
Figure 19
Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley

Sketch Map

Area 6

Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley

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



Key Characteristics

- Large scale, generally undulating plateau and vale landscape, with Pucklechurch Ridge forming a scarp/ridge to the north and west and the enclosed River Boyd valley to the south with gently rolling hills.
- The Cotswold Scarp is a prominent backdrop and skyline dominating and enclosing views beyond the area to the east. Internal long distance views are possible over the rolling landscape and across the area from the Cotswold Scarp.
- The Pucklechurch Ridge has a distinctive landform and textured cover, forming a prominent backdrop and skyline to adjacent westerly character areas.
- Land cover of medium sized pasture and arable fields, with some areas of large and small fields associated with plateau and steeper ground respectively. Distinct areas of commons, with infrequent small broadleaved woodlands including ancient woodland or copses in the north and elsewhere, associated with the Pucklechurch Ridge and valley landform. These provide habitat for notable species including European Protected Species.
- There are areas of calcareous and neutral grassland across the character area, supporting a diverse range of flora and areas of species-rich grassland. The arable areas provide springtime nesting and wintertime foraging opportunities for farmland birds, including Amber and Red listed species.
- Field boundaries are predominantly clipped hedges, with limited hedgerow trees and some post and wire fences, with thick, more overgrown hedges and more frequent hedgerow trees to the south and south west. These provide connectivity between wooded areas on the Pucklechurch Ridge and in the Boyd Valley.
- Settlement is concentrated at Pucklechurch and Wick with several small historic villages/hamlets dispersed throughout the area.

Key Characteristics

- Active and disused quarries lie within the area, with claypits and coal industry relics along the toe of the Pucklechurch Ridge (western boundary).
- The M4 motorway forms a significant feature cutting across the area. Numerous narrow lanes also cross the area, some with wide grass verges.

Location

The Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley landscape character area is situated in the east of South Gloucestershire, adjacent to the Cotswold Scarp, south of Yate and immediately north of Wick.

The northern boundary of this landscape character area follows the railway with the urban area of Yate immediately beyond. This line marks the subtle transition between this area and the more wooded Wickwar Ridge and Vale further north. The eastern boundary follows the base of the Cotswold Scarp. The southern boundary follows the A420, which marks a subtle change between the ridge and vale landscape of this area and the more defined Golden Valley to the south.

The western boundary follows the toe of the Pucklechurch scarp in the north, to Shortwood Hill due west of Pucklechurch. South of the B4465, the scarp peters out changing to a less distinct rolling low hillside with more limited woodland cover. From here southwards, the position of the western boundary approximately follows the skyline, marking a transition between the higher Pucklechurch plateau to the east and the lower area of commons at Holbrook and Siston to the west. (See Figures 19 & 37).

Physical Influences

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

In outline, the landform of the area comprises a scarp to the north and west, which rises to a small plateau and a large scale, undulating

eastern vale, with the south and west comprising low, gently rolling hills and the River Boyd valley.

The Pucklechurch Ridge is a pronounced, medium scale landform rising from the Westerleigh Vale eastwards. The ridge has a prominent scarp edge which varies little in height along its length, at approximately 100 metres a.o.d., whilst its toe varies from between 80 metres a.o.d. in the north to 65 metres a.o.d. in the south. The northern scarp is thus more prominent. Throughout its length the landform is folded with occasional, small scale valley incisions fed by springs and tributaries of the Folly Brook, flowing generally north westwards.

The scarp peters out to the south of Shortwood Hill, forming gently rising ground and a curving ridgeline, which defines the Siston Brook valley.

The plateau landscape to the east of the ridge rises barely perceptibly southwards, but is slightly more prominent in the area of Pucklechurch itself, forming a broad dome at around 130 metres a.o.d.

The broad open vale to the east includes tributaries of the River Boyd, which drain southwards past Wick, through the Golden Valley and eventually into the River Avon. East of Wick, the River Boyd follows a more defined, sinuous, small scale and steep sided valley, at around 50 metres a.o.d., rising to around 75 metres a.o.d. on the upper valley slopes.

