



Area 8

Yate
Vale



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Figure 25 Yate Vale

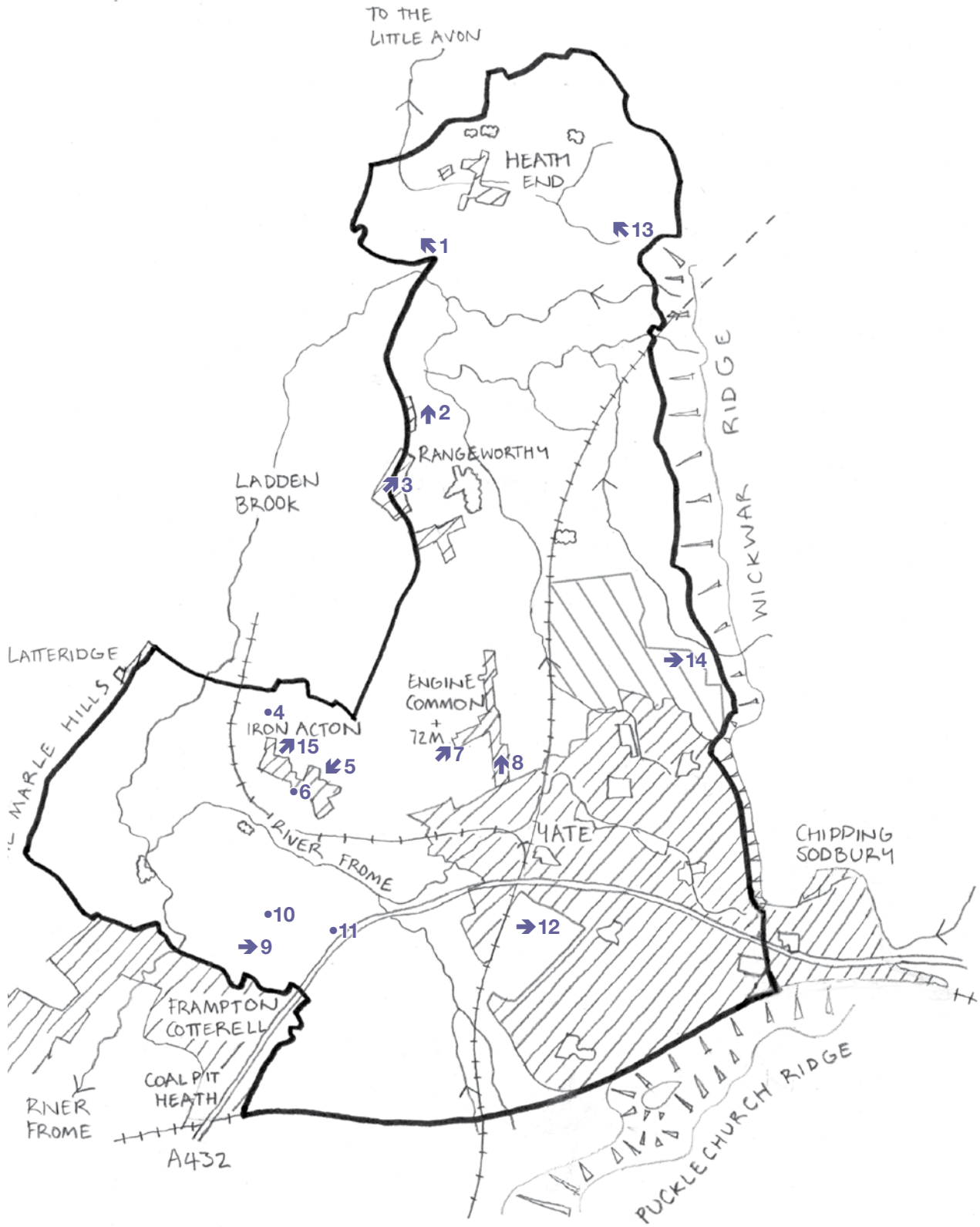
Sketch Map

Key

↖15 Photograph viewpoints

▨ Core strategy proposed new neighbourhood

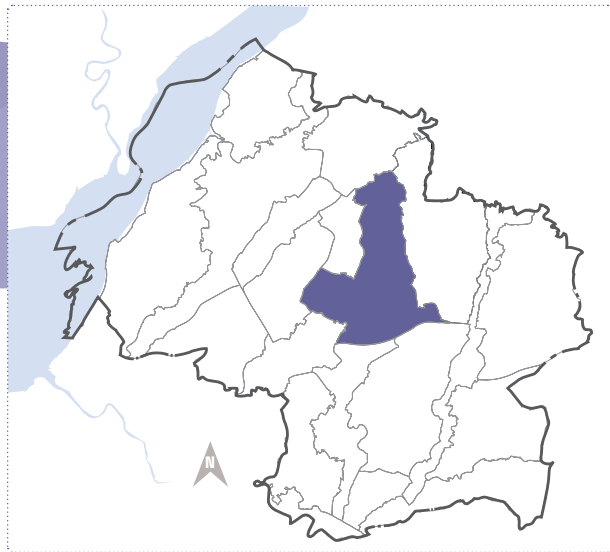
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Area 8

Yate Vale

The Yate Vale landscape character area comprises a gently sloping, largely agricultural often well treed area of medium sized fields, with large settlements in the south.



