

A417 Missing Link
TR010056

6.4 Environmental Statement
Appendix 7.2 Published Landscape
Character Assessments

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Procedure) Regulations 2009

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Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning
(Applications: Prescribed Forms
and Procedure) Regulations 2009**

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Development Consent Order 202[x]

**6.4 Environmental Statement Appendix 7.2 Published Landscape
Character Assessments**

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Foreword

The following text sets out relevant key characteristics of landscape character as described in published landscape character assessments.

The sources of information about the landscape character of the study area are:

- National Landscape Character Assessment, Character Area 106 - Severn and Avon Vales, (Natural England);
- National Landscape Character Assessment, National Character Area 107 – Cotswolds, (Natural England);
- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Character Assessment;
- Cotswolds AONB Management Plan. Supporting guidance for the Cotswolds AONB Character Assessment;
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. Supporting guidance for the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment;
- Cotswolds Local Distinctiveness Guide. Supporting guidance for the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character assessment;
- Gloucestershire County Council (2006) Gloucestershire Vales Landscape Character Assessment (LDA);
- Gloucestershire County Council (2002) Gloucestershire Landscape Character Typology. Supporting Guidance for the Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment; and
- Joint Core Strategy (2013) The Gloucester-Cheltenham-Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy Landscape Characterisation Assessment and Sensitivity Analysis.

1 National Character Areas

1.1 National Character Areas (NCAs) 2012-14

1.1.1 The description of the NCAs is included for context. The assessment of landscape character is carried out at a local scale in a proportional level of detail.

1.1.2 The scheme is located within NCA 107 Cotswolds, with part of the 3 kilometre study area to the west situated within NCA 106 Severn Avon and Vales.

NCA 107 Cotswolds

1.1.3 A description of key relevant characteristics for NCA 107 Cotswolds (as defined by the Natural England National Character Area Profile and confirmed by field work) are:

- The Cotswolds is predominately an agricultural landscape characterised by a dramatic limestone scarp rising above the adjacent lowlands of the Severn and Avon Vales. The limestone geology has formed the scarp and dip slope of the landscape, which forms part of a transitional boundary between the two NCAs and has influenced drainage, vegetation, land use and settlement.
- The agricultural landscape is primarily located across the high wold and dip slope with permanent pasture along the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys. Limestone Grassland flank these steep slopes of the scarp.
- Ancient Beech woods line the upper slopes of the scarp, with oak and ash woodlands more typical in the river valleys. Numerous plantations scatter the high wold and dip slope.
- Large areas of Common Land, typically along the crest of the scarp are important for unimproved calcareous grassland.
- There is a strong visual imprint of historic human activity in the landscape with Neolithic Barrows, Iron age hill forts and historic medieval fields patterns with ridge and furrow and later planned enclosures.
- The use of quarried limestone in the drystone walls and buildings brings a strong visual cohesion and harmony to the area, providing a distinct characteristic, which has become internationally renowned.

1.1.4 In the profile for each NCA, Natural England sets out Statements of Environmental Opportunity. These help to bring together relevant information and offer suggestions where action can be best targeted to conserve and improve the natural environment. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) for NCA 107 are:

- **“SEO 1: Protect and enhance the highly distinctive farmed landscape, retaining the balance between productive arable, pastoral and wooded elements and the open, expansive views particularly from the scarp, high wold and dip slope;**
- **“SEO 2: Safeguard and conserve the historic environment, cultural heritage and geodiversity that illustrate the history, evolution, foundations, land use and settlement of the Cotswolds landscape, and enable access to and interpretation of the relationship between natural processes and human influences; and**
- **“SEO 3: Protect, maintain and expand the distinctive character of the Cotswolds and the network of semi-natural and arable habitats, including limestone grassland, beech woods and wetlands along streams and rivers, to enhance water quality, strengthen ecological and landscape connectivity, support rare species and allow for adaptation to changes in climate.”¹**

NCA 106 The Severn and Avon Vales

- 1.1.5 Key relevant characteristics (as defined by the Natural England National Character Area Profile and confirmed by field work) are:

“A diverse range of flat and gently undulating landscapes strongly influenced and united by the Severn and Avon rivers which meet at Tewkesbury. Woodland is sparsely distributed across this landscape, but a well wooded impression is provided by frequent hedgerow trees, parkland and surviving traditional orchards. Small pasture fields and commons are prevalent in the west with a regular pattern of parliamentary enclosure in the east. Pasture and stock rearing predominate on the floodplain and on steeper slopes, with a mixture of livestock rearing, arable, market gardening and hop growing elsewhere. Along the main rivers, floodplain grazing marsh is prevalent. Fragments of unimproved calcareous grassland and acidic grasslands are also found. A strong historic timeline is visible in the landscape, from the Roman influences centred at Gloucester, earthwork remains of medieval settlements and associated field systems.”