The Siston Brook valley and its tributaries lie beyond the south western boundary. The open valley slopes within the character area in its upper reaches face south west, producing the broadly curving form of the area's western boundary.

The Cotswold Scarp rises beyond the character area to the east forming a prominent large scale ridgeline.

Land Cover

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

- A few large regular shaped arable fields defined by low, clipped hedges and fences, are associated with the plateau and very gentle landform and are scattered roughly north east/south west through the centre of the area (Photo 9).
- Surrounding the central vale, along the western boundary and to the south towards Doynton, medium, regular shaped pasture fields dominate, divided by a mix of thick, clipped and intermittent hedges.
- Thick, overgrown hedges with intermittent trees lie mainly along the south and south western boundary.
- Small, irregular shaped fields are quite widespread in the areas around Hinton, Abson, Doynton and Wick and on parts of the Pucklechurch Ridge, within the river valleys, including parts of the Boyd Valley and some slopes rising to the foot of the Cotswold Scarp.
- On the scarp face of the Pucklechurch Ridge are medium, regular shaped fields of rough grassland and scrub, interspersed with copses or small areas of woodland. Clipped and overgrown hedgerows, with some intermittent hedgerow trees, run along the contours and down the slope, emphasising the profile of the scarp.
- Woodland cover is relatively sparse. There are however small woodlands scattered across the northern area and also associated with steeper landforms along the Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley in the south. There has been an increase in small woodlands as a result of the Community Forest which are starting to contribute to the wider landscape.

Areas of common land are present in a few locations. To the north, on gentle slopes near the Pucklechurch Ridge, are Kingrove Common, an irregular shaped small area of unimproved grassland and scrub contained by overgrown hedgerows (Photo 1) and Wapley Common, a small area of open parkland, unimproved grassland and scrub, edged by woodland (Photo 2). Hinton Common west of the village comprises broad, roadside grass verges. Near the southern boundary, Holbrook Common to the north west of Wick, comprises a small area with an ordered, regular pattern of broad, roadside verges and open grass fields between scattered properties.

There are also a number of quarries and areas of mineral workings. These comprise Codrington Quarry, a disused area of workings north of the M4; Wick Quarry near the southern boundary, including an active (but not currently operating) large quarry and works buildings (Photo 12); Shortwood Claypit and former Brickworks (now in landfill/ progressive restoration), situated immediately to the west of this character area, but with an earlier tip site now covered by vegetation on the lower slopes of the Pucklechurch Ridge within this area; and the former Parkfield Colliery, comprising a north and south site, located along the toe of the ridge, the north site largely occupying a section of the lower slopes of the ridge within this area, near the M4.

There has been an increase in ponds and lakes associated with development at Westerleigh , Dodington and Doynton.

Biodiversity

This character area is at the edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with its range of important habitats including calcareous grassland and ancient woodlands.

This character area comprises a mosaic of grassland, woodland, arable and pastoral farmland with scattered ponds, dissected by watercourses and connected by wildlife corridors such as hedgerows, providing important habitats for a diverse range of species.

Some habitats are designated as SNClS that include nationally important habitats, flora and fauna. Key species likely to be associated with the ancient woodland include bats and dormice both of which are present across the District and are UK priority species with associated Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP). There appears to be good connectivity for species such as these between the wooded areas and other habitats via hedgerows and scattered trees.

There are nine sites within the Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley designated as SNClS for the calcareous and neutral grassland present on the sites and includes areas of species-rich grassland. This diverse habitat supports a range of invertebrates. Ant hills are a regular feature. These invertebrates in turn provide a food source for mammals including bats.

The Feltham Brook, the River Boyd and the River Frome are designated as SNClS for the flowing water and bankside vegetation, which will support a diverse range of species from aquatic macro-invertebrates to fish and water voles. There are also ponds and pools within the area which support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species).

There is some arable farmland that provides habitat for a variety of ground nesting farmland birds including those listed as Globally Threatened Red listed species. The winter stubble also provides a foraging resource.

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

Settlement and Infrastructure

Settlement within the area includes both large nucleated villages and dispersed small hamlets. Farmsteads are sparsely distributed throughout the area randomly, but at roughly equidistant intervals.

