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Assessment of Landscape Character Areas in Stroud District

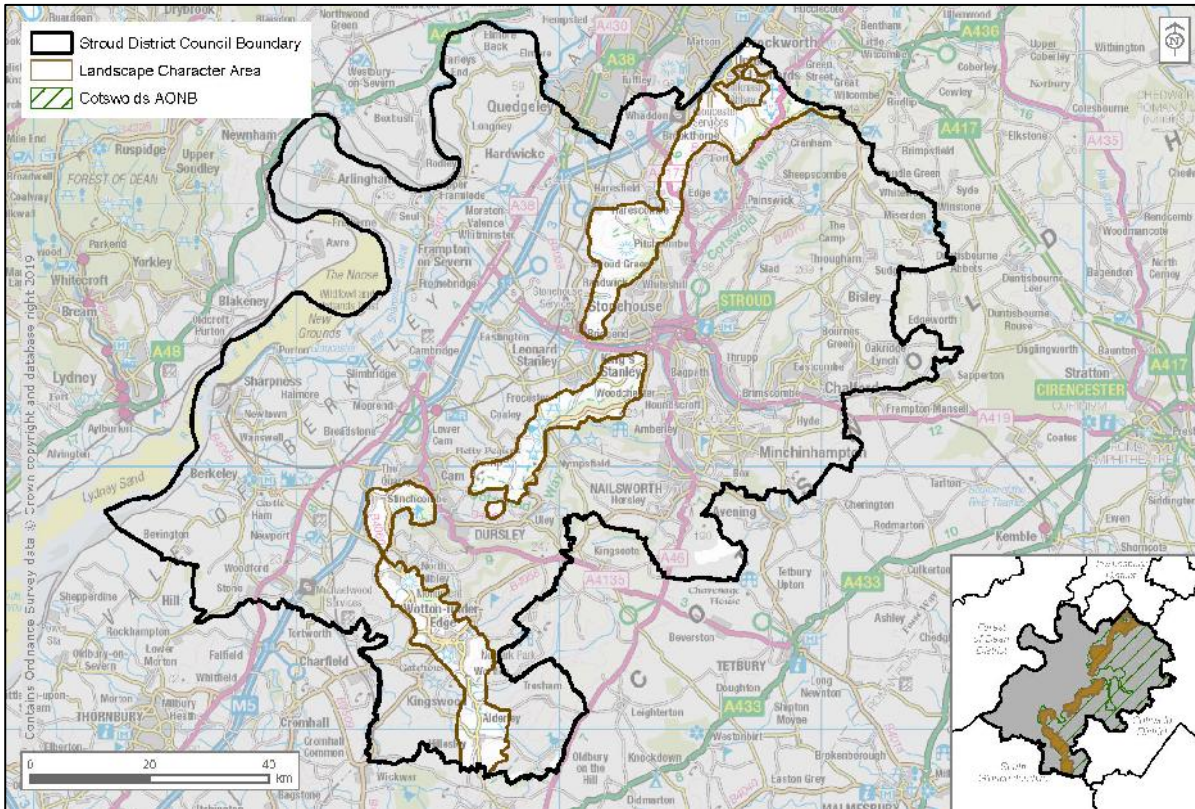
Supplementary annex to the Stroud District Renewable Energy Resources Assessment report

Prepared by CSE and LUC for Stroud District Council
November 2019

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Landscape Character Area: Escarpment



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large scale exposed and elevated scarp slope landform. Outcrops of exposed oolite limestone rock occur in some areas. Elevation varies widely, from 50 metres AOD to almost 300 metres AOD. • The slopes are typically steep, irregular and incised by narrow small stream gullies and coombes. • The escarpment is generally narrow, rarely exceeding a kilometre wide.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land cover is predominantly of unimproved grassland with areas of scrub and extensive areas of broadleaved woodland. • There is a high frequency of BAP Priority Habitats including deciduous woodland, lowland calcareous grassland and wood pasture among other localised habitats. • Woodland is most frequently situated on the steepest slopes. Some extensive tracts of ancient woodland are designated as SSSIs. • The field pattern is composed of small pastures which are enclosed by hedges on gentler slopes. Parkland is a feature of upper and mid-slopes. • The landscape is largely undeveloped, although it contains the larger settlements of Upton St Leonards, Middleyard, North Nibley and Wotton-under-Edge. Other small-scale settlements tend to lie either at the top or bottom of the scarp.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few roads traverse the LCA, with their distribution restricted by the steep topography. Most commonly roads are steep rural lanes, although the A4173 and the A46 briefly cross the landscape. • There are many footpaths along and crossing the escarpment, including parts of the Cotswold Way National Trail.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a high degree of intervisibility with surrounding LCAs, with the escarpment forming a prominent feature on skylines from adjacent landscapes. • Much of the LCA provides panoramic views over nearby landscapes including the Severn Vale and the surrounding valleys. • In places woodland extends over the upper slopes to the flatter land above, visually screening the escarpment tops. • Some views extend over adjacent urban development including parts of Gloucester, Stroud and Dursley. • Skylines are mostly undeveloped and marked by woodland. Prominent skyline features include the Tyndale Monument at North Nibley.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive areas of woodland provide a localised sense of enclosure. The open and exposed peaks of the escarpments contrast with this and provide expansive and long-distance views. • This is a strongly rural landscape with many parts characterised by high levels of tranquillity for quiet recreation.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The escarpment is rich in heritage sites, including hill forts and barrows along the ridge, as well as strip lynchets and ancient earthworks. • Scheduled Monuments include Painswick Hill camp, Dyke camp, Hairsfield Hill camp, Randwick Hill long barrow and Ring Hill earthworks, among others. • There are many small-scale abandoned quarry workings. • Several of the settlements contain designated Conservation Areas and listed buildings are widespread.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several Cotswold AONB special qualities are present and prominent including outcrops of exposed oolite limestone rock, ancient woodland, limestone grassland and traditional buildings of stone with stone roofs. • Hedgerow trees are a feature of the mid to lower slopes with occasional isolated oak or ash trees standing in fields of pasture or marking the line of small streams and spring lines.