Key Characteristics

- Gently sloping vale of medium sized pasture and arable fields, very irregular shaped to the north, with small to medium regular shaped fields between and around Engine Common and Rangeworthy.
- Fields are contained in places by clipped hedgerows with an even distribution of mature specimen trees, creating a strong parkland character.
- Areas of neutral grassland within Yate Vale support a diverse range of flora including areas of species rich grassland, while arable farmland provides nesting opportunities in spring and foraging potential in the winter for farmland birds including Amber and Red listed species.
- North and west of Yate, tall overgrown hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, copses and small woodlands, create a more enclosed landscape. Elsewhere occasional small woodlands scattered through parts of the area, often associated with relic coal mining, quarrying and the River Frome. The scattered woodland connected by hedgerows and other habitats across the Yate Vale provides habitat for notable species including European Protected Species.
- Large scale landscape with views largely filtered by vegetation; some distant views possible. This Character Area is overlooked by the adjacent Wickwar Ridge, The Marle Hills and over some distance from the Cotswold Scarp.
- Pennant stone walls feature along some minor roads to the south and B4058, elsewhere associated with older settlement and scattered farms.
- The town of Yate lies in the south, merging with Chipping Sodbury beyond the south eastern boundary. The village of Frampton Cotterell defines part of the southern boundary. There is a significant area proposed for the development of a new neighbourhood immediately to the north of Yate.
- A number of scattered linear settlements extend northwards from Yate and Iron Acton along the network of roads and lanes, mixed with an intricate landscape of dispersed settlement, historic courts, coal industry relics, commons, woodlands and fields. Much of the northern part of the area has very little settlement, other than scattered farmsteads.

Key Characteristics

- Numerous minor roads bisect the area in the south, whereas in the north access is very relatively limited and there are areas of tranquility.
- Overhead powerlines cross the area and are a visible horizontal and vertical element.

Location

The Yate Vale landscape character area is located in central South Gloucestershire, north east of Bristol and north of the M4 corridor.

The northern boundary defines an area of transition between the Yate Vale and higher ground with a different settlement and field pattern, within the adjacent Falfield Vale area. The eastern boundary follows the approximate toe of the Wickwar Ridge, which in the south is partly defined by the edge of Yate, before marking the approximate landform division between Yate and Chipping Sodbury.

The southern boundary continues to the west beyond the urban edges, following the South Wales to London railway line, which marks a transition from the simple Yate Vale landform to the more undulating and rising landform of the adjacent Westerleigh Vale. The south west boundary follows the eastern and northern settlement edge of Coalpit Heath and Frampton Cotterell. The western boundary follows the ridgeline of The Marle Hills and B4058. It is a transitional boundary between the subtle variation in landform and vegetation of the Yate Vale and that of the adjacent Earthcott Vale and Tytherington Plain landscapes. (See Figures 29).

Physical Influences

The Yate Vale landscape character area largely consists of Carboniferous Coal Measures, with Pennant sandstones, mudstones and shales within the vale and some Triassic Keuper marl, clays and sandstones along parts of the eastern and south western boundary.

The soils are dominated by a mix of Gleys, Stagnogleys and Brown Earth.

The area largely comprises part of the very shallow and broad Ladden Brook valley, which falls northwards from Yate at 85 metres a.o.d. to 54 metres a.o.d. (average heights). This area is contained to the east by the prominent Wickwar Ridge, which rises beyond the area's boundary, on average 40 metres above the Ladden Valley floor. The southern end of the ridge forms a shallow escarpment at Yate Rocks and Bury Hill, both within the adjacent area, before the gradient slackens to provide the slightly elevated shallow bowl at 100 metres a.o.d. within which Chipping Sodbury is located. Beyond the southern edge of Yate the land rises to form the Pucklechurch Ridge.

West of the Ladden Valley a broad area of slightly elevated ground is followed by the B4058.

To the north, land rises slightly at Heath End to 63 metres a.o.d. A tributary of the Little Avon River forms a small valley, flowing west and then northwards beyond this area.

The south western extent of the area comprises the shallow and broad River Frome valley, which is joined by the Ladden Brook, having passed through the adjacent Tytherington Plain to the north. The Marle Hills on this western boundary partly contain the valley, forming a low ridgeline at 65 metres a.o.d., above the valley floor at 50 metres a.o.d. (average heights).

The area's watercourses, comprising the River Frome, Ladden Brook and Little Avon River largely form irregular brooks and stream channels.

The River Frome is the most variable in channel form, flowing westwards through Yate, and then southwards through Frampton Cotterell. It variously forms a small natural river, a straightened channel and spillway (flood control measures) within Yate and south of Iron Acton and then follows an irregular, meandering river course north of Frampton Cotterell.

The large scale railway embankment of the South Wales to London line, on the southern boundary, is a significant elevated horizontal man-made landform, superimposed on the gently undulating, natural ground form.