Pucklechurch is a large village, located on raised ground just south of the M4, built of limestone, brick and render. It is situated on an historic trade route from Oxford and London to Bristol, routes which have been significant since Saxon times.

The medieval core to the north of the settlement (a Conservation Area), is based around the church and manor at Moat House Farm and is characterised by wide roads, stone houses and boundaries, with the church forming the main focal point. Its historic development has been principally based on agriculture and the coal mining industry. The presumed site of the Saxon Manor House where King Edward was martyred in 946 AD, lies on the north eastern edge of the town and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

More recent housing expansion has occurred and makes up a significant proportion of the village, with a large trading estate centred around a series of WWII balloon sheds and the adjacent prison complex, both located on high ground on the southern fringes.

Wick is a large village to the south with both linear and more recent nucleated development pattern. It is situated both within and on the upper slopes of the River Boyd valley and is partly strung out along the A420. It contains a number of limestone buildings, although more recent residential development comprises a mix of materials including brick, render and reconstituted stone. Bury Manor, a large house on an elevated knoll and Wick Quarry and associated buildings are immediately to the east.

Yate and Chipping Sodbury lie adjacent to the northern boundary and comprise an extensive area of residential brick development, contained by the railway cutting.

There is also a scatter of small historic villages and hamlets within and adjacent to this character area, including Wapley, Codrington, Parkfield, Abson and Doynton, as well as Dodington, Hinton and Dyrham which are spring-line settlements associated with the toe of the Cotswold Scarp. These are typically located within the rising ground of the adjacent character area. Settlement locations are generally related to roads, junctions and, in places, churches. They are built predominantly of limestone, render and newer reconstituted stone. Parkfield Rank, associated with the disused coal mines along the toe of the scarp, is set along the upper edge of the Pucklechurch scarp and includes a terrace of brick and rendered properties.

Dyrham and Doynton are designated Conservation Areas due to their historic layout and building content and are unified through their use of Cotswold stone. Stone walls within Doynton enclose roads through the village (Photo 13).

The distinctive Elizabethan Siston Court lies to the south west of Pucklechurch, adjacent to the character area boundary, set above the Siston Brook valley. The court is situated within open land containing elements of a designed 18th century landscape park, which is a locally designated historic park. The court and village (the latter lying within the adjacent area) are also designated as a Conservation Area, essentially due to the court (Photo 10).

Copper slag coping stones and quoins (a by-product from the Warmley Brassworks within the Kingswood area) are a feature of the limestone wall of Abson Church and an adjacent barn (Photo 8). Similar coping stones are also evident within short sections of stone walling to a residential property along the A420, west of Wick and in Doynton. The use of this copper slag material is often quite limited within individual buildings, although examples are scattered

widely throughout the rural areas of South Gloucestershire, as far as the Severn Ridges and Oldbury Levels.

Relics of the past coal mining industry and brickworks remain immediately adjacent to the foot of the scarp, north of Shortwood. The brickworks and Brandy Bottom Colliery – a Scheduled Ancient Monument - (Parkfield Colliery South Photo 4) lie in the adjacent character area, although are visible from the Ridge. However, Parkfield Colliery North lies within this area adjacent to the motorway. Once a large and successful colliery, all that now survives the cutting for the M4 is a landmark brick chimney and waste tip.

A disused railway line, a spur off the former Bristol to Bath railway, links the Parkfield Collieries and Shortwood Claypit.

The landscape character area is crossed by numerous roads. The M4 is the main route through the area and runs centrally east to west across the Boyd Valley on embankment and cutting through the Pucklechurch Ridge.

The A420 follows the grain of the landscape along the southern boundary, crossing the contours at grade and runs east to west. The B4465 forms a 'dog leg' in travelling east to west either side of Pucklechurch, but running north-south between Pucklechurch and Westerleigh. Narrow and often tortuous lanes are numerous throughout the area, generally contained by hedges, some with wide asymmetric grass verges.

Only one significant powerline is present, descending from the Cotswold Scarp to pass over the M4 and then run north westwards towards Yate.