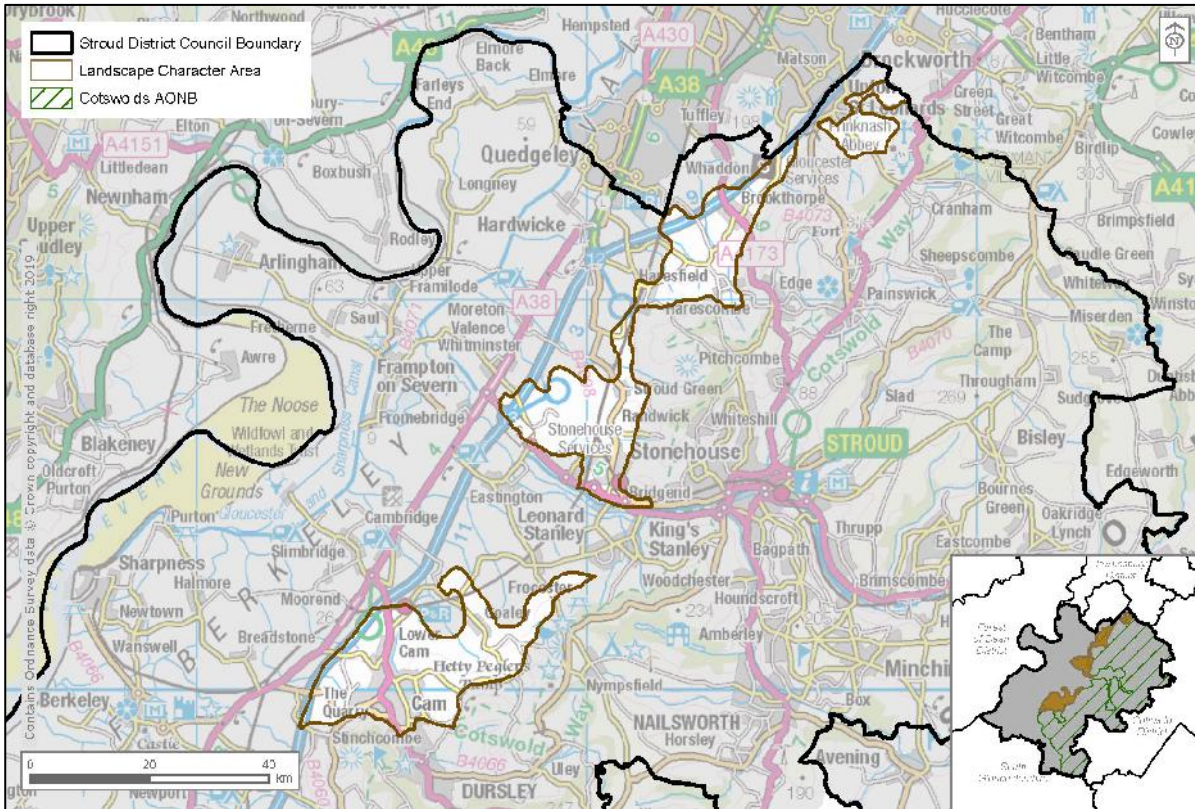
- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the foot of the escarpment, orchards form an element of the traditional rural landscape. There are many old pear and apple orchards in the northern section.• There are extensive areas of open access commons on elevated land, heavily used for recreation. There are also several promoted viewpoints. |
|--|---|

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Please note: Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the box entitled 'Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)					H
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)					H
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)				M-H	
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)					H
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>The steeply sloping sides of the escarpment landscape are often visually prominent and therefore have an elevated landscape sensitivity to all renewable energy scenarios assessed. The flatter land on the escarpment tops which is not overlooked and screened by surrounding woodland (e.g south west of Pen Hill) have a reduced sensitivity to solar installations.</p> <p>Areas where there is a high frequency of smaller scale landscape features such as small historic villages would be particularly sensitive to wind development as the contrasting scale would be visually prominent and out of place. Areas which already have important landmark features such as Nibley Monument or church spires would also be highly sensitive to wind development.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Escarpment Foot Slopes