Land Cover

The Yate Vale landscape character area includes arable and pasture land within various field patterns. In the north, to the east of Bagstone, is an area of irregular shaped fields. The field pattern over much of the remaining area is the result of parliamentary enclosure, which comprises distinct, regular shaped fields, small to medium in size, particularly in the area of Engine Common and Rangeworthy. Iron Acton also has a localised area of small to medium sized, rectangular fields. More extensively, south of Iron Acton, fields are generally medium sized and slightly more irregular in shape.

Fields are largely contained by clipped hedges, mixed with some tall overgrown hedges particularly to the north and west of Yate. Mature hedgerow tree specimens (predominantly oak) are common, scattered throughout parts of the area (Photo 2). In contrast, to the east of Heath End in the north of the area, there are fewer hedgerow trees (Photo 13). Copses and small deciduous and mixed woodlands are common to the west and north of Yate, often marking past industrial sites, including relic coal mines and quarrying (Photo 1).

Horse paddocks are scattered across the area, largely to the west of Yate, between and adjacent to Iron Acton and Engine Common. Paddocks are secured variously by overgrown hedgerows or stockproof fencing (either reinforcing gaps in

hedgerows or replacing hedgerows altogether), and also use electric tape to subdivide fields.

Pennant stone boundary walls are a common feature towards the south of the area, associated with ribbon settlements, at Acton Court, along minor roads and the B4058 (Photo 7 & 15). Hedge banks, including Pennant stone, are locally evident as boundaries to narrow lanes to the north of Frampton Cotterell (Photo 10).

There are small areas of common and heathland within the area as at Mays Hill, Goose Green in Yate, Nibley and, land along the B4058 within Rangeworthy. Iron Acton has a village green in the centre of the settlement. Westerleigh Common is a large open space, contained on three sides by a mix of residential and industrial estate development west of Yate, largely grassland and used for recreation. (Photo 12).

Mineral extraction within the area has left a number of relics. The extraction and burning of limestone has left small quarries and lime kilns along the toe of the Wickwar Ridge, near Yate Rocks/ Bury Hill. The remnants of a dramway, dating from the 1850's, runs west from these sites to the railway line. The extraction of celestite within this area has left only a number of small pits, now forming lakes. Wickwar Quarry, beyond the north eastern boundary, was at one time the world's largest extraction site for this mineral. Small scale remnants of stone and mineral extraction are also present north of Frampton Cotterell (Pennant sandstone) and between Engine Common and Rangeworthy (former colliery yard and coal pit). There is however, little visible evidence of the once extensive coal mining in the area, other than woodland cover over these sites today.

The urban area of Yate includes a variety of open space, retained amongst the dense settlement pattern. The extensive and distinctive network of amenity space contains relic trees and hedgerows from the former agricultural landscape and designed open space created as part of the Radburn style housing layouts of the 1960's expansion. This largely comprises amenity open space of mown grass and individual trees. The River Frome corridor includes both sections with overgrown hedgerows, mature trees (some pollarded) and amenity grassland and is an important ecological corridor and recreational route. The rural sections of the River Frome to the west of Yate, have occasional small woodland blocks and lengths of linear woodland.

On the northern edge of Yate lies Tyler's Field, which has a mix of maturing woodland and meadow on rising ground. There are a number of parks within Yate including, Brinsham Fields a small park and lake providing play, informal recreation and fishing which will lie between the existing housing development and the new housing area. A more structured area of mature trees, parkland children's play and lakes is found at Kingsgate Park on the site of historic parkland.

Biodiversity

The rural areas of the Yate Vale include a mosaic of grassland, woodland, arable and pastoral farmland with a criss-crossing of watercourses and ponds connected by wildlife corridors including hedgerows, thereby providing important habitat for a diverse range of species.

Ancient woodland is not frequent in this character area with approximately 1 hectare or 4% of the total woodland area being designated. Woodland habitat generally comprises more recent and scattered woodlands and copses. Key species likely to be associated with the 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 between wooded areas and other habitats via hedgerows and scattered trees.

There are six sites within the Yate Vale designated as SNCIs for their neutral grassland habitat, 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.

This character area is criss crossed by a number of water courses, and many of the designated SNCIs within this Landscape Character Area include a watercourse or tributary, however the River Frome and Ladden Brook are designated as SNCIs specifically for the flowing water and bankside vegetation. These watercourses will support a diverse range of species from aquatic macro-invertebrates to fish and water voles. In addition, ponds and pools within the area will support amphibians such as great crested newts (a European Protected Species).

Agricultural areas comprise a patchwork of arable and pastoral farmland, the arable farmland in particular is an ideal habitat for many species of ground nesting farmland birds including birds that are listed as being Globally Threatened Red listed species. The winter stubble also provides a valuable foraging resource for farmland birds.

The more urban area of Yate in the south east of this character area may present further opportunities for wildlife in the form of gardens, amenity areas and ponds.

The disused quarries within the northern and western extents of this area may include underground quarries and mines that can provide an ideal habitat for many species of bat including European Protected Species.

Settlement and Infrastructure

The Yate Vale includes the large settlement of Yate, which has merged with Chipping Sodbury to the east to form a continuous urban area. The town of Yate is however physically separated from Chipping Sodbury, which is located on higher ground within a shallow bowl of the Wickwar Ridge. There is a noticeable increase in elevation from the Yate Vale to Chipping Sodbury on approaching from the west.

