

South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment

Annex II: Strategic Viewpoints

South Gloucestershire Council

Final Draft Report for Adoption

Prepared by LUC

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The landscape of South Gloucestershire is diverse in character due to its underlying geology, associated landforms, and varying vegetation cover and settlement pattern. In the west, lies the estuary and the flat, low-lying levels, contained to the east by the pronounced slopes of the Severn Ridges. Gently rolling agricultural 'vales' and broad valleys characterise the central landscape of the district, before the shallow ridges extend to the east, providing a transition to the prominent escarpment and plateau of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). This results in a visually varied landscape, with open, elevated ridgelines affording long views across South Gloucestershire and beyond, in contrast to the enclosed valleys and wooded farmland where hillsides and mature vegetation provide containment. It is important that the most valuable views within South Gloucestershire are identified and protected, and that the notable landscape features, landmarks and scenic qualities that make up their composition, are retained and not diminished by inappropriate forms of development or land use change.

1.2 The eastern area of South Gloucestershire is of particular landscape value, reflected by its inclusion within the CNL; a nationally designated landscape protected for its distinctive character and scenic qualities. Views to, from and within the CNL (including the wide-open views experienced from the Cotswold Scarp) are identified as a special quality of the landscape in the CNL Management Plan (2023-2025) [\[See reference 1\]](#).

1.3 Notable vistas within the landscape were first identified within the 2014 South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment SPD, noted as being important to the scenic beauty of the CNL and the setting of Conservation Areas for example, as well as being valued by local communities. Since then, there has been further recognition of important views, including through the 'A Forgotten Landscape' project; a landscape-scale project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme between March 2015 and October 2018. This aimed to conserve, enhance and promote the natural and

cultural heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels landscape. The project included the installation of a series of interpretation points, toposcopes, and benches at key locations and viewpoints within the landscape, as well as the development of a series of circular walking routes using the existing rights of way network. Further information, including the location of these features, can be found on the project website [\[See reference 2\]](#).

1.4 In 2022 the Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridor Mapping Project identified strategic viewpoints and the views from them as important green infrastructure assets. Therefore, South Gloucestershire Council compiled a list of potential strategic viewpoints based on:

- views identified in the 2014 Landscape Character Assessment SPD;
- views previously identified for other projects such as ‘A Forgotten Landscape’;
- viewpoints where a toposcope or interpretation features are present, or the viewpoints were identified on OS mapping; and
- local knowledge of the council’s team of landscape officers.

1.5 This report forms Annex II of the refreshed and updated 2024 South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment SPD, Final Draft for Adoption. It contains an analysis of the viewpoints previously identified, and provides the justification as to why they are considered to be important and therefore categorised as being Strategic Viewpoints. The viewpoints have been tested against the criteria set out in **Chapter 2**, which relates to the topics of Popularity, Access and Facilities; Relationship with the Cotswold National Landscape (CNL); and the Quality, Value and Features of the View.

1.6 Following the New Local Plan Phase 3 consultation (which ran from 6 December 2023 to 16 February 2024) several responses were put forwards from Parish Councils and other interested parties, requesting additional viewpoints be considered. These viewpoints were reviewed against the assessment criteria, and identified as being of either strategic or local importance. The location of strategic and local viewpoints is shown on **Figure 3.1**.

Chapter 2

Criteria

2.1 The following chapter sets out the criteria that has been used to assess whether a viewpoint and associated view is of strategic or local importance. For a viewpoint to be categorised as a 'Strategic Viewpoint', it has to meet all or most of the criteria. Viewpoints that do not meet enough of the criteria are considered as 'Local Viewpoints' (see **Appendix A** for further detail on Local Viewpoints).

Popularity, access and facilities

- Popular, well known, or recorded viewpoints (e.g. symbolised on OS mapping, placemark on Google Maps, mentioned in publications such as Conservation Area appraisals).
- Viewpoints noted in the South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment SPD (Adopted 2014) as being natural observation points from which to appreciate the landscape.
- Publicly accessible viewpoints that are likely to attract many visitors (e.g. accessible from public rights of way, promoted footpaths, cycle routes, open access land).
- Viewpoints where facilities for the enjoyment of the view have been provided (e.g. benches, picnic areas, litter bins, parking).
- Viewpoints marked on the ground by a toposcope or similar interpretation feature/signage (e.g. interpretation boards).