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

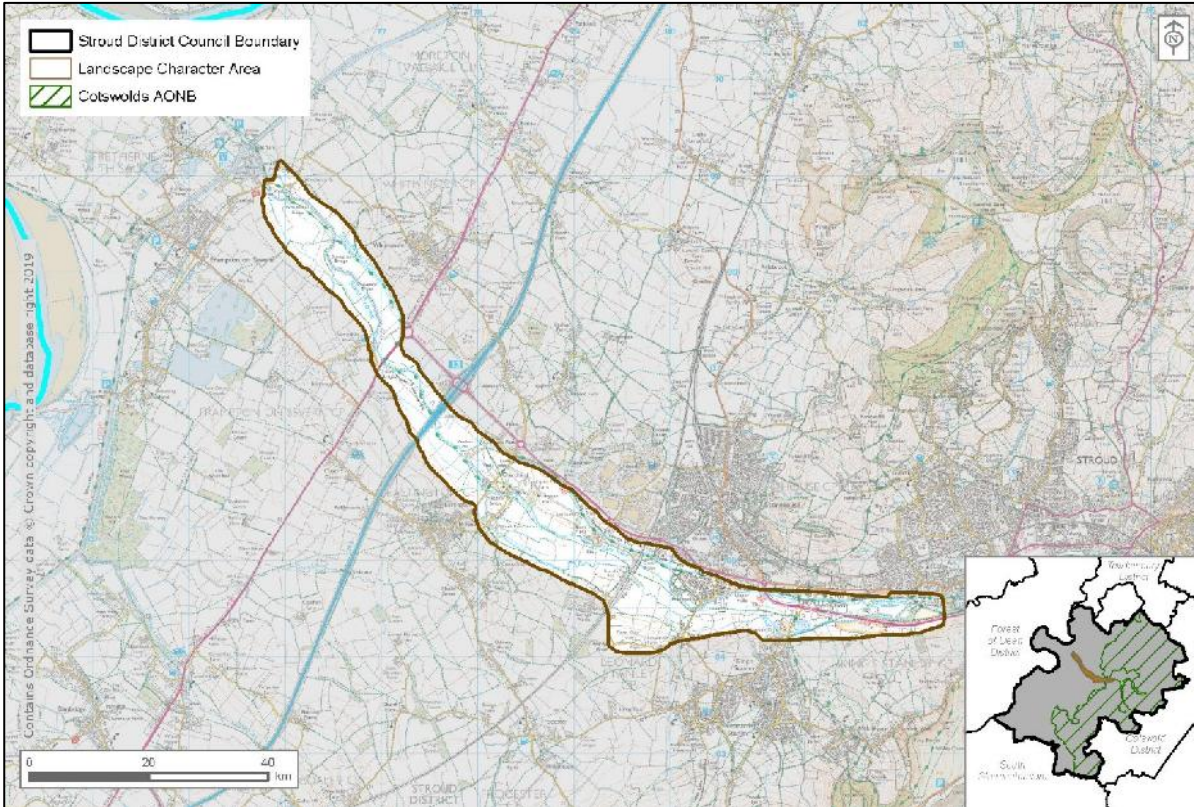
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transitional, westward sloping fringe at the base of the Cotswold Escarpment LCA. • The topography of the LCA is subtle and low-lying but is more obviously undulating than the open flat plains adjacent to the west and becomes more undulating as it transitions to the Cotswold Escarpment to the east. • The landform around Cam tends to be more dramatic and steeply sloping than other parts of the LCA.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a dispersed pattern of isolated villages and hamlets. The LCA also contains part of larger settlements including Stonehouse and Cam and Dursley. • Pasture is the predominant land use with a strong pattern of small-scale fields enclosed by hedgerows (often elm). • Remnant parkland trees are a common feature in this LCA, particularly in the central area around Harescombe and Brookethorpe. Woodland normally occurs as small farm woods, remnant parkland trees in pasture, or as small pear and apple orchards.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A railway line bisects a significant portion of the LCA. • The M5, the A4135 and the A4173 run through portions of the LCA from north to south. • The pattern of roads and lanes runs connects the Cotswold Escarpment to the Lowland Plain villages and the Severn Estuary. These lanes are sinuous and narrow and are often single track and enclosed by high hedgerows.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of settlements contain church towers which form skyline features which are highly visible across the relatively flat topography. • In the most northern part of the LCA, the elevated landform of Robins Wood Hill (Gloucester District) is prominent in views. • Areas close to the Escarpment are overlooked from the adjacent Cotswolds AONB.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High hedgerows and the undulating topography provide a strong sense of enclosure in parts. Where small farm woods, remnant parkland trees or orchards occur they contribute to a sense of enclosure. • From some areas, relatively open views towards Robins Wood Hill (Gloucester District) and the Escarpment provide a greater sense of expansiveness, however skylines are broken by development in parts.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of settlements are distinctive villages and hamlets of medieval origin, most of which contain historic churches. • There are two barrows on Court Hill which are listed as Scheduled Monuments.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong pattern of settlement, churches, lanes and field enclosure in this LCA which together provide a recognisable network. • Weathered stone and brick buildings provide a strong vernacular character to the landscape. • Views to the steep Cotswold Escarpment that rises dramatically to the east provide a strong sense of place.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)				M-H	
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)				M-H	
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)					
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)			M		
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)				M-H	
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas which are strongly overlooked from the adjacent Cotswolds AONB have higher levels of sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>The area around Cam and Upthorpe has increased landscape sensitivity to solar PV installations due to the more dramatic and steeply sloping landform which would result in solar panels being more visually prominent within the landscape.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Frome River Valley