Although Yate has a medieval core, it has grown relatively recently to include extensive areas of 20th century housing, often in brick, concentrations of commercial and retail development along major roads and industrial estate development on its western fringe.

The medieval settlement pattern within Yate is particularly evident, clustered around St Mary's Church, Goose Green and Yate Rocks, where the traditional buildings and walls are constructed of Pennant stone. Closer to the Wickwar Ridge, limestone also features within older buildings and walls, reflecting the local changes in geology. A dense network of minor roads emanate from the north and west of Yate. The development of settlement is closely related to this road network, with dispersed houses of a variety of styles and mix of stone and render, straddling the roads and lanes (Photo 3).

Engine Common is a distinct linear settlement (Photo 8), whilst Rangeworthy (Photo 3) and Heath End are linear settlements with a clustered pattern at road intersections.

Iron Acton village, to the west of Yate, is probably the result of two settlements merging, now forming a linear settlement. Designated a Conservation Area, it was founded through its associations with ore extraction and iron workings. It consists largely of a mix of older building styles, combined with a village green and other small public open spaces. The buildings are mainly Pennant sandstone and light coloured render, with high stone walls defining property boundaries along the High Street (Photo 6).

Acton Court (a SAM), to the north of Iron Acton is included within the Conservation Area and comprises a large Tudor house, walled grounds and decorative gateway (Photo 4). A former deer park lies to the north of Iron Acton, the majority of which is located within the Tytherington Plain area.

Farm building groups are numerous in the area, distributed at close but random intervals along minor roads around Engine Common, clustered together as seen at Mayshill on the A432 to the north of Coalpit Heath (Photo 11), or distributed more sparsely within the more rural area of the Ladden Brook valley. These buildings are generally small Pennant sandstone farmhouse buildings, of similar design, constructed during the early 19th century.

Yate Court, a medieval manor, lies within the Ladden Valley, north of Yate and is unique in being the only moated habitation within the South Gloucestershire area. It is surrounded by a former deer park, the boundaries of which and some of the internal fields, are still evident in the hedgerow pattern.

The settlement edges of Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath, which lie in the adjoining character area of the Frome Valley, form the south western boundary of this area. The irregular edge of Frampton Cotterell largely comprises linear pattern, traditional Pennant stone cottages and some brick housing infill, with a more clustered pattern around Frampton End. Frampton End extends slightly northwards from Frampton Cotterell into this character area and comprises scattered Pennant stone cottages, farm buildings and more recent housing infill along a winding country lane, flanked by open countryside. To the west, St Peter's Church also lies within this character area within a tight meander of the River Frome, creating a break within the settlement pattern on the northern edge of Frampton Cotterell.

The eastern edge of Coalpit Heath is defined by a linear, dense façade of 20th century brick housing, with a small clustered pattern at a minor road junction, near traditional farm buildings.

The small Roman town of Wickwar (now a scheduled monument) comprises an area of approximately 16 hectares and lies 2km to the south west of Wickwar village. The site is situated on a slight crest which drops away at the northern end towards the Ladden Brook. The town has been identified through extensive geophysical survey and a number of small trial excavations undertaken by Avon Archaeological Unit between 2001-2004. It is believed to date from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. Although there is no evidence of a continuation of the metalled Roman road immediately across the Ladden Brook, aerial photography shows it exists further to the north of the site.

Numerous minor roads and lanes bisect the southern part of the area; however, in the north these are very limited. The B4059, B4060 and A432 are the principal routes and lie in the south, connecting Yate to Coalpit Heath, Frampton Cotterell and Bristol. The A432 and its high traffic have a particular effect upon Nibley, bisecting the village and isolating the two halves. The B4058 runs north-south and defines a major part of the western boundary.

Pennant stone walls border much of the B4058 and are common along the fringes of Frampton Cotterell (Photo 10) and to the west of Yate (Photo 7).

The minor roads and lanes link with the public rights of way network, which includes one of the Circular Rides in South Gloucestershire, the Jubilee Way and the Frome Valley Walkway, which are all major recreational routes.

- The Circular Ride crosses the area east to west, largely along country lanes and one short section of bridleway. The route descends the Wickwar Ridge into the area at Bury Hill, follows country lanes southwards to the east of Engine Common, along the

north western fringes of Yate, through Iron Acton and then south along Hover's Lane to Frampton End.

- The Jubilee Way enters the area in the east, from Chipping Sodbury Quarry, descends and briefly follows the toe of the Wickwar Ridge, before passing north westwards to Rangeworthy.
- The Frome Valley Walkway largely follows the river's course from east to west, following a green corridor through the urban area of Yate, an industrial area on the western edge of Yate, then crossing the rural area to the west before entering Frampton Cotterell.

Three railway lines cross the area. The Bristol-Gloucester line passes centrally south to north, largely at grade, entering into cutting and tunnel through the Wickwar Ridge. The South Wales-London line passes east to west along the southern boundary, initially in cutting in the east and then on high embankment, with two blue brick, single arched bridges along the section between Yate and Coalpit Heath. A mineral line runs from Yate westwards, before turning north at Iron Acton. This was formerly the main line to Thornbury.

The area is also crossed by numerous powerlines in a variety of directions, but principally west to east, some converging on a sub-station beyond this character area to the north of Latteridge. In addition, one line runs north-south, near the eastern boundary.