Relationship with the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)

- Viewpoints that allow appreciation of, or provide notable views looking out from the CNL (formerly known as the Cotswold Area of Natural Beauty (AONB)), a nationally designated area for its distinctive landscape character and scenic beauty.
- Viewpoints referred to within the CNL Management Plan (2023-2025).

Quality, value and features of the view

- Provides a visually impressive, scenic vista that takes in notable landscape features (e.g. distinctive landforms, the Severn Estuary).
- Elevated viewpoint that facilitates a panoramic view (e.g. 180-360°) or broad prospect/appreciation of the surrounding landscape.
- Provides a view of a landmark/historic feature (e.g. notable church towers, the Severn Bridge, the Prince of Wales Bridge), or key historic elements within a Conservation Area.
- Designed viewpoint with historic or cultural heritage associations (e.g. to afford a view across/out from within a registered historic parkland or ancient hillfort).

Chapter 3

Analysis of Strategic Viewpoints

3.1 Thirty one Strategic Viewpoints (SVPs) have been identified within South Gloucestershire, based on the assessment criteria described in **Chapter 2**. These SVPs are listed below and their location is shown on **Figure 3.1** in relation to their associated landscape character area(s). A list of the full landscape character area (LCA) names is set out in **Table 3.1**, with each area being described in the main landscape character assessment report.

Table 3.1: Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas

LCA	Plateau and Scarp LCT
LCA 1	Badminton Plateau
LCA 2	Marshfield Plateau
LCA 3	Ashwicke Ridges
LCA 4	Cotswold Scarp
LCA	Shallow Ridge LCT
LCA 5	Wickwar Ridge & Vale
LCA 6	Pucklechurch Ridge & Boyd Valley
LCA	Parkland Vale LCT
LCA 7	Falfield Vale
LCA	Shallow Vale LCT
LCA 8	Yate Vale
LCA 9	Tytherington Plain
LCA 10	Earthcott Vale

LCA	Enclosed Valleys LCT
LCA 11	Golden Valley
LCA 16	Avon Valley
LCA	Broad Valleys LCT
LCA 12	Westerleigh Vale & Oldland Ridge
LCA 13	Frome Valley
LCA 14	Kingswood
LCA 15	Patchway, Filton and the Stokes
LCA	Undulating Ridge LCT
LCA 17	Rudgeway Ridge & Tytherington Ridge
LCA 18	Severn Ridges
LCA	Estuary, Shoreline and Levels LCT
LCA 19	Oldbury Levels
LCA 20	Pilning Levels
LCA 21	Severn Shoreline & Estuary

3.2 A full profile for each SVP is contained within **Chapters 4 to 34** providing clear justification against the criteria, with supporting diagrams and photography. The central focus of each strategic view is provided to illustrate the 'view composition'. However, it should be noted that the available strategic view may be wider from a given viewpoint, and therefore the full panorama is also included within the profiles. In a few locations, the selected SVP is representative of a series of sequential views that may be appreciated from along a given footpath route, for example.

3.3 The SVPs are as follows:

- **SVP 1: Old Passage**
- **SVP 2: Churchend**

- **SVP 3: Almondsbury Scenic Viewpoint**
- **SVP 4: Old Down**
- **SVP 5: Whitewall Lane (Buckover)**
- **SVP 6: St Michael's Church (Hill Court)**
- **SVP 7a and 7b: Spaniorum Hill**
- **SVP 8: Church Lane (Winterbourne)**
- **SVP 9: Sodbury Common**
- **SVP 10: Community Forest Path (Siston)**
- **SVP 11: Westerleigh Hill**
- **SVP 12: Hanging Hill**
- **SVP 13: Little Sodbury Hillfort**
- **SVP 14: St John's Church (Old Sodbury)**
- **SVP 15: Saint Arilda's Church (Oldbury-on-Severn)**
- **SVP 16: Tog Hill**
- **SVP 17: Dyrham Park**
- **SVP 18: Freezing Hill**
- **SVP 19a and 19b: Hanham Hills**
- **SVP 20: Bristol and Bath Railway Path (Avon Riverside Station)**
- **SVP 21: Wickwar Ridge**
- **SVP 22: St James' Church (Abson)**
- **SVP 23: Woodwell Meadows (Littleton-upon-Severn)**
- **SVP 24: Stoke Park**
- **SVP 25: East End (Marshfield)**
- **SVP 26: Cold Ashton**
- **SVP 27: Shortwood Hill (Pucklechurch)**

- **SVP 28: Severn View Viewpoint**
- **SVP 29: Mount Hill (Hanham)**
- **SVP 30: Flax Pits Pond, Hicks Common Road**
- **SVP 31: Avon Valley Panorama**

3.4 A further 21 viewpoint locations are identified as Local Viewpoints (LVPs) which represent views that are considered to be locally important, but do not meet enough of the criteria to be considered strategically important. The LVPs are listed below and their location is shown on **Figure 3.1**. The scoping exercise explaining the reason for their exclusion as a Strategic Viewpoint is contained within **Appendix A**.