- 1.1.6 Relevant Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) for NCA 106 are:

- **“SEO 2:** Seek to safeguard and enhance this area’s distinctive patterns of field boundaries, ancient hedgerows, settlements, orchards, parkland, small woodlands, chases, commons and floodplain management with their strong links to past land use and settlement history, and for the benefits this will bring to soil erosion, soil quality and biodiversity; and
- **“SEO 4:** Protect geological exposures and maintain, restore and expand semi natural habitats throughout the agricultural landscape, linking them together to create a coherent and resilient habitat network enabling ecosystems to adapt to climate change.”

1.2 Regional landscape character areas

Joint Core Strategy Landscape Characterisation Assessment and Sensitivity Analysis

- 1.2.1 A small part of the 1.9 mile (3 kilometre) study area is situated within the Gloucester Landscape Character K – Brockworth to Badgeworth and L – north Brockworth. These descriptions, and the corresponding sensitivity areas, are included for context. The assessment of landscape character is carried out at a local scale in a proportional level of detail.

- 1.2.2 Key relevant descriptions (as defined by the Joint Core Strategy and confirmed through field work) include:

K: Brockworth to Badgeworth

“On a broad scale Chosen Hill encloses the area to the west, with the Cotswold AONB Escarpment, to the distant east. The undulating landform, synonymous with the A417 cutting, divides the area from Brockworth. Running north-south, the larger M5 corridor has minimal visual impact, as its route is predominantly lower than the surrounding landscape (becoming visible only in the north of the area) and landform gradually rises in the west, helping to unify the landscape through which it passes. Traffic noise has a significant impact in the immediate vicinity and across much, if not all, of the area. A single line of pylons cross the site diagonally, creating large industrial features at a local scale, and focal point from further afield. Scattered farmsteads are very typical of the area and offer a mix of building age and style from traditional to large and industrial (the latter can be a

visual detractor at a local scale). Field pattern is quite regular with field size ranging from small to medium, with smaller fields generally being located around farms and settlement. The foot of Chosen Hill, west of the M5, offers a consistently medium to small field size, and has perhaps not, therefore, undergone the agricultural intensification evident in places east of the M5. Pasture is dominant within the area, but some arable land is evident, corresponding with larger field size. Field boundaries are usually low level, well maintained hedgerows with sporadically located mature deciduous trees. However, there are frequently taller, overgrown boundaries and bands of tree planting (including dense tree and scrub banks of the M5) which create the appearance of a heavily treed landscape in places. Small streams create small but steep valleys, which are often well vegetated and possibly of high wildlife value. Throughout the area pockets of traditional rural character exist, these are often located where built form and ridge and furrow offer time depth e.g. west of the M5, at Badgeworth, and around various farmsteads. A basic network of footpaths passes through the area, including a section of the Gloucestershire Way.”

L: North Brockworth (south of the A417)

“This gently undulating, and predominantly arable landscape is bound by the A417 in the north, a major infrastructure confluence in the west and the residentially developed village of Brockworth to the south. The undulating topography and tree and scrub lined road network generally prevent views into the area north of the A417. This, in conjunction with the continuous proximity to residential development, gives a notable degree of separation from the northerly landscape, which is otherwise similar in character. To the west the landscape becomes more fragmented by infrastructure, including bridges and embankments, and field size increases. A meandering brook follows the southern boundary, likely to be a biodiverse corridor important to wildlife. Central to the area are the historically significant Brockworth Church and Brockworth Court, around which ridge and furrow and well-established native hedgerows were observed. The M5 and A417 can be glimpsed and traffic noise is audible across the site.”