There are several major recreational routes across the area:

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

The wider public rights of way network includes extensive linear routes which generally criss-cross the area, with a more intense radiating pattern emanating from Pucklechurch and Doynton. The Bristol - Oxford Road and Back Lane / Redford Lane form an extensive east-west route, connecting the mining areas west of Pucklechurch with Dyrham. Paths east of Doynton climb the adjacent Cotswold Scarp. One path runs along the top of the Pucklechurch Ridge, with several routes descending towards the adjacent Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge area.

Landscape Character

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

The Cotswold Scarp forms a prominent backcloth and skyline to this area in the east. Extensive

open views of this significant landform are possible from a large extent of the area, greatly influencing its character (Photo 5). This character area is therefore important in providing the setting for the western edge of the Cotswold AONB. The scarp also provides panoramic views over this area.

The Pucklechurch Ridge, with its section of scarp, forms a visually prominent backcloth and containment to views from the Westerleigh Vale, the urban edge of the Kingswood character area and those areas of settlement elevated on rising ground. From these areas, the ridge is a distinctive rising landform and skyline feature. Its textured cover of hedgerows, woodland, rough grassland and scrub with Parkfield Rank and scattered farms, are particularly visible and distinctive. The relics of past industrial activity are closely related to the foot of the scarp, largely within the adjacent area. The two chimneys of the Parkfield Colliery (North and South sites) form local landmarks and are visible against the backdrop of the slope from the adjoining area (Photo 4).

Panoramic views over the adjacent Westerleigh Vale are possible, particularly from Parkfield Rank, Shortwood Hill and footpaths along the scarp edge. Evident within these views are:

- A rural landscape, scattered with industrial relics (now largely absorbed within a framework of naturally regenerating vegetation), road and rail infrastructure, an oil terminal and abattoir building. The landscape is contained to the west by prominent commercial development at Emerald Park, and the residential urban edge of Emerson's Green and Kingswood, with the expanse of Greater Bristol beyond.
- Emerald Park has a concentration of large scale warehouses, the large physical size of these buildings and uniformity of materials, is in contrast to the adjacent rural vale landscape. They are a dominant feature within views from the ridges, although the associated maturing landscape is now providing some absorption into the wider landscape.

- The extensive nature of settlement edge and urban area of Emerson's Green and Kingswood is very prominent within these views. There is a marked contrast at the boundary between settlement and the adjacent rural vale. Development continues to expand eastwards towards the scarp foot.

Above the Pucklechurch Ridge, the agricultural landscape is comprised largely of a patchwork of pasture and arable land of medium to large, regular shaped fields over a rolling, undulating landform. Smaller and more irregular shaped fields are typically associated with small settlements and steeper landform.

Boundaries vary within the area and include laid, clipped, thick or intermittent hedges, infrequently supplemented with fencing. This variety continues along the numerous roads and lanes that cross the area. Hedgerow trees and woodland are generally intermittent, contributing to an open character (Photo 6 and 9). A few copses are scattered to the north of the M4, (Photo 2 at Wapley) and in small woodlands along the Pucklechurch scarp (Photo 3 & 4).

A dense pattern of hedgerow trees and woodland to the south, around Wick and within the curvilinear Boyd Valley, produces a bold landscape framework (Photo 11), which limits views into and out of this area. This medium scale semi-enclosed landscape is diverse and distinctive in appearance.

Commons at Kingrove (rough grassland and scrub contained by overgrown hedgerows), Wapley (parkland, rough grassland, scrub and woodland backdrop), Hinton (roadside grass verges) and Holbrook (linear roadside verges and regular fields) all provide visually distinct local areas.

The settlement and development pattern varies within the area and, with the exception of Pucklechurch and Wick, is small scale.

The scattered, small scale historic settlements and hamlets within the Boyd Valley and along the toe of the Cotswold Scarp, generally nestle within the landscape, are harmonious and well integrated within the vegetation pattern and often large scale landscape setting.

The churches at Pucklechurch, Wick, Abson and Doynton and Bury Manor at Wick, are focal points within the wider landscape (Photo 7).