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

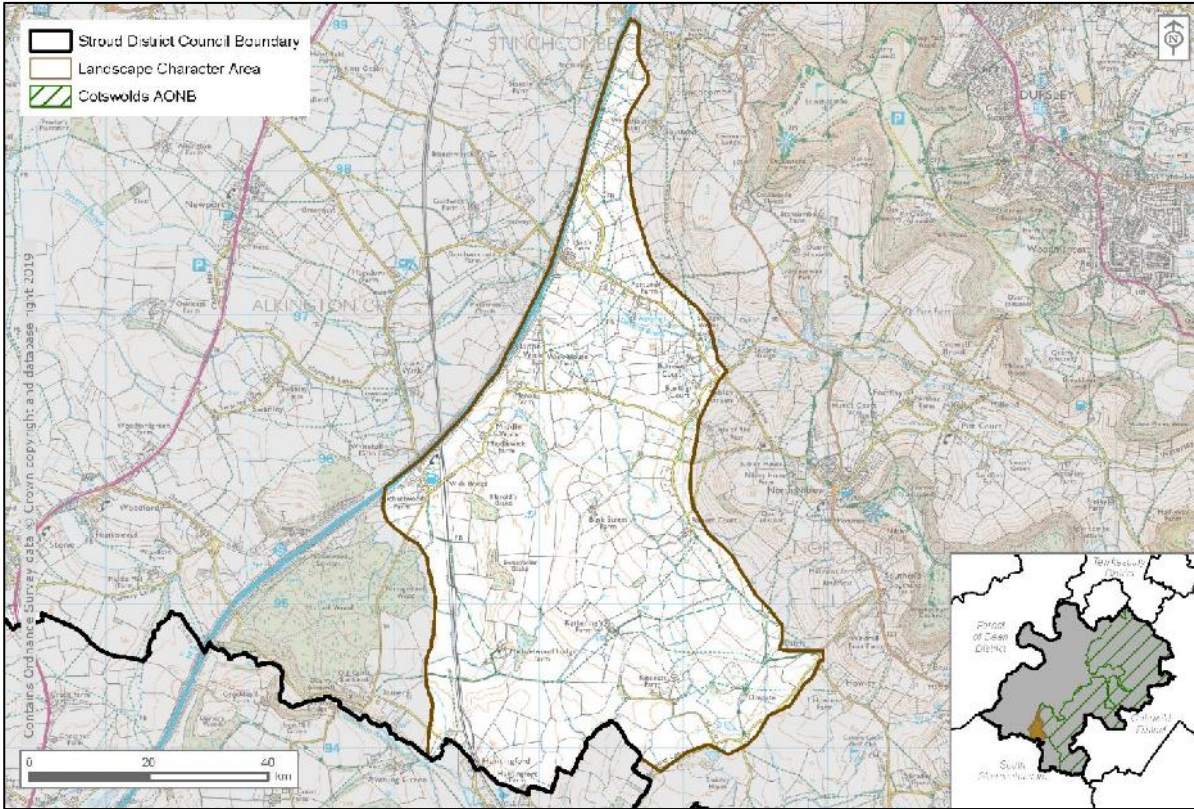
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shallow alluvial valley containing the River Frome and Stroudwater Canal. The valley traverses the landscape from east to west. • The landform is low-lying and slopes are gentle. Elevation ranges between 15 and 45 metres AOD. • Fields are generally small scale and the valley landform encloses the LCA.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The valley floor is sheltered and relatively well-wooded along the river and field margins in comparison to the surrounding agricultural landscape. Tree species are generally associated with damper conditions, including alder and willow. • Remnant parkland trees (often mature oak) are a common feature of the pasture fields within this LCA. • Settlements are mostly small villages and hamlets of medieval origin, except for Bridgend which is a large village separated from the nearby town of Stonehouse by the A419.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Frome River Valley LCA is traversed by roads which run in a north-south direction. These include the M5 and the A38. The mainline railway also crosses the LCA. • The A419 runs from west-east through the LCA in the east, near to King's Stanley. • The Thames & Severn Way, a long distance path, runs through the length of the LCA, mostly tracking the route of the River Frome. This joins the Cotswold Way National Trail in the east. The trails are linked to a network of footpaths. • The Stroudwater Canal runs through the LCA. It is currently not navigable. A portion of the canal towpath is accessible.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several lines of pylons run through the valley both from north-south and east-west. In some areas they are a dominant and intrusive feature on the skyline. • Where the topography and vegetation allow, there is intervisibility with the Cotswolds AONB to the east. • Trees are also a common feature on the skyline and enclose views in some parts of the LCA.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong sense of enclosure in the Frome River Valley LCA. Enclosure is dependent on the pattern of field enclosure and the presence of woodland in this relatively shallow landscape, although it is sometimes influenced by gently undulating slopes. • More enclosed areas and around settlements such as Churchend, King's Stanley and Stanley Downton.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A substantial portion of the Frome River Valley LCA is designated as the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area, which is on the Heritage at Risk register. • There are several listed buildings within the LCA, including the main building at Stanley Mills (Grade I), Whitminster House, the Church of St Andrewin Whitminster and the Church of St Michael and Angels in Eastington (all Grade II*).
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wetland habitats associated with water channels, with permanent unimproved wet pasture and meadows, contribute to the distinctiveness of the Frome River Valley LCA. • The historic churches, settlements, lanes and field enclosure are characteristic of this LCA. • Small areas of Open Access Land are located to the south of Ebley.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)					H
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)		L-M			
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas with existing electricity infrastructure and close to the urban edge (particularly where these are existing industrial developments) have lower levels of sensitivity to renewable energy development.</p> <p>The north-western parts of the LCA have a more rural and undeveloped character, increasing sensitivity to renewable energy installations.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Kingswood Vale - North



