

South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment

Annex I: Visually Important Hillside

South Gloucestershire Council

Final Draft Report for Adoption Chapter 16

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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3	Draft Report	E White	E White	K Davies	05.07.2023
4	Final Draft	E White	E White	K Davies	01.11.2023
5	Final Draft (updated following New Local Plan Phase 3 consultation)	E White	E White	K Davies	20.06.2024
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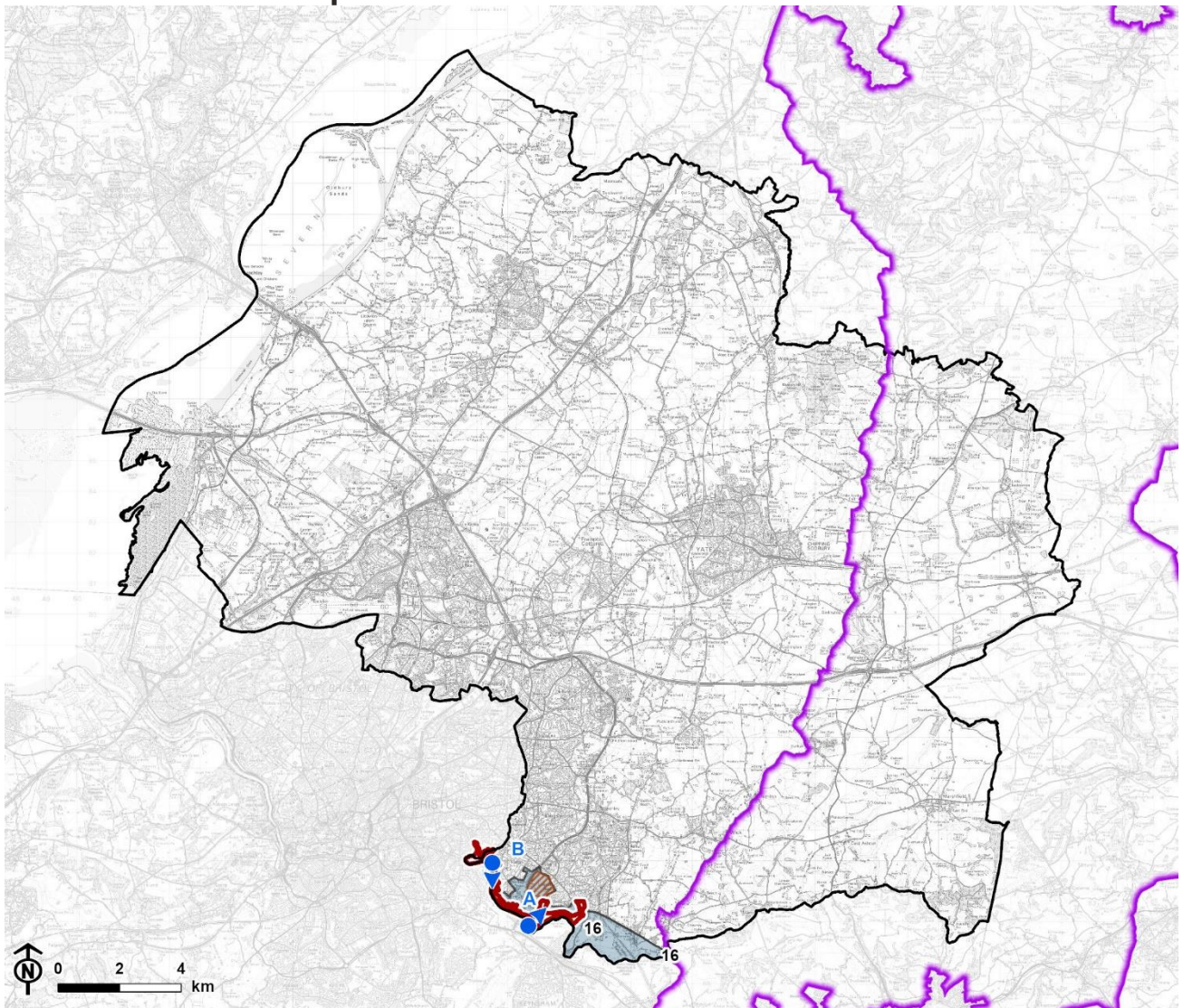
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Chapter 16

River Avon - steep northern side







The River Avon VIH comprises a steep northern valley side to the River Avon. It is located on the southern edge of the South Gloucestershire boundary and is located within the Avon Valley (LCA 16) landscape character area. It forms a southerly extension of the Hanham Hills VIH. The VIH contribute towards the setting of the river which is confined by the steep wooded valley sides, and the setting of Hanham Abbots Conservation Area.

Figure 16.1: Location of the River Avon Visually Important Hillside and landscape character context



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CB:HS, EB:shayler_h LUC 12274_2024_r1_VIHSVPUpdates 17/07/2024
Source: LUC, SGDC, NE, OS

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Council boundary |  | Adjoining Visually Important Hillside |
|  | Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) boundary |  | Photograph location |
|  | River Avon Valley Visually Important Hillside | Enclosed Valleys LCT | |
| | |  | 16. Avon Valley |

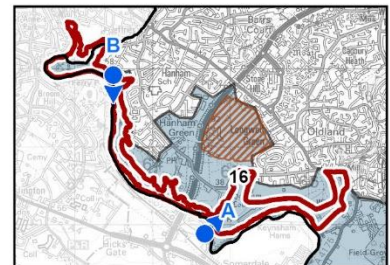


Figure 16.2: Detailed map of the River Avon Visually Important Hillside

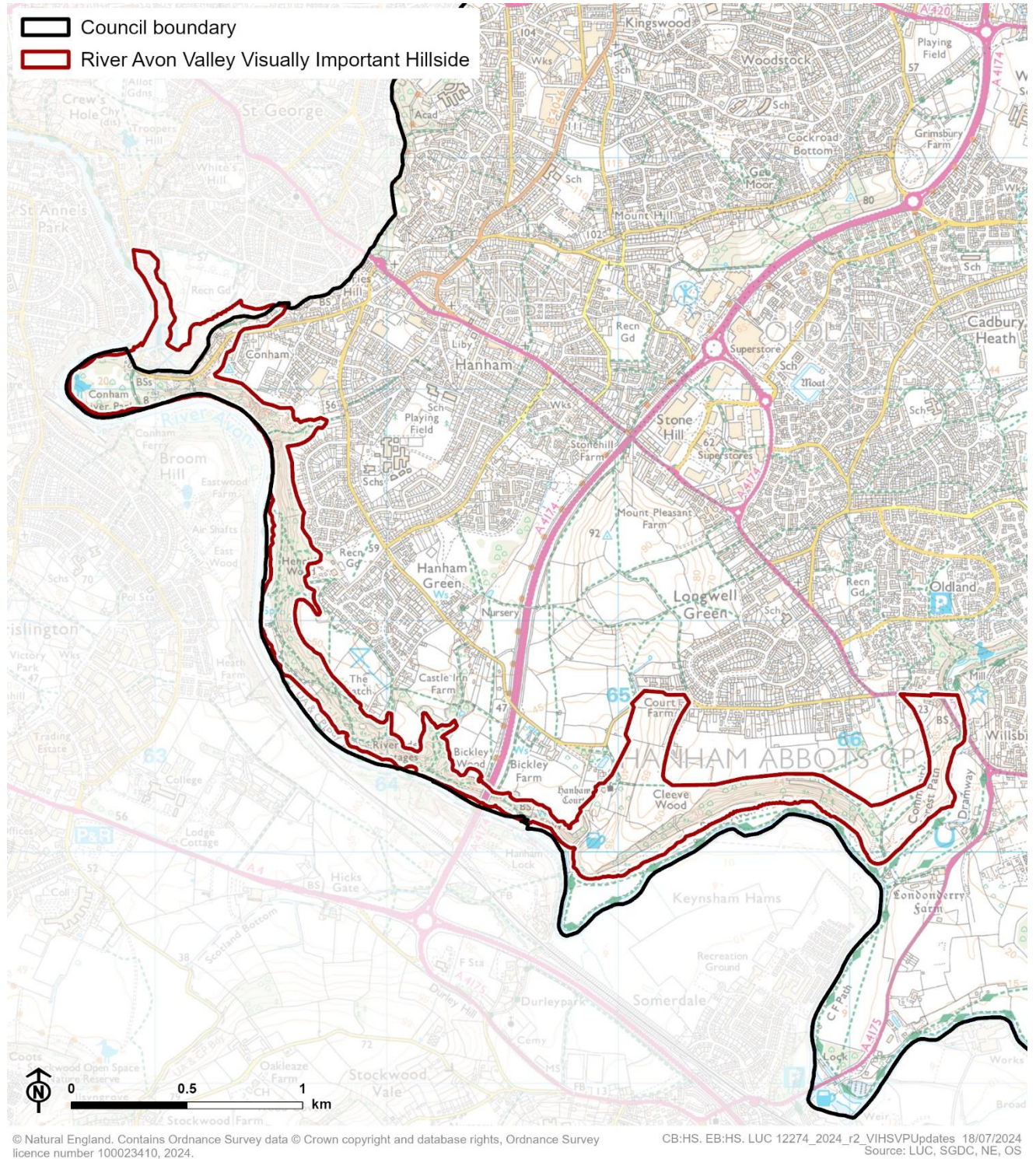


Figure 16.3: View of River Avon, overlooking Hanham Lock (Photo point A)



Figure 16.4: View looking along the River Avon, from the Avon Valley Panorama Viewpoint (Photo point B)



Characteristics

Distinctiveness and identity

- The River Avon VIH is a readily identifiable landform feature on OS mapping, as the steep northern side of the valley is identified with close contour lines along the River Avon.
- A triangulation pillar in the western section of the VIH (near Conham) indicates the top of the northern valley side and is marked on OS mapping.
- The VIH is a distinctive feature with a strong sense of identity as noted in the following publications:
 - LCA 16: Avon Valley description within South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment SPD notes that “*the valley profile becomes enclosed*” with “*steep sided bluffs rising from the valley floor, with more gentle slopes above*”, and refers to the steep sides of the River Avon valley.
 - The Hanham Abbots Conservation Area appraisal states that the south of the area is “*contained by a backdrop of the steeply wooded slopes of the Avon Valley*”. It also states that the impressive Sally on the Barn at Court Farm (a Grade II listed building located at the top of the VIH in the north-west) is impressive and “*is an important focal point at the northern ‘entrance’ to the conservation area*”.

Visual prominence

- Due to the incised and wooded nature of the valley, views along the VIH are limited to areas of higher elevation as noted in LCA 16: Avon Valley which states that “*Long views along the valley are possible from the elevated A4174, less so from the A4175 road bridges.*” The LCA also references views from the valley floor, mentioning that “*views are typically more contained from eye level along the valley floor and from slopes, due to the dense woodland cover.*”

- The VIH is visible from limited public vantage points including from the Avon Valley Panorama strategic viewpoint (SVP 31) and from other locations along the River Avon Trail which runs along the edge of the River Avon.

Character and value

- A key characteristic of the LCA 16: Avon Valley is *the “steep-sided, densely wooded slopes which enclose the River Avon to the west.”*
- The VIH is partly straddled in its centre by the Hanham Abbots Conservation Area and contributes to the setting of the area. The VIH includes an important historical building group at Hanham Court and Court Farm, which contributes towards the character and value of the area.
- The character and appearance of the VIH is largely unspoilt by visual detractors, limited to roads that cross the valley and small traditional riverside cottages near Conham River Park in the west and at Hanham Lock in the east.
- LCA 16: Avon Valley notes that in relation to the VIH's land cover *“the narrow enclosed river valley to the west includes a combination of linear ancient and semi-natural woodland, clipped hedges, and bands of mature deciduous trees, creating a textured but simple enclosed landscape, which emphasises the sinuous form of the River Avon”.*
- The VIH has a role in the landscape by partly defining LCA 16: Avon Valley. The wooded valley side (including Avon Valley Park and Hencliff Wood) is also identified as forming a backdrop to the Avon Valley Conservation Area appraisal [\[See reference 1\]](#).

Summary

The steep northern side of the River Avon is categorised as a VIH as it meets most of the criteria to some extent. It is readily identifiable as a

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natural landform feature on OS mapping; a distinctive feature with a strong sense of identity; has some prominence in local views; contributes to the setting of a Conservation Area; its character and appearance is largely unspoilt by visual detractors; and has a role in the landscape by partly defining a character area.

References

- 1 Avon Valley Conservation Area Appraisal (1993) Available at:
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/2946-24-avon-valley>

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