Landscape Character

The Yate Vale landscape character area is gently sloping, forming the eastern segment of an overall broad, rolling and curved vale, which extends into the adjacent Tytherington Plain area. The Yate Vale is contained to the east and south by low ridges of the Wickwar Ridge and Pucklechurch Ridge and is distinct from the Tytherington Plain, which has a more simple landform, pattern of land cover and very little settlement.

The Yate Vale is largely an agricultural landscape, with a large concentrated area of settlement in the south at Yate and beyond the area's boundary at Chipping Sodbury and Frampton Cotterell.

The rural character of the area has been influenced greatly by long term human activity associated with settlement, small scale coal mining, quarrying and associated infrastructure. This activity has been set within a low vale, which is contained by the gently rising landforms of the Wickwar (Photo 14) and Pucklechurch Ridges (to the east), The Marle Hills (to the west) and Severn Ridge (to the north). These slopes contribute visually to the rural setting, enclosure and sense of scale of this area.

The rural areas of the Ladden Brook and River Frome valleys largely comprise an area of subtle landform, semi-enclosed by clipped hedgerows and an even distribution of mature specimen trees, which create a structured landscape with a strong parkland character (Photo 2). Immediately to the north and west of Yate, there is a more enclosed landscape of tall overgrown hedgerows, mature hedgerow trees, copses and small woodlands (Photo1).

Within this framework, the pattern of dispersed farm buildings, linear settlements, low lying road and rail network are well integrated and generally visually low key.

In contrast, an area to the east of Heath End is more open, with few hedgerow trees (Photo 13). This allows views eastwards to Wickwar Quarry (within the adjacent area), where a section of quarry face and associated buildings on the skyline are visible.

Similarly, the area between Yate and Coalpit Heath/Frampton End has few hedgerow trees, which, combined with a shallow open valley, allows some open distant views across to the industrial edge of Yate (Photo 9).

Elsewhere, views are typically filtered by the layers of vegetation, with open views generally only possible from higher ground, such as from

the adjacent Wickwar Ridge, The Marle Hills, or from elevated open spaces within Yate, such as at Tyler's Field.

Distant views also extend over this area from the Cotswold Scarp, from where the low lying vale and strong vegetation structure forms part of a much larger panorama, extending to the Severn Ridges.

Land cover and vegetation pattern variations are evident. Within the widespread pattern of medium sized, slightly irregular shaped fields, is a small area of very irregular shaped fields to the east of Bagstone in the north, partly influenced by the Ladden Brook and its tributaries, with an ordered pattern of square and rectangular fields associated with linear settlement at Engine Common, Bagstone and part of Heath End.

Former coal mining and quarry sites for Pennant stone, lime and coal are now largely colonised by vegetation and marked by woodland, with former site features no longer visible from the wider landscape. These woodland sites are scattered throughout the vale adjacent to Yate, Frampton Cotterell, Coalpit Heath and along the toe of the Wickwar Ridge.

Former celestite extraction has also left small pools to the north of Yate, now largely colonised and enclosed by vegetation and woodland.

Horse paddocks, scattered across the area, particularly to the west of Yate, between and adjacent to Iron Acton and Engine Common, have in places disrupted the vegetation framework through changes in the management regimes of hedgerows and/or the replacement of hedgerows with timber fences. The consequence has been the creation of a more open landscape character than adjacent fields. This more open landscape increases the visibility of stables, parked vehicles, open storage, jumps and other features associated with the keeping of horses.

The urban edges of Yate are not particularly visible from within the wider vale landscape, due to the layered effect of vegetation and generally

low view points. Within southerly views the tower of St. Mary's Church forms a landmark. The urban edge and its extent is however very prominent within local views and from the Wickwar Ridge on this area's eastern boundary. From these locations the density of residential development and large scale industrial units form stark urban edges, however there is some amelioration of this as associated landscape works mature. The principal impact is from the south from Nibley and the Westerleigh Ridge where the industrial development is prominent.

Westerleigh Common, within the western fringes of Yate, is a large area of rough pasture and young woodland with some peripheral scrub, largely surrounded and dominated by industrial estates and residential development. The industrial estates cover an extensive area on the western edge of Yate and are evident within distant views from Coalpit Heath.

St. Peter's Church forms a local landmark, visible within rural views to the north and along this edge of Frampton Cotterell.

The settlement edge of Frampton Cotterell and Frampton End are well integrated by the strong hedgerow and tree structure, the riparian vegetation along the River Frome and wooded mound of the former iron workings.

The eastern edge of Coalpit Heath forms a more prominent built edge against the rural landscape beyond. Gently rising ground to the east however limits views of this edge from the wider landscape.

The South Wales to London railway, on high embankment along the southern boundary, physically contains views both into and out from the south western corner of the character area. The tall arched, brick bridges are distinctive local features, also found within the Frome Valley area to the west. Due to the removal of much of the linear woodland that formerly covered significant lengths of embankment, grass covered slopes often form a prominent artificial skyline.

Pockets of locally distinct landscape features are evident to the south of the area. Iron Acton has an attractive mix of historic buildings and open space with the church forming an important feature in the local landscape (photo 5). Acton Court to the north of the village is an historically important medieval manor.