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

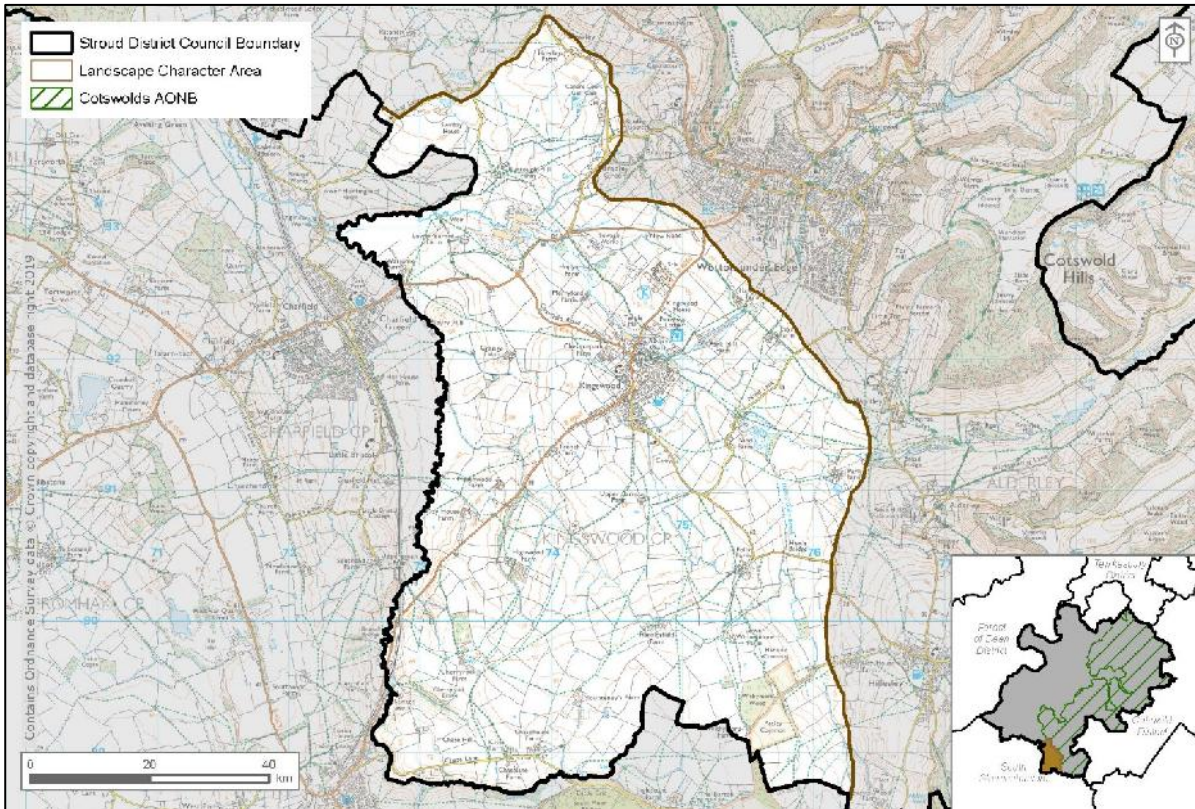
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This LCA represents the transition between the foot slopes of the Cotswold Escarpment to the Severn Vale lowlands. The undulating landform tends to become more dramatic adjacent to the Cotswolds escarpment. Some locally incised streams are tributaries to the Little Avon River. Close to Michael Wood fields are larger and the landform is gently undulating, creating the perception of an expansive landscape. This contrasts with areas adjacent to the escarpment where smaller field sizes, frequent trees and a more complex landform result in a more intricate landscape.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landscape is characterised by fields of mixed agricultural use which are mostly medium scale. Some small groups of fields contain solar panels. Some fields are rectilinear but the pattern is generally irregular. Field boundaries are generally hedgerows of varying height. Ash and oak are the most prevalent hedgerow trees. Woodland is a prominent feature in the landscape, with small farm woods and shelterbelts. Some woods are classified as ancient. Settlement is not a significant feature of this landscape. There is a sparse distribution of farmsteads and associated buildings of red brick and Cotswold stone, connected by winding lanes.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The north-west of the LCA is adjacent to the M5 which runs from north to south. Other than the M5, roads are limited to rural winding lanes which generally cross from east to west. The mainline railway transects the LCA from north to south towards its western edge. A fairly extensive network of public footpaths serves the LCA.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skylines are mostly undeveloped and marked by trees. Where the landform and tree cover allow, views are semi-expansive, particularly when looking towards the Cotswold escarpment. The Tyndale Monument at North Nibley is prominent in views from across the area. The LCA is overlooked from viewpoints at North Nibley and Drakestone Point (both within the Escarpment LCA and the Cotswolds AONB).
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The undulating landform and semi-extensive tree cover create a sense of enclosure. Where the landform is less undulating and tree cover less extensive there is a stronger sense of openness, particularly in areas which offer views towards the Cotswold escarpment. Traffic noise from the M5 is a dominant feature in the north of the LCA, which otherwise has a strongly rural character.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several of the farmhouse buildings in this LCA are Grade II listed. The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that the majority of fields are piecemeal enclosures. Some may be medieval in origin.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sparsely distributed buildings of red brick and Cotswold stone and winding lanes and provide this landscape with a strongly traditional character. Old orchards occur on slopes bordering the Cotswold escarpment and on high land, contributing to the rural quality of the LCA. The irregular topography, ancient woodland and presence of mature oak trees within hedgerows give this LCA a distinctively sheltered character in parts.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)				M-H	
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)		L-M			
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)				M-H	
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas which are overlooked from the Cotswolds AONB have higher levels of sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>Steep slopes, including those adjacent to the Cotswolds AONB and associated with Doverte Brook, have higher levels of sensitivity to solar PV installations, which would be more visually prominent in these locations.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Kingswood Vale - South