More recent built development at Pucklechurch and Wick is prominent within local views (Photo 15) and from the Cotswold Scarp.

The eastern and southern edges of Pucklechurch, including housing, a large modern prison and shed buildings associated with the trading estate, are prominent within local views. A large extent of the settlement is also visible in views from the M4 to the north east. Community forest planting is reducing the openness of the views from the north. Further planting along the east would be beneficial. The lack of integration results from the slightly elevated location of the town, the limited vegetation framework/hedgerow trees along the eastern settlement edge, or within the adjacent agricultural landscape, and the large scale of some developments. From the Cotswold Scarp, the light coloured roofs of the large scale trading estate sheds are visually evident and attract attention, due to scale, colour and textural differences, compared to the adjacent residential settlement pattern and general lack of built development within this rural area as a whole (Photo 9 & 14). However the maturing peripheral landscape scheme around the prison is providing some absorption of the prison complex in views from the south.

The buildings and quarry edge of the works at Wick Quarry (currently inactive) are visually prominent from the Cotswold Scarp and A420 to the east (Photo 12), due to a lack of screening or vegetation. When in use, frequent blasting operations were also an audible intrusion in the locality.

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

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

The M4 and its associated significant traffic levels cuts through the centre of the area and is a highly visible and a prominent source of noise, particularly along the elevated section near Codrington. The open landform and limited vegetation structure emphasise its visual presence. Similarly, the single powerline is also a visible element within the area.

The Changing Landscape

The Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley landscape character area is an open, simple, undulating to rolling area with a defined scarp. The open views of and from the Cotswold Scarp give a distinctive character to the area and are integral in providing the setting to the Cotswolds AONB.

The landscape framework is largely intact, although there are signs of erosion of its integrity, following the removal of features or deterioration through limited management. Hedgerows are in places sporadic and intermittent, replaced by stock fencing, and there is subdivision of fields with alien boundary treatments resulting from horsekeep affecting a wide area. Hedgerow removal has been associated with arable land use, particularly in elevated flat areas and as a result of quarrying, landfill and golf course development.

The southern pastoral landscape, with its thick hedgerow structure, hedgerow trees and occasional copses, appears to be in good relatively condition.

However, mature hedgerow trees throughout the area typically have few juvenile replacements present to sustain this framework in future decades, although recent woodland planting between Pucklechurch and the M4 motorway and associated with the golf course will, in time, contribute to the landscape framework.

There has been some intensification of the rural landscape in recent years with some new barns and dwellings, some of which are tied to agricultural use, for example in the vicinity of Toghill, Watery and Rookery Lanes.

The areas scattered ponds and pools are vulnerable to any loss of habitat including the terrestrial habitat around ponds as well as the ponds themselves.

'Horsiculture' has increased and is now widespread in this character area, in particular between Pucklechurch and Abbson. Here and elsewhere features such as stables, sheds, paddocks and the subdivision of fields by electric tape fences often erode landscape character. Associated infrastructure can also include exercise areas, jumps, access tracks and floodlighting. The proliferation of such land use is leading to the loss or erosion of traditional field boundaries and hedges and the introduction of more prominent structures, resulting in a marked change in local character and loss of biodiversity value. In addition the introduction of flood lighting can disrupt biodiversity.

Other uses such as caravan storage, a traveller site to the west of Pucklechurch and the introduction of manmade landforms and ornamental planting associated with golf courses are further eroding the traditional rural character of this landscape area.

There are several Traveller sites in the locality. When well landscaped and managed there is the potential for these to fit with the landscape, but where poorly managed these can erode landscape character.

The Pucklechurch Ridge visually influences the adjacent Westerleigh Vale and Kingswood character areas lying to the west.

It has areas susceptible to landscape change, with the rough grassland and scrub possibly subject to future changes in grazing practices, which would affect the visual texture and openness of the scarp. Mature trees along the skyline and woodland copses on the slopes presently have no juvenile replacements. The loss of tree structure may reveal the dispersed farm buildings and residential properties, making them more prominent and also harm biodiversity value.