The River Frome corridor within the urban context of Yate has sections of a remnant rural landscape, with mature bankside trees and less distinct sections of amenity landscape, with regularly planted trees within mown grass. This green corridor forms a significant physical break within the urban framework of Yate. With the exception of the planned layout and mature planting of Kingsgate Park, Yate's other open spaces are largely former fields contained by road and residential development, that now provide amenity spaces with an informal planting structure.

Powerlines and pylons, many converging on the substation to the north of Latteridge, form strong vertical and horizontal elements within the landscape that are prominent within many of the distant views, particularly in the south of the area.

The Changing Landscape

The Yate Vale landscape character area has a gently sloping landform and is predominately agricultural in character, with clipped hedges, some overgrown and a generally strong framework of trees. Broadly speaking, the landscape elements and components are intact and in good condition. In some places, however, the main landscape elements and components are eroded, although this condition does not currently significantly affect the existing rural structure.

The existing hedgerow and tree structure is generally in a good condition. However, the mature trees have few juvenile trees to sustain the future long term framework. A decline or loss of hedgerow trees, overgrown hedgerows or woodland would increase the visual prominence of existing settlement and infrastructure within the area, reducing the present perception of

tranquillity and relatively remote character, found particularly to the north of Yate, and around Engine Common and Rangeworthy.

The effectiveness of overgrown hedgerows for stock control will reduce in time if not managed. Bringing these features (which currently create a more enclosed landscape) back under management, will itself initially change the character of the local landscape, resulting in the loss of screening and enclosure, particularly where these features predominate, as to the north of Yate. Dependent on the number of hedgerow trees which are allowed to develop, or are planted, the landscape character could become more or less open as a result of management.

Loss or degradation of hedgerows or tree cover would also impact on the habitat value of the landscape and potentially on connectivity between habitats. Pools and ponds are also vulnerable to any loss of habitat including the terrestrial habitat around ponds as well as the ponds themselves.

New woodland planting, under the Forest of Avon initiative, was undertaken at Tyler's Field within the northern edge of Yate, and as this establishes the woodland on this slightly elevated site is increasingly contributing to and enhancing existing views from within Yate and will potentially screen parts of the urban area from the wider landscape, while also providing habitat value. The landscape structure of other areas such as Rangeworthy and Westerleigh Common have also benefitted from additional woodland planting and improved management.

Recreational pressure for 'horsiculture' is evident particularly along the edge of settlement. This change in land use is a relatively recent trend, which in places has led to the loss or erosion of hedgerows. The cumulative effect of this and the associated infrastructure of electric tape fencing or subdivision of fields, stables, entrance ways and access tracks, exercise areas, jumps and even floodlighting, can result in a marked change in landscape character as well as impact on biodiversity.

Pennant stone boundary walls around individual properties in the south are largely in good condition. However, in some locations e.g. along the B4058, the condition of walling is variable, influencing the character of the locality.

The settlement edges of Yate have a visual influence upon the adjacent rural fringe, due to limited integration from existing vegetation structure and a lack of new planting to accompany more recent housing development. The scale of commercial and industrial estate warehouses on the western edge of Yate has a significant impact, although associated landscape works is maturing to provide some integration with the wider landscape. The visibility of Yate's northern fringe to views from the Wickwar Ridge make this area sensitive to change. Another feature of the area is infill and intensification of use of existing sites, such as Brimsham School and Broad Lane Depot.

The Core Strategy proposes a significant extension to the settlement to the north of Yate, set within a strong landscape of green infrastructure. This should help not only to provide an appropriate buffer between the urban and rural landscape, but also break up the areas of built form in views from higher ground. At the time of writing there were pressures for further development at Engine Common, however this lies outside the Core Strategy proposed area.

The national trend of increasing traffic levels, with the potential for subsequent road widening, threatens some of the more populated ribbon settlements and linking routes. Currently these minor roads typically maintain a small scale presence and follow traditional routes which have evolved over time. There are however, examples of more recent road construction which have resulted in a significant impact in the locality, including the Iron Acton bypass (built in 1967), which cut through the village green to the north and the A432, creating severance through Nibley to the west of Yate.

An increase in traffic volumes and/or a perceived need for highway improvement measures, has the potential to introduce standard highway design solutions including kerbs, new signage and materials, which could have a localised but cumulative, effect eroding the existing rural character within settlements and rural corridors.

The sensitivity of the landscape to change varies within the area, with landform, elevation and vegetation cover. Typically, the more robust framework of mature hedgerow trees and strong hedgerows north of Yate creates enclosure.

In the north of the area, to the east of Heath End, few mature trees, low tightly clipped hedges and a rising landform allow open views across the landscape. The Heath End area is highly sensitive to any visible land use change which has the potential to erode the rural landscape character.

Similarly, change along the toe, slopes or skyline of the Wickwar Ridge, has the potential to be intrusive (as seen at Wickwar Quarry to the east), influencing the level of tranquillity and rural views experienced both along the ridge and within the vale below. The Core Strategy proposes to address this through the identification of a broad swathe of land along the scarp and toe of the ridge as significant green infrastructure.