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

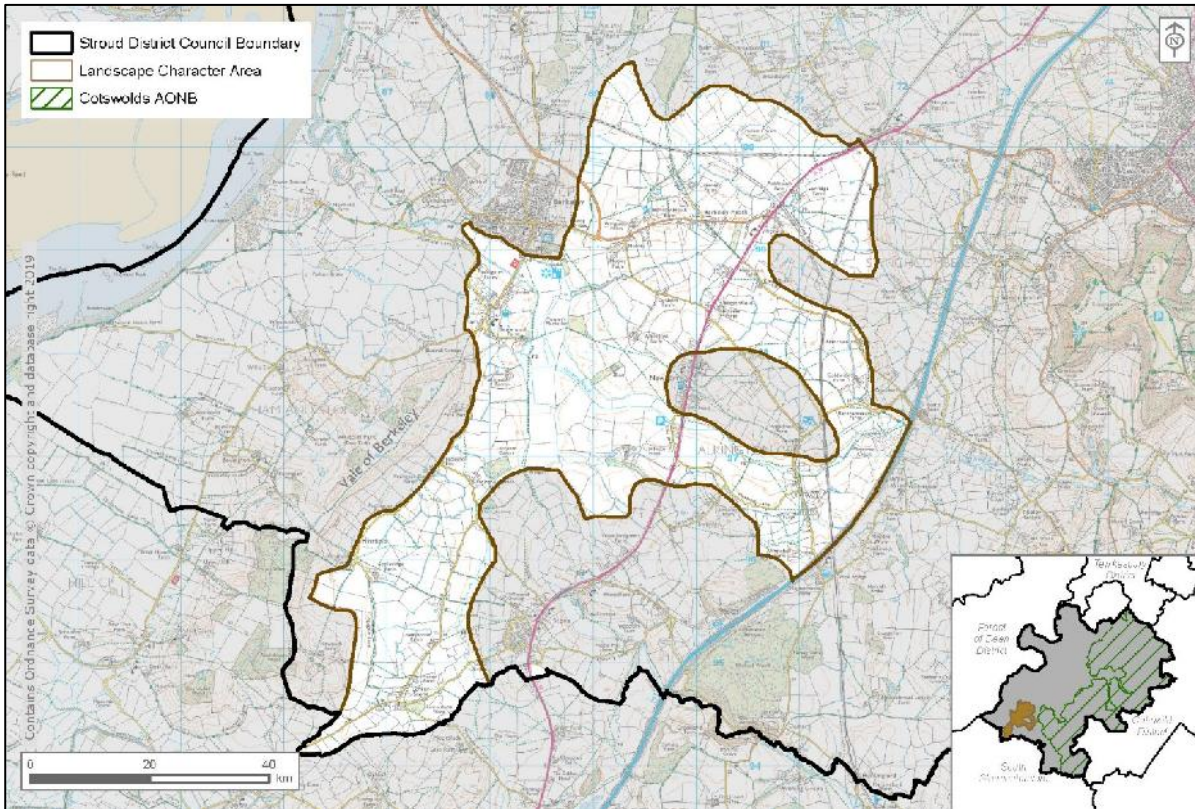
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This LCA is located where the landscape transitions from the foot slopes of the Cotswold Escarpment to the Severn Vale lowlands. Elevation ranges between 30 metres and 80 metres AOD. Topography tends to be gently undulating, with some locally incised streams forming tributaries to the Little Avon River. Slopes associated with the river valley in the west of the LCA are steep.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fields are generally rectilinear, although there are some irregular fields located adjacent to watercourses. Hedgerows mark field boundaries and vary from low-cut to mature and overgrown. Willow occurs in both hedgerows and along water courses. Settlement is not a significant feature of this landscape, with the exception of the village Kingswood. The pattern is otherwise a sparse distribution of farmsteads, mills and associated buildings of red brick and Cotswold stone, connected by winding lanes.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LCA is traversed by a network of roads, which includes the B4058, B4060 and the B4062. Several winding lanes exist, linking Kingswood to Wotton-under-Edge, Charfield and Wickwar. An extensive network of footpaths provides good access to the landscape. Many routes are likely to have originally provided access between the remote farmsteads, hamlets and surrounding towns and villages.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In gently undulating areas views are often semi-expansive, particularly when looking towards the Cotswold escarpment. The Cotswold escarpment provides a prominent backdrop to most of the LCA. The Tyndale Monument at North Nibley is a distinctive feature. There are two existing 74 metre to tip wind turbines in the south of the LCA which are prominent on skylines.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a sense of openness with some far-reaching views, particularly towards the south of the LCA. Where a sense of enclosure is experienced it is generally provided by mature hedgerows and undulations in the landform. Blocks of woodland are infrequent within the farmed land, although trees within hedgerows and along rivers create localised enclosure.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listed buildings are located throughout this LCA, with many located in the village of Kingswood. Listed buildings in this landscape include old mill buildings, farm buildings and Kingswood Abbey Gatehouse, a Grade I listed building and scheduled monument. Part of Bradley Court Registered Park and Garden (Grade II) is in the north of the LCA.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cotswold escarpment provides a distinctive backdrop and sense of place to the LCA. The traditional character of the LCA is emphasised by its winding lanes and extensive network of footpaths, red brick and stone buildings and old mills. The area around Nind Farm, contains Nind Local Nature Reserve and a Key Wildlife Site, Nind Trout Farm and Ozleworth Brook. A tract of Open Access Land is located at Assley Common in the south of the LCA.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)				M-H	
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)		L-M			
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)				M-H	
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas which are overlooked from the Cotswolds AONB have higher levels of sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>Steep slopes, including those adjacent to the Cotswolds AONB and associated with the Little Avon River, have higher levels of sensitivity to solar PV installations, which would be more visually prominent in these locations.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Little Avon Basin