1.2.3 Both Gloucester landscape character areas as described above in the Joint Core Strategy Landscape Characterisation Assessment and Sensitivity Analysis are characterised as medium sensitivity areas due to:

- *“undulating landform creates visual containment at a local scale and visual associations can be made with surrounding AONB and Chosen Hill landform;*
- *tranquillity lost owing to the M5, A417 and A46;*
- *reasonable amenity value - long public footpaths (including link to Chosen Hill over the M5, and the Gloucestershire Way) but a limited number of circular walks;*
- *agricultural intensification and fragmentation by the A417 has degraded the rural landscape character has occurred but pockets of better retained landscape, and certain landscape features, have endured; and*
- *some landscape features have been retained including orchard, historic buildings, some mature trees”².*

2 Local landscape character areas

2.1 Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment

Gloucestershire County landscape character types and areas³

- 2.1.1 The landscape character of Gloucestershire County has been appraised in the Cotswolds AONB, Gloucestershire Vales, Forest of Dean and Stroud District Landscape Character Assessments. In order to keep the assessment proportional, only the landscape character types (LCTs) and landscape character areas (LCAs) that would receive direct or indirect effects from the scheme, as identified within the 1.9 mile (3 kilometre) study area are appraised as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). These are outlined within the Cotswolds AONB and Gloucestershire Vales Landscape Character Assessments.
- 2.1.2 The Gloucestershire Vales Landscape Character Assessment is a combined assessment covering Tewkesbury District Council and areas of Cotswold District Council that fall outside of the AONB. The Cotswolds Conservation Board (CCB), has prepared its own Landscape Character Assessment covering the AONB.
- 2.1.3 The Forest of Dean and Stroud District Landscape Character Assessments have been scoped out at this stage as they would not receive any direct or indirect effects arising from the scheme.
- 2.1.4 The Gloucestershire Vales Landscape Character Assessment identifies a total of 38 LCTs that cover the whole of Gloucestershire County. The scheme crosses four LCTs from west to east. These are:
- LCT 18 Settled Unwooded Vale
 - LCT 22 High Wold
 - LCT 26 Escarpment
 - LCT 27 Secluded Valleys
- 2.1.5 The LCTs provide a generic understanding of the landscape as described as *“geology, landform, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern.”*⁴
- 2.1.6 Alongside the LCTs, the Gloucestershire Vales Landscape Character Assessment identifies LCAs which describe unique and distinct geographical areas of a specific landscape type.
- 2.1.7 Within the 1.9 mile (3 kilometre) study area is one LCA sited within the Settled Unwooded Vale (LCT18). The rest of the study area is sited within the AONB and appraised as part of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment. The LCT and LCAs which are sited within the study area are described as follows:

LCT 18 Settled Unwooded Vale

- *“soft gently undulating landform, with lower escarpment slopes forming a transitional area between the vale and escarpment; and*
- *Cotswolds Escarpment defines the eastern limit of the Vale and provides a dramatic backdrop to vale settlements and landscapes;*
- *mixed arable and pasture land use with occasional orchards;*
- *well maintained hedgerows forming a strong landscape pattern;*
- *limited woodland and ancient woodland cover;*
- *quiet winding lanes linking villages, hamlets and farms at the foot of the escarpment;*

- *varied mix of building materials, including use of brick, timber and stone, and slate and thatch roofing, but with Oolitic Limestone still prevalent within the vale villages in closer proximity to the Cotswolds Escarpment;*
- *proliferation of modern ‘suburban’ building styles and materials;*
- *major transport corridors through vale;*
- *rural areas bordered by large urban and suburban areas and interspersed with commercial and industrial uses; and*
- *widespread network of pylons and transmission lines.”⁵*

LCA SV6B Vale of Gloucester

- *“the Vale of Gloucester is bounded by the principal urban areas of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury to the south west, south east and north respectively;*
- *to the east, the Vale is defined by the rising landform of the Cotswolds escarpment;*
- *a diverse mixture of land uses in the Vale of Gloucester which combine to create a colourful and textured landscape;*
- *agricultural land use in the vale includes both arable cultivation and pasture in a patchwork of fields that are large to medium in scale and predominantly regular in shape;*
- *in the wider vale landscape, low hedgerows with scattered hedgerow trees form the common boundary treatment. While these hedgerows are generally well maintained, some are becoming either gappy or overgrown;*
- *woodland is not a characteristic feature of the Vale of Gloucester and is generally limited to few small copses; and*
- *recreational resources in the character area include a number of rights of way, including the Gloucestershire Way long distance footpath which descends from the Cotswolds escarpment and crosses the vale.”⁶*

2.2 Cotswold District Council Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.2.1 CCB has prepared the Landscape Character Assessment covering the AONB. Areas within Cotswold District Council but outside the AONB are included as part of the Gloucestershire Vales Landscape Character Assessment. The scheme is situated entirely within the Cotswolds AONB and so no additional LCAs as part of Cotswold District Council within the 1.9 mile (3 kilometre) study area.