To the northwest and west of Yate, the landscape is potentially less sensitive to change, due to the dense overgrown hedges and mature tree structure, which generally form a strong and robust vegetation framework. However, any loss of vegetation, as a result, has the potential to further affect landscape character and reduce habitat value, and change within this area could be visible from the adjacent rising land and ridgeline of the Wickwar Ridge.

The recently consented solar park development at Says Court has altered the character of this locality; however it is envisaged that the accompanying landscape scheme will reinforce the existing landscape pattern and should in time help to absorb this development into the

landscape. Some aspects, including ancillary equipment 'buildings' that are located on a gentle ridge are however likely to remain relatively prominent in the landscape.

The northern edge of Frampton Cotterell, at Frampton End, is well integrated and largely visually contained, given the current limits of the settlement edge, set behind an established and strong pattern of hedgerows, trees and small woodlands. This area is therefore less sensitive to change, although any loss of vegetation has the potential to erode this rural character, or increase the prominence of the existing settlement edge or any subsequent change.

The eastern edge of Coalpit Heath is partially screened from the Yate Vale by a low gentle ridge landform to the east of the settlement, making it less sensitive to change along the immediate settlement edge, although large scale change has the potential to be prominent, given the general openness of the landscape in this area, due to limited tree and woodland cover.

The rural village character of Engine Common and Rangeworthy comprises a linear settlement pattern, often interspersed with small fields. It is sensitive to incremental infill or the cumulative effect of changes that have the potential to alter this distinctive pattern, through the coalescence of built forms, increased density of development, or loss of vegetation features and stone walls. Such change could lead to the urbanisation of road corridors and loss of rural village characteristics. Engine Common is also sensitive to coalescence between this settlement area and Yate to the south and south east.

The remaining small linear settlement areas of Iron Acton and Heath End and the clustered settlements of Nibley and Mayshill, also have a distinctive character. These areas would be sensitive to change which could erode the existing architectural form and pattern or disturb the vegetation framework, which provides a setting for and integration of the settlements.

Embankment stabilisation works which cleared railway embankments of tree cover have significantly increased the prominence of the railway within the landscape. Future electrification of the line would add substantially to the visual intrusion of the line from overhead gantries and potentially the replacement or adaption of bridges and structures that cross the line.

Progressive restoration is expected for earlier phases of the Wickwar quarry. There has been some expansion northwards in recent years, in accordance with the preferred area for extraction identified in the Minerals & Waste Local Plan to the east of the B4509. This is beyond the Wickwar Ridge skyline (in the adjacent character area). There may be some local visual or audible effect evident near the site boundary, but excavation work is unlikely to have a significant visual effect on wider views from within this area. Restoration of the quarry area will be to permanent water.

Partial infill of Barn Hill quarry in Chipping Sodbury is providing a development area for retail and housing, close to the edge of the Conservation Area and the Frome valley. The quarry walls screen the development area from the north and east.

Landscape Strategy

- Restore, maintain and reinforce the characteristic hedgerows, dry stone walls, historic field patterns and mosaic of habitats of the Yate Vale.
- Protect and enhance the particular character, significance or setting of the parkland, historic field patterns and earthworks associated with Acton and Yate Courts and their deer parks, as well as the landscape pattern of the Engine Common area. Measures should include securing succession planting and landscape management plans.
- Ensure that new development of all scales respects and enhances the particular, variable and distinctive character and appearance of the landscapes, and settlement patterns of the Yate Vale. Ensure that traditional features of the landscape, including those of habitat value are incorporated into the design.
- Encourage the use of building materials that respect and integrate with the local vernacular, in particular Pennant Sandstone with carboniferous limestone closer to the Wickwar Ridge area.
- Avoid disturbance of the remaining areas of tranquility in the north of the character area. Lighting design needs careful consideration especially on the edge of settlements and in rural areas, both to minimise impact on landscape character and avoid disruption to vulnerable species.
- Encourage small scale woodland planting, particularly close to prominent industrial and residential development.
- The landscape strategy for new development should ensure a green character in views from adjacent high ground and buffering from the surrounding rural landscape.
- Where strategically visually important planting is removed to deliver infrastructure and transport projects, seek to secure replanting schemes and commitments to long term maintenance and management to ensure successful establishment of new planting.
- The landscape schemes associated with quarry restoration should ensure the creation of a new landscape structure that ensures re-integration of the site with the particular character and appearance of the wider landscape, and its mosaic of habitats.
- Improve the Frome River corridor as a recreational route and wildlife habitat, particularly through Yate and Chipping Sodbury
- Protect the character of the lane network from damage by maintaining roadside stone walls, hedges and trees and managing road verges to promote grassland interest.
- Ensure the new neighbourhood has a substantial framework of new tree planting to reduce visual impact from the Wickwar Ridge and the adjoining vale.
- Transport proposals including new structures should be sensitively located and designed to protect the character and amenity of the host landscape and wider views.

Landscape Character Areas



1 Heath End area is very flat. The hedges especially around fields to the west of the B4058 are formed of mature Oak trees, with an occasional Ash tree. There are several coal spoil heaps, now covered with trees, the largest of which is shown to the right of the photo.