3.5 The LVPs are as follows:

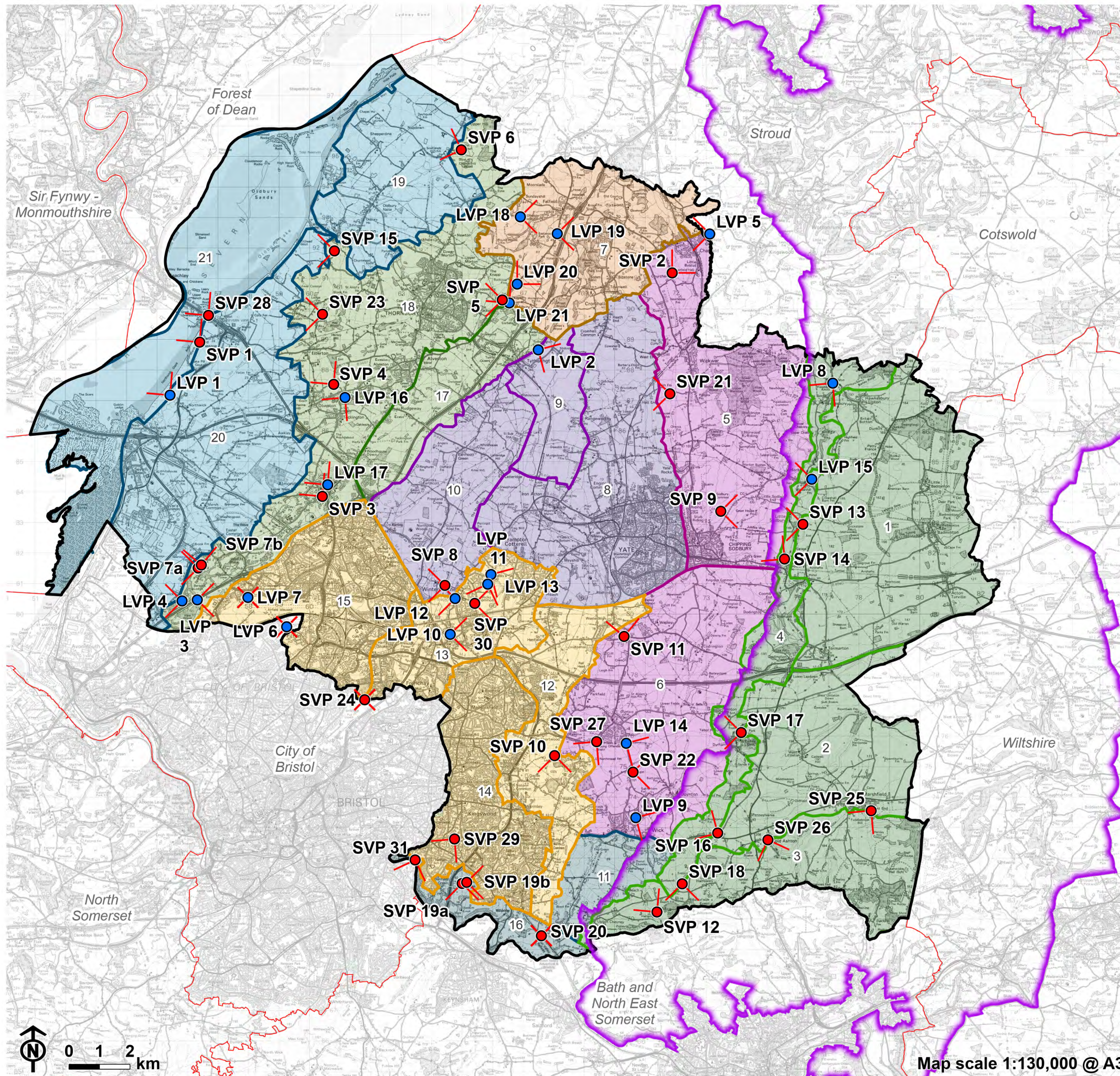
- **LVP 1: Severn Way (Northwick)** – a view from the Severn Way long distance footpath along the sea wall embankment towards the Severn Bridges, Severn Estuary and South Wales.
- **LVP 2: Baden Hill (Tytherington)** – a view south and east from Baden Hill, Tytherington.
- **LVP 3: M5 overbridge /gateway at Haw Wood** - a view from the M5 overbridge /gateway at Haw Wood east across Filton and towards the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- **LVP 4: Berwick Lodge Farm** – a view from the woodland edge north of the M5 at Hallen looking west and south-west over the Severn Estuary and Avonmouth.
- **LVP 5: Elbury Hill** – a view from Elbury Hill west over Charfield and Tortworth.
- **LVP 6: Filton Golf Course** – a view from Filton golf course looking north and west.
- **LVP 7: Earth Sculpture (Cribbs Causeway)** – a view from the earth sculpture south of Lysander Road at Cribbs Causeway.