2.3 Tewkesbury Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.3.1 The Landscape Character Assessment that covers Tewkesbury Borough Council has been appraised as part of the Gloucestershire Vales Landscape Character Assessment. There is only one LCT and one LCA within Tewkesbury Borough Council that is located within the 1.9 mile (3 kilometre) study area. These are LCT 18 Settled Unwooded Valley and LCA SV6B Vale of Gloucester.

2.4 Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.4.1 The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment identifies five different LCTs along with seven LCAs within the 1.9 mile (3 kilometre) study area. The relevant character types are listed below along with their key characteristics:

LCT 2 Escarpment

- *“steep exposed and elevated west facing scarp slope, partly cloaked in semi natural broadleaved woodland;*

- *generally poor soils and steep sloping relief of the escarpment not suited to arable farming, and primarily used for pasture or woodland;*
- *limited areas of Registered Common Land on upper scarp slopes merging into the more extensive areas on the High Wold;*
- *calcareous grasslands located on steeper scarp slopes;*
- *summit of the scarp slope marked by dramatic linear beech hangers;*
- *woodlands, hedgerows, scrub and isolated trees give the impression of a well treed landscape; and*
- *small scale settlement generally confined to lower, shallower slopes of the escarpment, in sheltered locations, and adjacent to spring lines;*

LCA 2D Coopers Hill to Winchcombe

- *“this stretch of the escarpment forms a dramatic backdrop to the towns of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Bishop’s Cleeve and limits their eastward expansion;*
- *the height of the escarpment gradually increases in a northerly direction. Thus, at Cooper’s Hill it rises from 100 AOD to just over 200 m AOD;*
- *large unenclosed areas of rough grassland on upper slopes and improved pasture in moderately sized hedged enclosures bordering the vale;*
- *calcareous grassland located on steeper escarpment slopes, often found in close association with areas of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodlands such as at Cold Slad and Barrow Wake;*
- *large areas of ancient woodland between Cooper’s Hill and Birdlip; and*
- *numerous archaeological sites border upper slopes such as at Crickley Hill.*

LCT 7 High Wold

- *“broad, elevated, gently undulating plateau area dissected by a network of dry valleys with distinctive convex profile valley sides;*
- *expansive long-distance views across the open plateau, and to distant hills beyond the Severn Vale;*
- *elevated areas of plateau surrounded by deeply incised valleys;*
- *predominantly arable land use with some improved pasture/grass leys, and very limited permanent pasture mainly confined to valley bottoms;*
- *large scale, regular fields mainly enclosed by dry stone walls, together with*
- *hedgerows with very occasional hedgerow trees, and post and wire fencing;*
- *small to moderate size geometric farm woodlands, many comprising small coniferous and broadleaved plantations and shelterbelts, and plantations bordering roads;*
- *settlement limited to small stone-built villages and hamlets, generally within valleys, and isolated farmsteads and individual dwellings;*
- *network of mainly linear roads following ridge tops, and linking settlements;*
- *evidence of long period of occupation of the land;*
- *seasonal rotation of arable cropping patterns and improved grassland interrupts otherwise homogenous and simple land cover;*
- *remnants of once more extensive commons survive on the fringes of the escarpment;*
- *occasional active and disused limestone quarries located across the High Wold; and*
- *use of locally quarried stone for both walls and houses, frequently constructed in distinctive local vernacular.*

LCA 7B Bisley Plateau

- *“a complex and convoluted form, extending across the upland plateau to the west and north of Stroud and as far north as Birdlip;*
- *The plateau projects extended ‘fingers’ of elevated and gently sloping land between a series of steep sided valleys;*
- *the plateau is detached from the main Cotswolds escarpment by the re-entrant strike valleys of Painswick and Slad;*
- *there are a number of higher ‘summit areas’ across the plateau, including 303m AOD south of Birdlip;*
- *the area has a distinctive open character and although there are a number of nucleated plateau top villages, notably Bisley, Whiteway, Brimpsfield and Birdlip, it is generally sparsely populated in character; and*
- *there is much evidence of former occupation of the area including a number of tumuli and long barrows.*