The Parkfield Rank facade of properties, along the ridgeline of the scarp, forms an unusual, distinctive and isolated built skyline feature. This intrudes upon the scarp face of the Pucklechurch Ridge, which otherwise has very few built features evident, creating a distinctive landmark. The introduction of significant vertical structures on the ridge could alter the character and perceived scale of this visually prominent landform.

The Shortwood Claypit which is largely contained within the adjacent character area immediately to the west has a stockpile of clay that is currently being drawn on, however the claypit itself has now concluded operations and is in progressive restoration with phased infilling of sections of the site.

The final land raising is expected to result in a landform which is locally convex, rather than the typical concave slopes of the lower scarp. The restoration proposals for the whole site, including the adjacent claypit, will however reintroduce a hedgerow framework over the site, as well as a large area of new woodland. Both will contribute to the overall landscape structure and habitat value of the area, although the new woodland, in the long term, is likely to screen some of the views of the wider adjacent vale that are currently obtained.

The abattoir and oil terminal buildings near the scarp toe in the adjoining character area, and M4 motorway, are built forms which dilute the rural character, due to their massing, scale or linearity, which contrasts with the rural landscape and landform of the scarp.

The Emerson's Green East development site, covers an extensive area within the adjacent character area to the west and extends between the existing urban edge of Emerson's Green, to and along the toe of the Pucklechurch Ridge. Development of this scale will inevitably result in significant landscape change and loss of the existing rural character, which will be prominent from the Pucklechurch Ridge. New development and structures within this area are also likely to affect the visibility, prominence and distinctiveness of the Pucklechurch Ridge, in views from the west and the M4. However, policies are included in the Core Strategy Local Plan which seek to ensure that any proposals for the area take account of the need to protect character, amenity and distinctiveness of the locality and wider landscape. Woodland planting along the eastern edge of the development will be required to buffer the impact on the adjoining countryside.

Heavy traffic and overhead powerlines are local detractors to landscape character. However the undulating landform and layered effect of the hedgerows generally limits the impact of roads and other structures on the wider landscape. They do however remain evident within elevated long distance views from the Cotswold Scarp. Reduction or erosion of the hedgerow and tree structure would increase the impact of such elements.

The lanes are a key characteristic of the landscape and are under pressure from increased traffic with damage to verges and hedges and pressure for highway Improvements. Lack of maintenance of the wider grass verges is leading to the development of scrub.

Wick Quarry has little woodland structure along its eastern boundary. Both the quarry workings and buildings are prominent from the Cotswolds AONB. New planting has however been undertaken around the more recent extension and may, in time, reduce its impact to some degree.

The central and eastern parts of this landscape character area are sensitive to change, which might erode its distinctive character, due to its open nature and visibility from the Cotswold Scarp.

Sections of the edge of Pucklechurch are also sensitive to change, due to their existing visual prominence and influence upon local landscape character and local, middle and distant views. Future change and particularly expansion of the settlement area into the surrounding plateau, will potentially increase the visual prominence of the town in this open landscape, especially where it results in loss to the already limited vegetation structure, eroding the rural character of this landscape.

The undulating topography and semi-enclosed nature of the western and southern parts of this landscape character area, coupled with a denser vegetation structure, makes it relatively less sensitive to change. However there is more sensitivity on the open hill tops and skyline locations, which are prominent within local and long views, compared with that of the more treed and enclosed valleys.

The steeper slopes, for example the valley sides and upper slopes of the Boyd Valley around Wick, are sensitive to change which might require landform remodelling, due to the extent of earthworks that can be required, resulting in impact upon landscape form and vegetation framework.

Maintenance works by Network Rail has resulted in the loss of significant swathes of woodland on both cut and embankment slopes. This has increased not only the visual prominence of the railway and trains but also increased the visibility and extended the urbanising influence of Yate in the wider landscape, and reduced wildlife habitat. The proposed electrification of the railway is also likely to further increase the visual prominence of the line through the introduction of overhead power lines and supporting gantries and the potential replacement or acaption of existing structures that cross over the railway line.