2 View north from Green Lane, with wooded ridgeline of Falfield Vale (LCA7) along the skyline.



3 Typical scattered linear development within Rangeworthy.



4 Gateway to Acton Court Estate.



5 Iron Acton, looking south down the avenue towards St. James the Less Church. Pasture in the foreground.



6 Iron Acton looking west along High Street, with "The Cassy" in the foreground. A cassy is a raised footpath.



7 Looking north east along Mission Road. An example of a high, long, dry stone wall.



8 Looking north along North Road, with linear residential development of Engine Common.



9 Looking east from Frampton End Road showing the largely rural agricultural landscape within this area of broad vale, occupied by the River Frome.



10 Narrow winding lane. Hedgebank with Pennant stone walls hidden by hedge are common near Frampton Cotterell, which borders this area.



11 Old farmhouses are common features. Chestnut Farm at Mayshill, built from local pennant sandstone.



12 Westerleigh Common, Yate. Used for pasture and recreation.



13 View north westwards of semi-enclosed pasture and arable land with wooded hills of the Falfield Vale on the skyline.



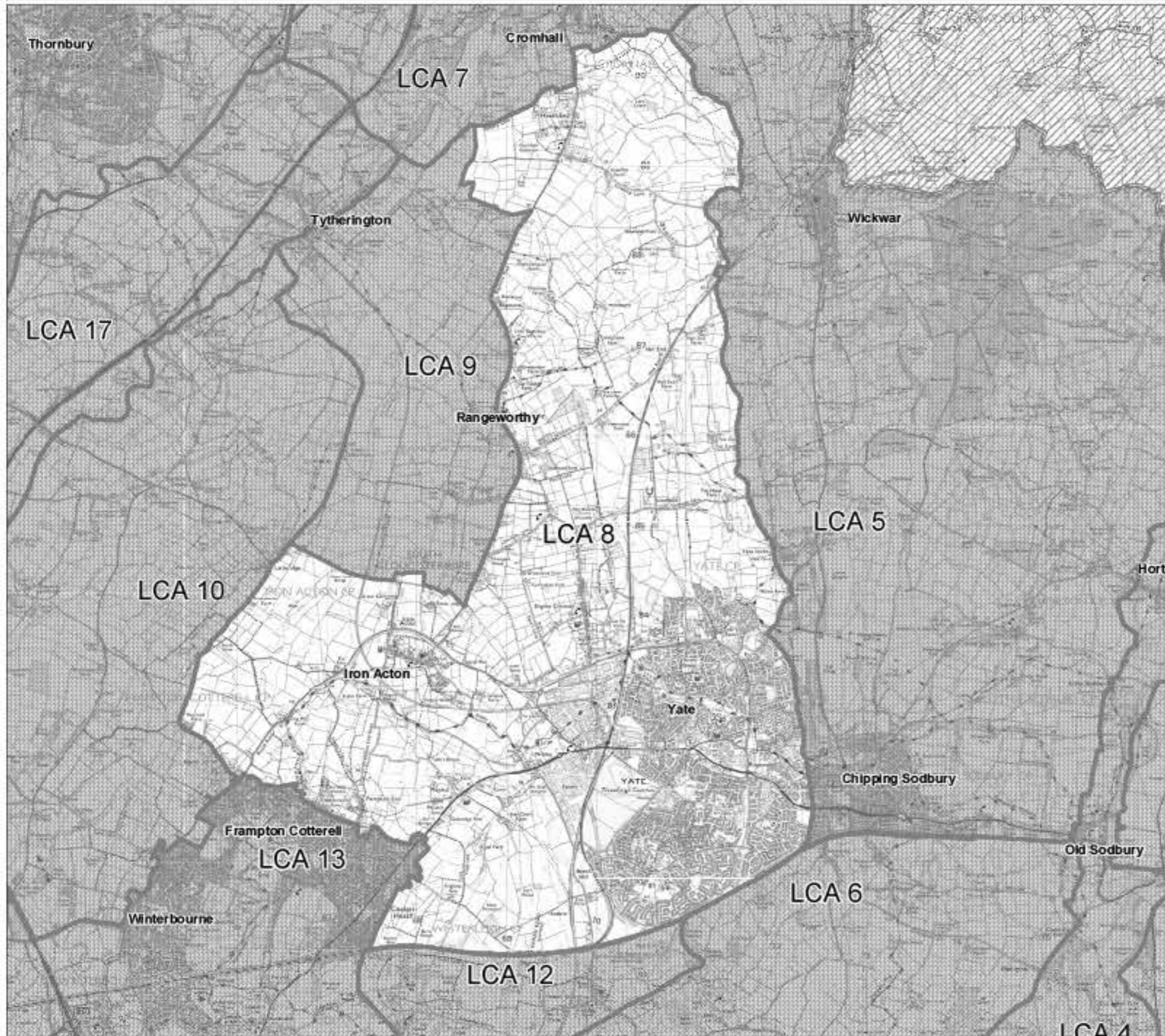
14 View south east to Wickwar Ridge and Yate Rocks. The ridge visually contains the Yate Vale along most of its eastern boundary.





15 Stone wall boundaries are locally a common feature near Acton Court and adjacent to the B4058.

Figure 26 – Area 8
Yate Vale

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 27
Area 8
Yate Vale