LCA 7C Cotswold High Wold plateau

- *“the Cotswolds High Wold plateau comprises the largest section of the High Wold extending immediately east of the head of the Miserden Valley near Birdlip;*
- *the area embraces all the characteristics of the High Wold. Here, the influence of the underlying geology is particularly strongly expressed, from the dramatic, gently undulating, and expansive upland plateau landform, dissected by dry valleys, and light stony soil, through to the harmonious relationship between the network of limestone walls and buildings with their surroundings;*
- *the sense of scale and openness is particularly apparent, as well as the effects of an intensive managed agricultural landscape;*
- *arable farming predominates although improved pastures grazed by cattle and sheep are also in evidence;*
- *fields on the plateau tend to be large and geometric in shape;*
- *boundaries are mainly dry stone walls and hedgerows, although hedge loss and dereliction of stretches of walls gives the landscape a neglected appearance in places;*
- *woodland cover is not extensive and restricted to small deciduous plantations, walled corner copses and shelterbelts close to farms. Many of which planted at the time of the enclosures and are an integral part of the landscape;*
- *few of the woodlands on the Cotswolds High Wold are ancient indicating a long history of clearance and farming;*
- *within the managed agricultural landscape small areas of rough grassland are apparent, sometimes made more visible by beech plantations. These ‘islands’ mark the site of upstanding Neolithic long barrows and Bronze Age round barrows and are a significant feature of the Cotswolds High Wold;*
- *settlement of the Cotswolds High Wold Plateau is sparse; and*
- *telecommunication masts dominate some sections of the High Wold close to the escarpment edge. Particularly at Shab Hill north-east of Birdlip. The tall structures affect the perceived scale of the escarpment. Pylon lines are also intrusive features across this part of the High Wold.*

LCT 8 High Wold Valley

- *“predominantly dry or ephemeral flow headwater valleys with generally broad valley form and shallow slope profiles;*

- *incised valley form below heads of valleys with often steep, convoluted valley sides dissected by minor watercourses and distinctive convex profile at transition with the High Wold;*
- *sections of pronounced valley form meanders with distinctive interlocking spurs, disproportionate to size of rivers and streams;*
- *extensive areas of predominantly broadleaved woodland cloaking sections of the valley sides, particularly across the steeper sections;*
- *areas of open pastoral farmland extend between the wooded slopes, and along valley bottoms, together with pockets of arable land, particularly on the shallower slopes;*
- *pasture predominantly comprises improved grassland, together with occasional remnants of unimproved and calcareous grasslands;*
- *intermittent stone-built villages occupying secluded locations in valley bottoms, often in association with a bridging point, and on valley sides;*
- *occasional farmsteads and isolated buildings within the more open valley sections linking to farmed areas on the adjacent High Wold;*
- *occasional private parklands and gardens associated with country houses;*
- *limited road network within valleys, generally confined to a single valley bottom road, or routes that cross the valley; and*
- *deeply incised and inaccessible wooded slopes extending across some valley sections.*

LCA 8A Toadsmoor, Holy Brook and Upper Frome Valleys

- *“in common with other High Wold valleys the Frome and its tributaries rise close to the escarpment, with a cluster of springs feeding into the Frome to the north of Brimpsfield, approximately 1 mile (1.5 kilometres) east of the escarpment at Birdlip;*
- *woodland cover is a notable feature of these valleys, and the Upper Frome together with its upper tributaries, have a particularly extensive cover of woodland throughout their courses;*
- *there are some notable areas of ancient woodland, eg east of Frampton Mansell to Pinbury Park within the Frome, and also within the Toadsmoor Valley. Intermittent areas of calcareous grassland also occur, the majority of which are designated as SSSIs;*
- *there is a notable absence of settlement or roads within the Upper Frome and Holy Brook valleys, imparting a strong sense of seclusion; and*
- *there are a number of parks within the Frome Valley the most notable being the Registered Garden of Misarden Park.*

LCA 8C Upper Churn Valley

- *“the general trend of the catchment is typical of the Dip-Slope valleys with a general north-west / south-east alignment;*
- *the upper reaches of the Churn from Colesbourne to Seven Springs is generally more open and with a gentler valley form profile than in the lower section of the valley;*
- *there is extensive pastoral land throughout the valley, interspersed with valley bottom woodland copses and riparian vegetation;*
- *the stone-built villages of Coberley and Cowley are notable settlements on the lower valley slopes; and*
- *parklands and estate managed land is also a notable feature of the Upper Churn valley, notably to the east of Cowley Manor.*

LCT 10 High Wold Dip-Slope Valley

- *“well-defined gentle concave valley form with intermittently very steep and indented valley sides dissected by minor watercourses, and distinctive convex profile at transition with the High Wold Dip-Slope;*
- *intermittent areas of predominantly broadleaved and mixed woodland extend across sections of the valley sides, particularly across the steeper sections;*
- *predominance of improved pastoral farmland extending between the wooded slopes, and along valley bottoms, together with pockets of arable land, particularly on the shallower slopes;*
- *occasional remnants of unimproved and calcareous grasslands;*
- *sheltered, visually contained and intimate valley systems;*
- *intermittent stone-built villages occupy sheltered locations in valley bottoms, often in association with a bridging point;*
- *farmsteads and individual buildings within the more open valley sections link to farmed areas on the adjacent High Wold Dip-Slope;*
- *occasional private parklands within or adjacent to valleys influence character; and*
- *road network generally confined to a single valley bottom road, together with principal and local cross valley routes.”*