Landscape Strategy

- Due to the visual prominence of the Cotswold Scarp (LCA 4), the landscape strategy for LCA 4 is of particular relevance to the character of much of the open plateau of the Pucklechurch Ridge area
- Due to the strong visual interrelationship between the character area and the Cotswold scarp, development which would be prominent from or interrupt views to the scarp should be resisted in order to preserve the natural beauty of the AONB and its setting.
- In order to integrate new development at Emerson's Green into the wider Westerleigh Vale landscape, including in views from the Pucklechurch Ridge, a robust framework of woodland and forest scale trees is required. Careful consideration must be given to the distribution and design of roofscapes, green infrastructure, landscape works and the use of traditional materials.
- Any significant vertical features on the skylines of the Cotswolds Ridge (LCA 4) and the Pucklechurch Ridge should be carefully sited to ensure that the inherent sense of scale and rural character of this character area are not compromised.
- Ensure that the rural landscape settings of the designated conservation areas, including views towards the Cotswold Scarp from within the Pucklechurch Conservation Area, are not harmed by new development.
- Ensure that any new development in the rural landscape is located, designed and landscaped to integrate with existing landscape features and to conserve and protect the particular rural character of the locality. This should include protecting the landscape in the longer term through the implementation of landscape management plans.
- Transport proposals including new structures should be sensitively located and designed to protect the character and amenity of the host landscape and wider views.
- Encourage and support the management, restoration and enhancement of the relic industrial landscape and structures of the coal mining industry associated with Parkfield Colliery.
- Active management and strengthening of the various elements of the landscape framework, in particular hedgerows, trees and woodlands, including replacement or new planting, is needed to ensure the conservation of these key features for the long term as well as conserving and enhancing habitat value and connectivity. The loss of hedgerows or introduction of fences should be resisted.
- The restoration of quarry sites should integrate these sites back into the surrounding landscapes and enhance biodiversity value.
- Proposals for horsekeep and non agricultural uses should be designed to ensure that the particular character of the wider landscape is conserved. Given the large number of such developments within the area, this may limit the number and extent of new facilities which can be accommodated, particularly between Pucklechurch and Abson. Where these are permitted the scheme proposals should incorporate appropriate landscape and habitat enhancements.
- Maintain or improve remaining areas of tranquillity, including ensuring that lighting proposals do not disturb wildlife.

Landscape Character Areas



1 Kingrove Common with the Cotswold Escarpment at Old Sodbury in the background. Used by most of the local farmers for grazing. Horses have been banned to deter travellers.



2 Wapley Buses and Wapley Common.



3 View from Lyde Green Common with Pucklechurch Ridge defining the skyline. The oil terminal and M4 feature in the middle distance.



4 View eastwards to the Pucklechurch Ridge, with the chimney of Brandy Bottom Colliery within the middle distance.



5 Cotswold Scarp. Looking east from balcony of Community Centre in Pucklechurch, recreation field in the foreground. Shows the dominance of escarpment in the landscape.



6 Boyd Vale towards Cotswold Scarp from near Talbot Farm, at the top of Burchall's Hill. Dyrham Woods (LCA4) nestle in the fold of the scarp.



7 Abson. Church of St. James and village. Also a key skyline feature in views from Doynton.



8 Wall of Abson Church, black copper slag coping stones from Warmley Brass Works.



9 Looking West from the Cotswold Way across the broad Boyd Vale, towards Pucklechurch and its trading estate.



10 Siston Court sits on the ridgeline, with the church and hamlet set within the Siston Brook Valley below.



11 Village of Wick with the Cotswold Scarp and Ashwicke Ridges forming the skyline.



12 Wick Quarry within wooded framework. The works buildings however remain visible beyond the site.



13 Doynton village. Stone walls and buildings contain the lanes.



14 View from Toghill picnic area, with Doynton village in hollow, Pucklechurch on the low ridgeline behind with the trading estate evident. Bristol lies to the left in the distance.