- **LVP 8: Somerset Monument** – a view west, north and south from the Somerset Monument, Hawkesbury Upton.
- **LVP 9: Wick Rocks** – a view east and south-east across Wick Quarry towards the Cotswold Scarp.
- **LVP 10: Whiteshill Common** – a view from Whiteshill Common (south-west of Winterbourne) looking east.
- **LVP 11: Beaver Close, Winterbourne** – a view from Beaver Close in Winterbourne looking south-east.
- **LVP 12: View from Winterbourne Hill** – a view from Winterbourne Hill road near The George and Dragon Pub, looking west.
- **LVP 13: Cloisters Road, Winterbourne** – a view from Cloisters Road in Winterbourne looking south-west.
- **LVP 14: Redford Lane, Pucklechurch** – a view from the junction at Abson Road/Redford Lane/Back Lane on the south-eastern edge of Pucklechurch, looking east and south-east.
- **LVP 15: Horton Camp Hillfort** – a view from Horton Camp Hillfort looking west from the Cotswold Scarp across the adjacent vale landscape and beyond. Note similar views are afforded from SVP 13: Little Sodbury Hillfort.
- **LVP 16: Tockington Hill** – a view from the old deer park on Tockington Hill looking west and south-west along the Severn Ridge and towards the Severn Estuary.
- **LVP 17: The Scop, Almondsbury** – a view from The Scop Field in Almondsbury looking west and north-west towards the Severn Estuary.
- **LVP 18: Footpath west of Falfield** – a view from a public footpath to the south of Sundayshill Lane, looking east across Falfield Vale and towards the Cotswold Scarp.
- **LVP 19: A38 south of Falfield** – a view from the A38 south of Falfield, looking east towards the Cotswold Scarp.

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- **LVP 20: A38 near Buckover** – a view from the A38 north of Buckover looking north, north-west, and north-east across the vale landscape and towards the Cotswold Scarp to the north-east.
- **LVP 21: Cuttsheath Road, Milbury Heath** – a view from a bench on Cuttsheath Road, Milbury Heath looking north-west across Falfield Vale towards the Severn Estuary.

Figure 3.1: Location of Strategic Viewpoints and Local Viewpoints



- Council boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary
- Strategic viewpoint and angle
- Local viewpoint and angle

South Gloucestershire LCT/LCA

- Plateau and Scarp
 1. Badminton Plateau
 2. Marshfield Plateau
 3. Ashwicke Ridges
 4. Cotswold Scarp
- Shallow Ridge
 5. Wickwar Ridge and Vale
 6. Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley
- Parkland Vale
 7. Falfield Vale
- Shallow Vale
 8. Yate Vale
 9. Tytherington Plain
 10. Earthcott Vale
- Enclosed Valleys
 11. Golden Valley
 16. Avon Valley
- Broad Valleys
 12. Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge
 13. Frome Valley
 14. Kingswood
 15. Patchway and Filton
- Undulating Ridge
 17. Rudgeway and Tytherington Ridge
 18. Severn Ridges
- Estuary, Shoreline and Levels
 19. Oldbury Levels
 20. Piling Levels
 21. Severn Shoreline and Estuary



Map scale 1:130,000 @ A3

References

References

- 1 Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan (2023-2025). Available at: <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-25-CNL-Management-Plan-Adopted-Subject-to-SEA-HRA.pdf>
- 2 A Forgotten Landscape Interpretation points and benches information. (No date). Available online at: [Interpretation Points and Benches - A Forgotten Landscape](#)

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