LCA 10A Middle Churn Valley

- *“the valley form is still distinct, it assumes a progressively broader form with shallower slope profiles to the south of the character area;*
- *the land is predominantly under pasture, with occasional areas of arable, within a mosaic of regular and mainly medium-scale fields; and*
- *woodland cover within the Middle Churn Valley is generally sparse. There is, however, an intermittent cover of small rectilinear broadleaved woodlands on the lower valley slopes and bottom, together with riparian vegetation, and a mosaic of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.”⁷*

LCT 18 Settled Unwooded Vale

- *“soft gently undulating landform, with lower escarpment slopes forming a transitional area between the vale and escarpment;*
- *Cotswolds Escarpment defines the eastern limit of the Vale and provides a dramatic backdrop to vale settlements and landscapes;*
- *mixed arable and pasture land use with occasional orchards;*
- *well maintained hedgerows forming a strong landscape pattern;*
- *limited woodland and ancient woodland cover;*
- *quiet winding lanes linking villages, hamlets and farms at the foot of the escarpment;*
- *varied mix of building materials, including use of brick, timber and stone, and slate and thatch roofing, but with Oolitic Limestone still prevalent within the vale villages in closer proximity to the Cotswolds Escarpment;*
- *proliferation of modern ‘suburban’ building styles and materials;*
- *major transport corridors through vale;*
- *rural areas bordered by large urban and suburban areas and interspersed with commercial and industrial uses; and*
- *widespread network of pylons and transmission lines.”^{8 9}*

LCA18A Vale of Gloucester Fringe

- *“Within the boundary of the AONB, the area of land classified as Settled Unwooded Vale is limited, confined to a narrow section of the landscape type at the base of the escarpment, merging into the broad lowland Vale of Gloucester;*
- *the Settled Unwooded Vale within the AONB is underlain by Lias Group mudstones and sandstone, which in places are overlain by extensive areas of drift deposits creating a soft, gently undulating landscape;*
- *there is a regular patchwork of arable and pasture fields enclosed largely by neat hawthorn hedges and as such the agricultural landscape is typical of the wider vale;*
- *the type is characterised by a mosaic of improved grassland and arable land with small areas of neutral grassland;*
- *woodland is largely absent although numerous small farm copses are conspicuous;*
- *hedgerow and field oaks contribute significantly to local landscape character and help maintain the rural character of some areas by screening views to urban and suburban features;*
- *stonewalls also create a number of field boundaries within the landscape type;*
- *the landscape is perceived as being more intimate and sheltered in close proximity to the escarpment; and*
- *the character of the Settled Unwooded Vale retains influences from neighbouring urban development. Such influences are often associated with the proliferation of masts and overhead transmission lines, and more subtly, from the effects of lighting.”¹⁰*

3 Historic landscape characterisation

- 3.1.1 This description of the National Historic Landscape Characterisation is included for context, helpful for a simplified translation of local types. The scheme is located within six National Historic Landscape Character Types (HLC) these are:
- Enclosed Agriculture: Typically Pre-Modern;
 - Enclosed Agriculture: Typically Ancient;
 - Woodland and forestry: Ancient Woodland;
 - Industry;
 - Unimproved Land: Grassland; and
 - Recreation: Unspecified.¹¹
- 3.1.2 The National Historic Landscape Characterisation of this area is derived from the more detailed assessment Gloucestershire County Council has carried out to characterise the present landscape¹². This identifies the visible evidence of the human processes that have formed the landscape through time to inform a wide range of planning, conservation and management-led initiatives and strategies.
- 3.1.3 Twenty-six historic landscape types cover the study area, with the scheme situated across 21 primary HLCs. These are:
- A1 Irregular enclosure reflecting former unenclosed cultivation patterns;
 - A2 Less irregular enclosure partly reflecting former unenclosed cultivation patterns;
 - A3 Regular organised enclosure ignoring former unenclosed cultivation patterns
 - A4 Less regular organised enclosure partly reflecting former unenclosed cultivation patterns;
 - A5 Irregular enclosure reflecting former unenclosed cultivation patterns; regularised as large fields
 - B1 Largely unenclosed pasture;
 - B4 Less regular organised enclosure of former unenclosed pasture;
 - C1 Surviving early woodland;
 - C2 Early woodland cleared in the post-medieval period;
 - D2 Meadow placename not in area of riverine pasture;
 - E2 Medieval deer park boundary;
 - F1 Surviving post-medieval designed ornamental landscape;
 - G1 Deserted medieval or later settlement;
 - G2 Existing settlement of medieval or earlier origin;
 - G3 Existing settlement - extent by mid-19th century;
 - G5 Existing settlement - 19th century linear settlement infilled in 20th century;
 - H1 Disused industrial site;
 - H2 Active industrial site;
 - J1 Active recreational site;
 - L1 Irregular enclosure. Former land use not identified; and
 - L3 Regular segmentation of less regular parallel boundaries; former land use not identified.
- 3.1.4 The following descriptions of each HLC have been included to provide historical and present land use context, which contributes to the local distinctiveness of the Cotswolds AONB.

A1 Irregular enclosure reflecting former unenclosed cultivation patterns

- *“Small (generally between 1 and 7ha) irregular fields;*
- *Enclosures are piecemeal enclosure of earlier open fields. They are likely to owe their origin to gradual enclosure by local arrangement, generally from the 16th century and later (although this form of enclosure is known from at least the 13th century and as late as the 19th century); and*
- *Most common outside the area of the Cotswolds AONB, particularly in the area of the Severn Vale. Where found within the of the Cotswolds AONB, this type tends to be found on relatively steep ground, such as valley sides or the edges of the Cotswolds escarpment at the western edge of the Cotswolds AONB”.*

A2 Less irregular enclosure partly reflecting former unenclosed cultivation patterns

- *“Small (generally between 1 and 7ha) irregular fields;”*
- *Enclosures contain numerous co-axial boundaries, sharing boundaries with former headlands, which clearly derive from former open field divisions;*
- *“This Primary Type was differentiated from similar areas of A4 mainly on the basis of smaller field size.”*

A3 Regular organised enclosure ignoring former open–cultivation patterns

- *“Fairly large (generally between c. 6 and 14ha, although some were as small as 4ha) enclosures”*
- *Enclosures in this category are generally laid out in a grid pattern although no attempt was made to differentiate intersecting and non-intersecting grid patterns.*

A4 Less regular organised enclosure partly reflecting former unenclosed cultivation patterns

- *“Typically, fairly large (between 6 and 14ha, although some are as small as 4ha);*
- *The enclosure pattern is generally regular and displays clear internal cohesion demonstrated by similar boundary type and numerous co-axial boundaries;*
- *This enclosure pattern is likely to owe its origins to Non-parliamentary large-scale organised enclosure dating to the 18th and 19th centuries, which may have taken more account of former open-cultivation boundaries than parliamentary enclosure; and*
- *This Landscape Type is found throughout the Cotswolds AONB.”*

A5 Irregular enclosure reflecting former un-enclosed cultivation patterns, regularised as large fields

- *“fairly large (generally between c. 8 and 14ha) amorphous fields”;*
- *“generally lack long common co-axial boundaries... The pattern of enclosure echoes some elements of former open-cultivation systems”;* and
- *“The pattern of enclosure echoes some elements of former open-cultivation systems, in the form of old strip field land or furlong boundaries (reversed S or irregular “dog leg” boundaries)”.*

B1 Largely unenclosed pasture

- *“Areas of common with no internal enclosures, although occasional long boundaries, subdividing the areas of open pasture into large areas, or isolated discrete enclosures, are found within some areas categorised as B1. This*

Landscape Type generally survives as open grassland with some invasive scrub or isolated tree clumps;

- *Found almost exclusively in the western part of the area of the Cotswolds AONB on areas of high ground, overlying a geology of Great Oolite limestone, at the top of the Cotswolds scarp; and*
- *These open commons are generally in the vicinity of former open fields which had been enclosed on a piecemeal basis. This lack of large-scale reorganisation of the countryside may have contributed to their preservation.”*

B4 Less regular organised enclosure of former unenclosed pasture

- *“Relatively large (generally between 6 and 14ha, although some were as small as 4ha) fields, clearly organised on a large scale and with a number of common boundaries and enclosures of similar size;*
- *The pattern of enclosure, however, was less regular than that categorised as B3. Fields were also larger than those categorised as B2;*
- *Occasional boundaries may echo open field divisions in the form of old strip field land or furlong boundaries (reversed S or irregular “dog leg” boundaries but this was not a determining characteristic of this type;*
- *This Landscape Type is interpreted as large-scale, organised enclosure of earlier long-term open pasture;*
- *The date of the enclosure is unknown, but likely to be the result of the large-scale landscape reorganisations of the 18th and 19th centuries, of which parliamentary enclosure was a part; and*
- *Some enclosures in this Landscape Type may owe their origins to parliamentary enclosure. In these instances, the irregular enclosure pattern may be the result of local variations influenced by topography. Where enclosures follow former open fields divisions, this may indicate that these survived as boundaries within areas of largely unenclosed pasture, or as significant landscape features, and were utilised during later enclosure.”*

C1 Surviving early woodland

- *“All areas designated as Ancient Semi-natural Woodland on nature conservation maps regardless of their present shape. These areas were designated C1 even where their boundaries conform to later enclosure patterns”;*
- *“Replanted areas of Ancient Semi-natural woodland which retain evidence of their former boundaries”*
- *“Area of woodland of probable medieval or earlier origin”*

C2 Early woodland cleared in the post-medieval period

- *“Early woodland known to have been cleared in the later post-medieval period.”*

D2 Meadow placename not in area of riverine pasture

- *“indicate the site of former meadows known from place names.”*

E2 Medieval deer park boundary

- *“a curved boundary, occasionally, but not necessarily forming part, or all of the boundary of a sub rectangular or oval enclosure, the interior of which is now subdivided into a number of separate enclosures. These boundaries are often respected by later enclosure patterns, communications and, in many instances, parish boundaries. The interpretation of this boundary as that of a*

medieval deer park was supported by place name and documentary references.”

F1 Surviving post-medieval designed ornamental landscape

- *“Post-medieval designed landscaped parks, including landscapes designed for deer coursing (as opposed to medieval deer parks which were essentially designed as deer enclosures”;*
- *there is only one instance of this in the study area, which is Cowley Manor*

G1 Deserted medieval or later settlement

- *“Evidence of deserted settlement (dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods) identified in areas which are no longer part of recognised towns, villages or hamlets.”*

G2 Existing settlement of medieval or earlier origin

- *“sites of existing settlement, known to have been present since c. AD 1600.”*
- *“This Primary Type indicates the site of medieval settlements still inhabited in the 20th century.”*

G3 Existing settlement - extent by mid 19th century

- *“consists of the limit of towns, villages and hamlets mapped on the 19th century 1” OS map.”*
- *“Type G3 also includes area of green or open space which forms part of an existing settlement.”*

G5 Existing settlement - 19th century linear settlement infilled in 20th century

- *“Modern settlement which was slightly different in character from that recorded on 19th century OS maps. This Primary Type can be interpreted as extended settlements which have undergone minor extension and linking development since the 19th century.”*

H1 Disused industrial site

- *“Industrial sites which are no longer in use but which still have a visible impact on the landscape”;*
- *includes large-scale factory or mining complexes, power stations, civil airports, and areas associated with transport (e.g. railway marshalling yards) which are disused and fall outside areas designated as settlement.*

H2 Active industrial site

- *“Industrial sites which are still in use and which have a visible impact on the landscape.”*

J1 Active recreational site

- *“includes extensive sites set aside for recreational activity, where these are the predominant land use within a given area or are superimposed on earlier enclosure patterns.”*
- *“Primary Type J1 includes golf courses, camping/caravan parks, large motorcycle scrambling courses and racecourses.”*

L1 Irregular enclosure. Former land use not identified

- *“Small (generally 1 and 7ha) enclosures with either irregular or sinuous boundaries, although occasional straight boundaries;*

- *the enclosures tend to lack co-axial common boundaries, and boundary patterns and generally lack a sense of overall cohesion. This suggests that enclosure of these areas may have been undertaken on a piecemeal basis;*
- *tend to be found on marginal slopes (particularly steep river valley sides at the western edge of the Cotswolds AONB); and*
- *this type may represent either piecemeal enclosure of marginal areas of unenclosed cultivation (A1s) or perhaps the enclosure of uncultivated waste (or woodland) at the edges of cultivated open fields.”*

L3 Regular segmentation of less regular parallel boundaries; former land use not identified

- *“These areas consist of generally long thin areas of land, often on valley sides or sandwiched between different elements of the landscape (e.g. an area of woodland and a road), or different landscape types;*
- *these areas are now enclosed in a regular fashion generally consisting of straight, approximately parallel boundaries segmenting the area into roughly equal enclosures between 2 and 7ha;*
- *likely to represent relatively recent enclosure of areas of waste or cleared woodland; and*
- *some areas are found on valley sides at the western edge of the Cotswolds AONB.”*

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