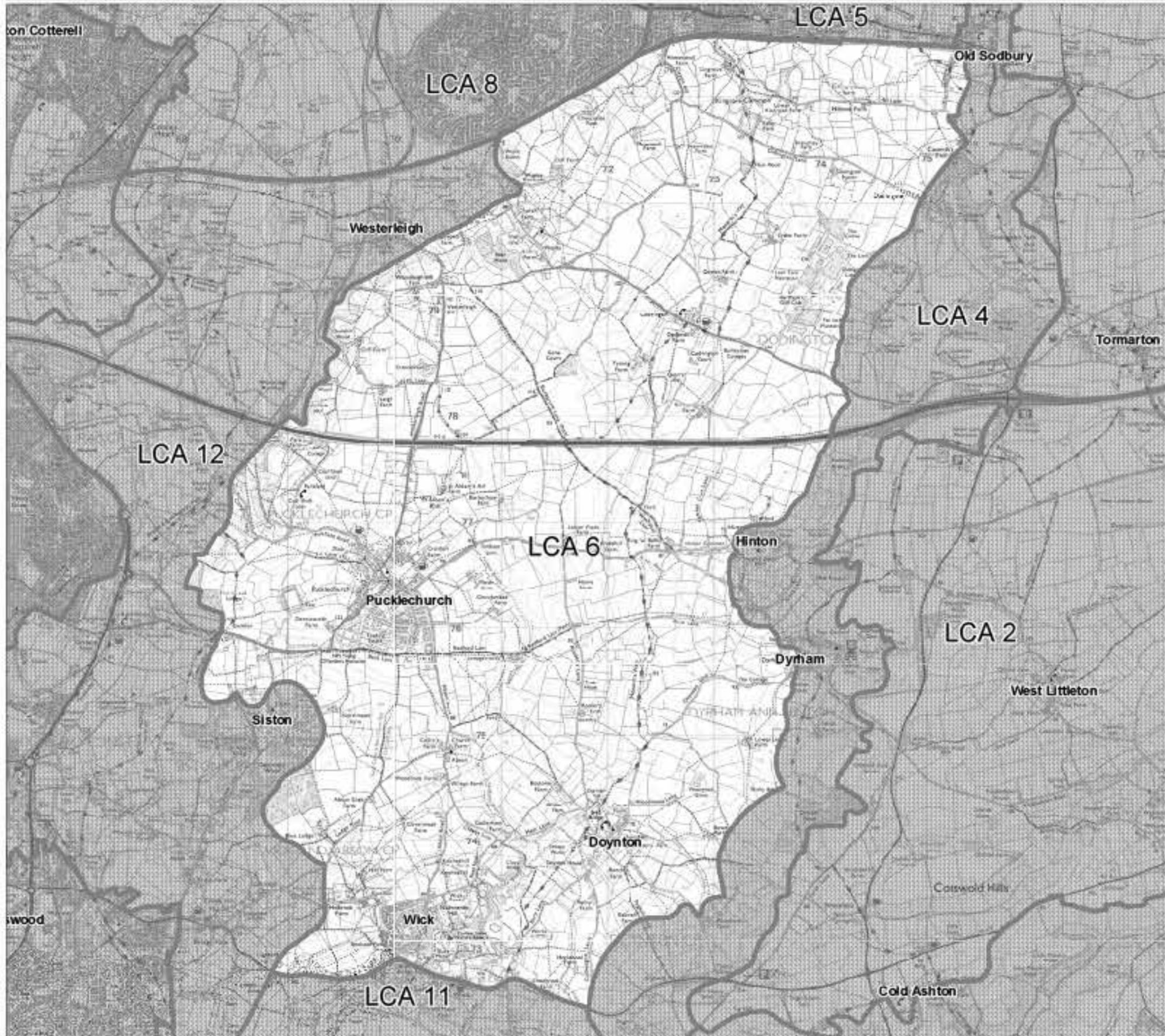
15 Residential development within Wick, with the line of the properties to the right following the A420.



16 View across Doynton to Toghill: subdivision of agricultural land has resulted in an increasing number of buildings in the landscape.

Figure 20 – Area 6
Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley

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)



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

South Gloucestershire Council Licence No LA100023410, 2008

Figure 21
Area 6

Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley