

# South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment

## Annex I: Visually Important Hillside

### South Gloucestershire Council

**Final Draft Report for Adoption Chapter 11**

Prepared by LUC

September 2024



Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1	Draft Method and Pilot	E White	K Davies	K Davies	24.02.2023
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## Land Use Consultants Limited

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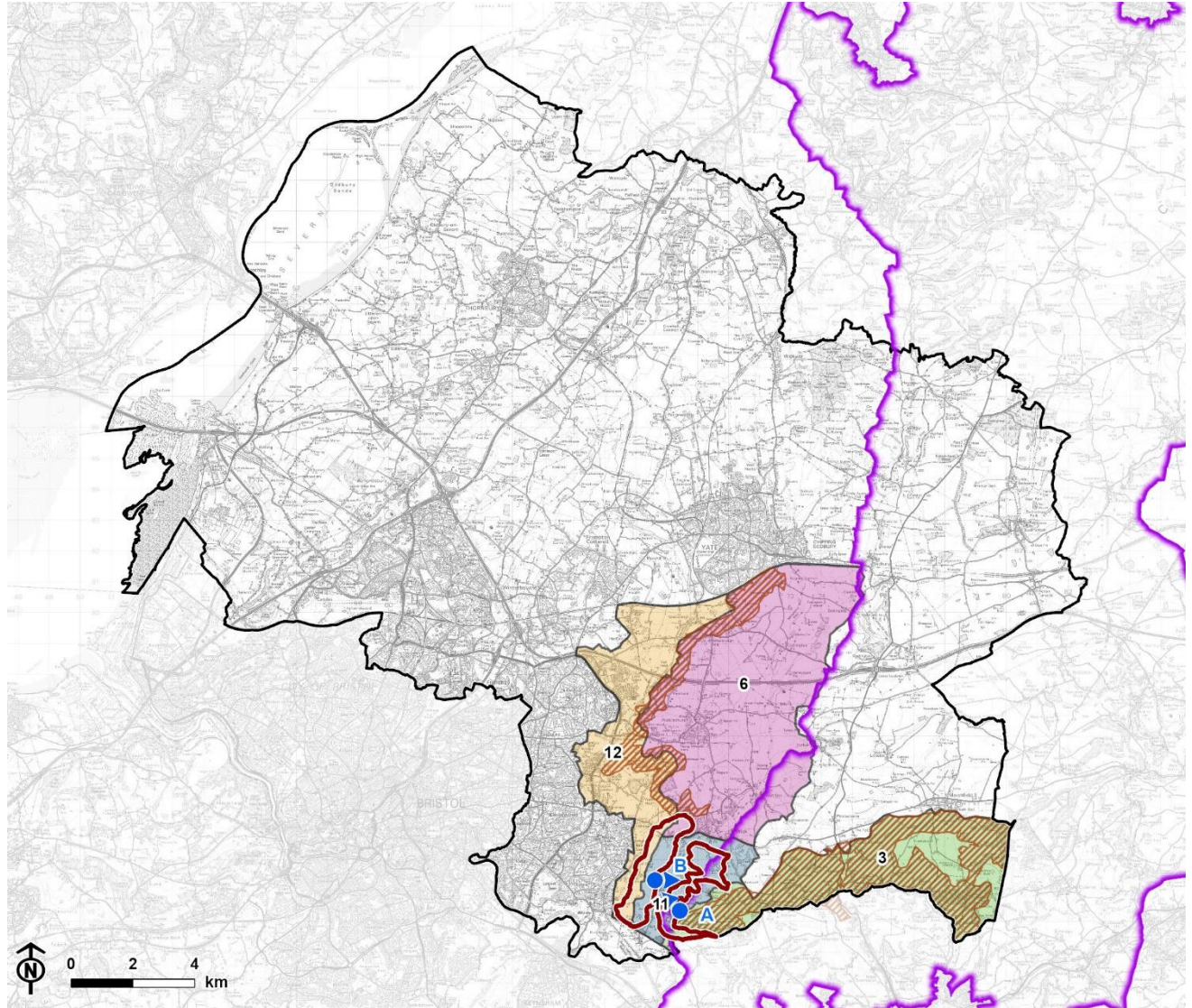
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## Chapter 11

# Oldland Ridge and Cotswold Lower Slope – including Beach Hill, Cann Brake, Bitton Hill, Barrow Hill, Mount Pleasant and Mill Hill










The Oldland Ridge and Cotswold Lower Slope VIH comprises two distinctive areas separated by the north-south Golden Valley (River Boyd), which in turn it encloses. The VIH is located along the southern edge of South Gloucestershire and its western part (Oldland Ridge) separates the Golden Valley from the urban area of Kingswood to the west. Its eastern edge falls within the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape (CNL) and adjoins the Ashwicke Ridges VIH at Upton Cheyney. It lies mostly within the Golden Valley (LCA 11) landscape character area, straddles the boundary of Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge (LCA 12) landscape character area in the west, and small parts extend into Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley (LCA 6) landscape character area in the north where it also adjoins the Pucklechurch Ridge VIH. The western part of the VIH (Oldland Ridge) is formed by a steep ridge and a series of hills, providing a green backdrop to the Bitton Conservation Area. The eastern part (Cotswold Lower Slope) comprises a series of steep side valleys emanating from the Cotswolds Escarpment, and is intrinsic to the setting of the Upton Cheyney Conservation Area, which straddles the steep west-facing valley side of the VIH. Together they form visually prominent landforms of rising ground with a distinct rural character.

**Figure 11.1: Location of the Oldland Ridge and Cotswold Lower Slope Visually Important Hillside and landscape character context**



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CB:HS, EB:shayler\_h LUC 12274\_2024\_r1\_VIHSVUpdates 17/07/2024  
Source: LUC, SGDC, NE, OS

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|  | Council boundary   | <b>Plateau and Scarp LCT</b>   |
|  | Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary                       |  3. Ashwicke Ridges                     |
|  | Oldland Ridge and Cotswold Lower Slope Visually Important Hillside | <b>Shallow Ridge LCT</b>   |
|  | Adjoining Visually Important Hillside                              |  6. Pucklechurch Ridge and Boyd Valley  |
|  | Photograph location  | <b>Broad Valleys LCT</b>   |
|   |  |  12. Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge |
|   |  | <b>Enclosed Valleys LCT</b>  |
|   |  |  11. Golden Valley                      |

**Chapter 11** Oldland Ridge and Cotswold Lower Slope – including Beach Hill, Cann Brake, Bitton Hill, Barrow Hill, Mount Pleasant and Mill Hill

**Figure 11.2: Detailed map of the Oldland Ridge and Cotswold Lower Slope Visually Important Hillside**

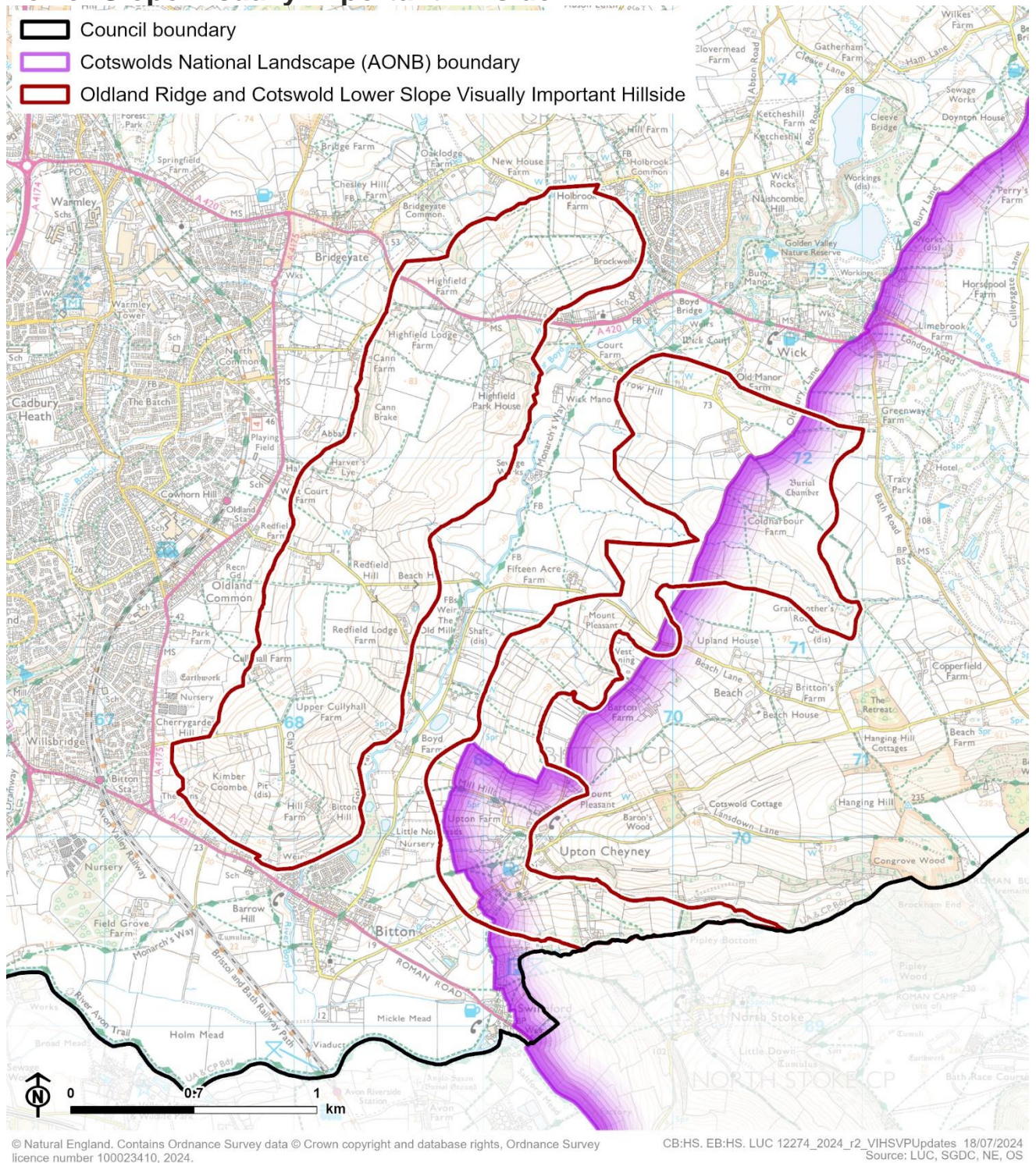


Figure 11.3: View of the Oldland Ridge from Wick Lane (Photo point A)



Figure 11.4: View of the Cotswold Lower Slope from Beach Hill (Photo point B)





## Characteristics

### Distinctiveness and identity

- The Oldland Ridge and Cotswold Lower Slope VIH is readily identifiable as a natural landform feature on OS mapping, with two distinctive areas separated by the north-south Golden Valley (River Boyd). The western half of the VIH (Oldland Ridge) comprises a rounded ridgetop where there is a relatively large gap between contours at the top of the ridge, indicating a linear plateau, and is punctuated by hills marked with concentric circles (or ovals). Close contour lines either side of the ridgetop indicate steep slopes westwards towards the Siston Brook and eastwards towards the Golden Valley (descending from around 90m to 25m). The eastern half of the VIH (Cotswold Lower Slope) comprises the middle slopes between the lower Golden Valley and the rising ridgeline of Hanging Hill, with tributary valley insertions, and is identified with close contour lines indicating steep slopes with a westerly aspect that descend from the Ashwicke Ridges VIH in the east towards the Golden Valley (from around 90m to 35m).
- The VIH is a distinctive feature with a strong sense of identity as noted in the following publications:
  - LCA 11: Golden Valley description within the South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment SPD notes the distinctive upper valley landform within the eastern half of the VIH comprising *"broad, descending spurs with an undulating form"*.
  - LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge is defined along its southern edge by the *"linear and gentle slopes of the Oldland Ridge which rise to the east."*

## Visual prominence

- The VIH comprises prominent valley sides as noted in LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge which notes that *“the gentle to rolling landscape is contained by the prominent Oldland Ridge.”*
- The VIH is noted in LCA 16: Avon Valley as a *“distinctive landform feature”* present in views from the LCA.
- The VIH is visible from several public vantage points and forms a key feature in views from the strategic viewpoints at Hanging Hill (SVP 12), Freezing Hill (SVP18), Hanham Hills (SVP 19b) and the Bristol and Bath Railway Path (SVP 20).

## Character and value

- The varied and sloping topography of the VIH contributes to the setting of the Upton Cheyney Conservation Area which is located on the steep slopes of Lansdown Hill, as well as Bitton Conservation Area, which the VIH partly encloses to the north and provides a backdrop to.
- The character and appearance of the VIH is partly unspoilt by visible detractors as stretches of the hillsides are undeveloped. However, LCA 12: Westerleigh Vale and Oldland Ridge notes that the VIH *“to the south has areas where landscape character has been eroded, due to the poor condition of some landscape features and particularly due to the visual prominence of the urban edge, which encroaches upon its lower slopes”*. It also notes the influence of 'horsiculture' within the area having led to the loss or erosion of hedgerows close to the VIH including adjacent to the Oldland Ridge at the settlement edge.
- Landcover across the VIH comprises mixed agriculture, defined by a largely regular field pattern with clipped hedges and occasional fences. Little tree cover exists along the top of the ridge.
- The VIH provides the opportunity for views across the landscape including extensive views westwards over the dense urban development of Bristol and eastwards towards the large-scale landform of the Hanging Hill ridge.

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LCA 11: Golden Valley states that there are “*extensive views westwards over Bristol and eastwards into the Golden Valley and beyond to the large-scale landform of the Hanging Hill ridge*” from the top of the Oldland Ridge.

- The VIH has a role in the landscape by defining LCA 11: Golden Valley and forming a prominent backdrop to the surrounding lower-lying landscape. It also creates visual containment to the south-eastern edge of Bristol’s urban fringe.

## Summary

Oldland Ridge is categorised as a VIH as it meets most of the criteria to some extent. It is readily identifiable as a natural landform feature on OS mapping; a distinctive feature with a strong sense of identity; has some prominence in views across the landscape; visible from several public vantage points; contributes to the setting of Conservation Areas; its character and appearance are partly unspoilt by visual detractors (although is influenced by the existing urban edge); it provides the opportunity for views across the landscape; and has a role in the landscape by defining a character area and forming a visual backdrop.

Report produced by LUC

# Report produced by LUC

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