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

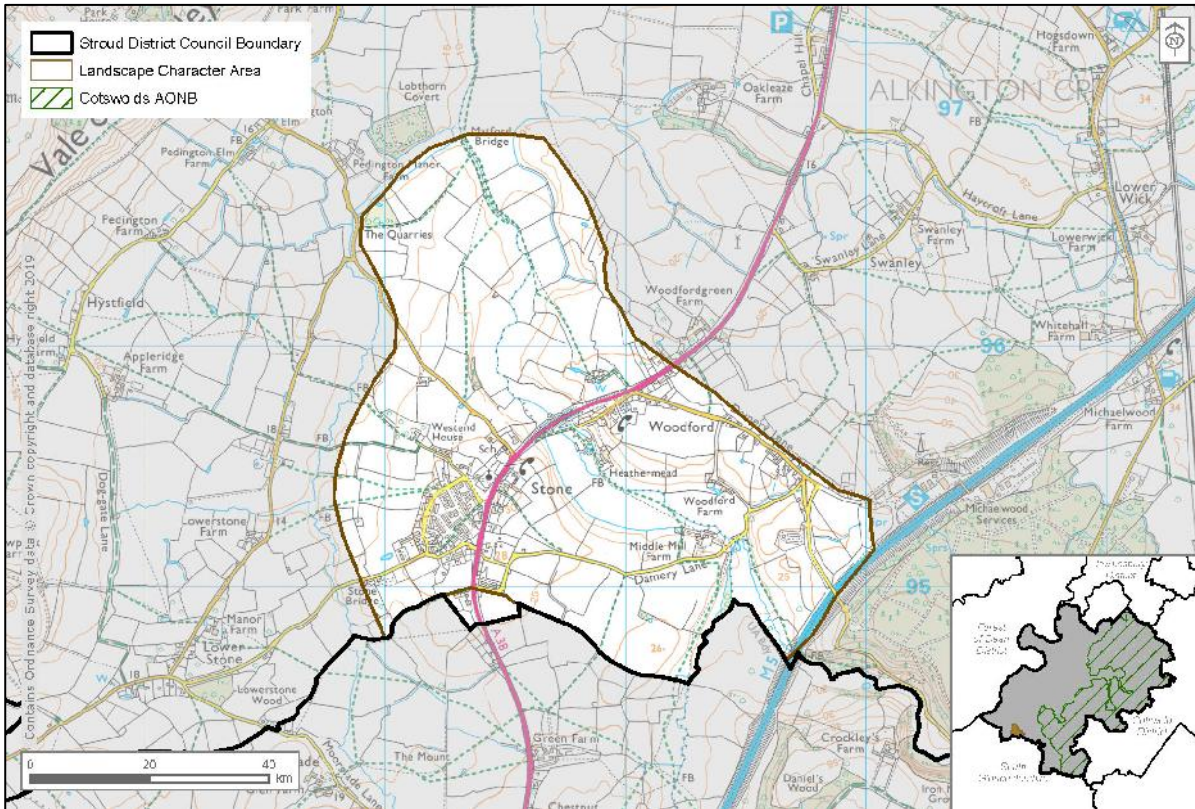
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gently undulating, low-lying flood plain characterised by a network of small streams and drainage ditches, including Doverte Brook. • The scale of the landscape is not uniform but tends to be large due to the low-cut hedgerows which make fields appear larger. Around Berkley Heath fields are smaller and enclosed by hedgerows with mature trees, creating a more intricate landscape.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The field pattern is mixed, with rectilinear and irregular enclosures. Fields tend to be large scale, with the exception of a few clusters of small to medium-sized fields, particularly towards the south and southeast of the LCA. • The land use is mostly pastoral with some areas of arable. • Tracts of woodland, mostly broadleaved, are common within the LCA. Lowerstone Wood in the south is locally designated as a Key Wildlife Site. • Hedgerows often demarcate field boundaries and frequently contain mature trees. Freestanding oak trees are a common feature in the landscape and are indicative of former parkland. • The LCA is fairly sparsely settled, with the estate village of Ham and scattered farms.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mainline railway and A38 both traverse this LCA from north to south, with the railway also branching off in the north and transecting the landscape from east to west. • Elsewhere, a network of narrow winding lanes supports the pattern of enclosure. • There is an interconnected network of public rights of way, which includes old laneways/tracks that provide access between settlements and farmsteads. Some parts of the LCA are relatively inaccessible.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skylines are often expansive. Small-scale development (often individual farmsteads) and mature hedgerow trees form skyline features where they occur. • The Cotswold Escarpment is a prominent feature in the eastward looking skyline where views are open and unobstructed by features in the foreground.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This relatively flat landscape generally provides a sense of openness, which is diminished in parts by mature hedgerows and tracts of woodland. • From the more elevated parts an increased sense of openness is experienced through views to the Cotswold AONB escarpment in the east, the sandstone ridges to the west (and the distinct mixed woodland in the Wooded Cambrian Ridge LCA to the southeast).
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA includes part of the Grade II* Berkeley Castle Registered Park and Garden. This includes the estate village of Ham and forms a link between Whitcliff Deer Park and Berkeley Castle.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distinctive historic landscape of Berkeley Castle falls partially within the LCA, near to the point where the Little Avon River flows through the gap between the two sandstone ridges which bound the landscape to the west. A tidal mill and old farm houses contribute to the strong sense of place at this location. • The white alder and willow-lined river course and rectilinear field pattern contribute to the scenic qualities of this generally open, lowland floodplain landscape which retains much of its rural character despite being traversed by two major transport routes.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)				M-H	
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)		L-M			
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)				M-H	
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)				M-H	
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas within and close to the historic landscape associated with Berkeley Castle (including the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden) have greater landscape sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>Areas which are overlooked by the nearby escarpment within the Cotswolds AONB have greater landscape sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Little Avon Mid-Valley



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

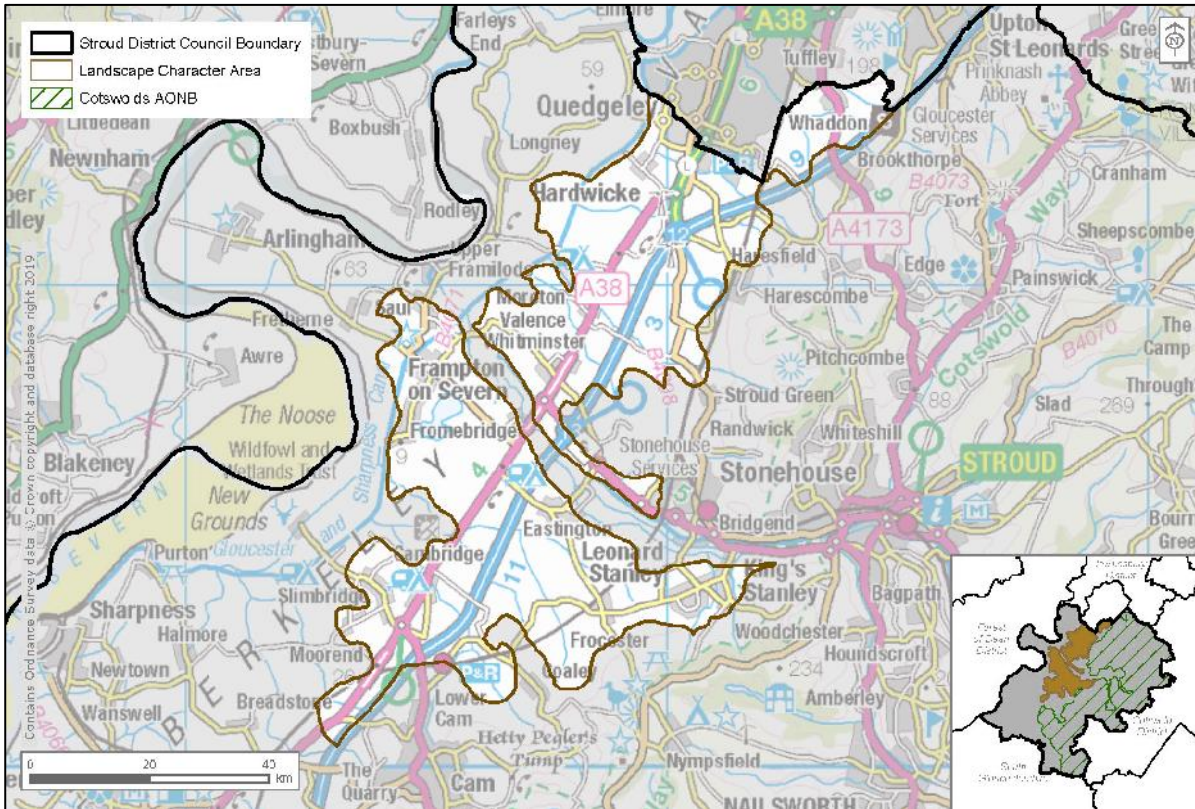
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low-lying and undulating landform which distinguishes the Little Avon Mid-Valley LCA from the surrounding floodplain landscape. • The narrow valley of the Little Avon River is characterised by steep slopes on either side. • Fields are generally small to medium scale but can appear larger due to low cut hedgerows dividing the fields.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural land use varies and tends towards arable on higher land and permanent pasture on the floodplain. • Field pattern is small-medium scale and notably irregular. Field boundaries are mixed but mainly hedgerows, with some post and wire fencing, wood fencing and traditional walls appearing less frequently. Hedgerow trees occur often, mainly oak and ash. • The river course is clearly lined with alder and willow. • Settlement is a significant feature of this landscape, with the villages of Woodford and Stone situated separated by the Little Avon River and its floodplain.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA is traversed by the A38. The road itself is mostly concealed from view of the surrounding rural landscape by trees and by development associated with the village of Stone. • The M5 marks the boundary of the eastern edge of the LCA. • Networks of narrow winding lanes traverse the landscape, connecting Woodford and Stone to their surroundings. • The LCA is well supported by footpaths which tend to provide access to Woodford and Stone.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spire of the Church of All Saints in the village of Stone is a prominent skyline feature. • Skylines are often uninterrupted but small-scale overhead wires associated with the villages of Woodford and Stone sometimes mark the skyline. • The backdrop of Michaelwood within the Wooded Cambrian Ridge LCA to the east and south east is prominent. • Views to the north are relatively extensive although views to the south tend to be enclosed by hedgerows and trees.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sense of enclosure is variable across this LCA. • Low hedges and large fields give a sense of openness across a considerable amount of the landscape. This contrasts with mature hedges and woodland which provide a sense of enclosure, particularly along narrow winding lanes. • Traffic noise from the adjacent M5 interrupts tranquillity.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church of All Saints in the village of Stone is a Grade II* listed building.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite being bisected by the A38 and located adjacent to the M5, this LCA retains much of its rural character. • The traditional character of this area is particularly pronounced by the tree-lined course of the river and its mill buildings, and in parts where narrow winding lanes are lined by dense hedgerows containing mature trees. • The undulating nature of the landform and its ridges contribute to the distinctive character of this LCA.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Please note: Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the box entitled 'Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)					H
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)			M		
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)				M-H	
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
Slopes associated with the Little Avon River which crosses through the centre of the LCA have higher levels of sensitivity to solar PV installations, which would be more visually prominent in these locations.					

Landscape Character Area: Lowland Plain



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

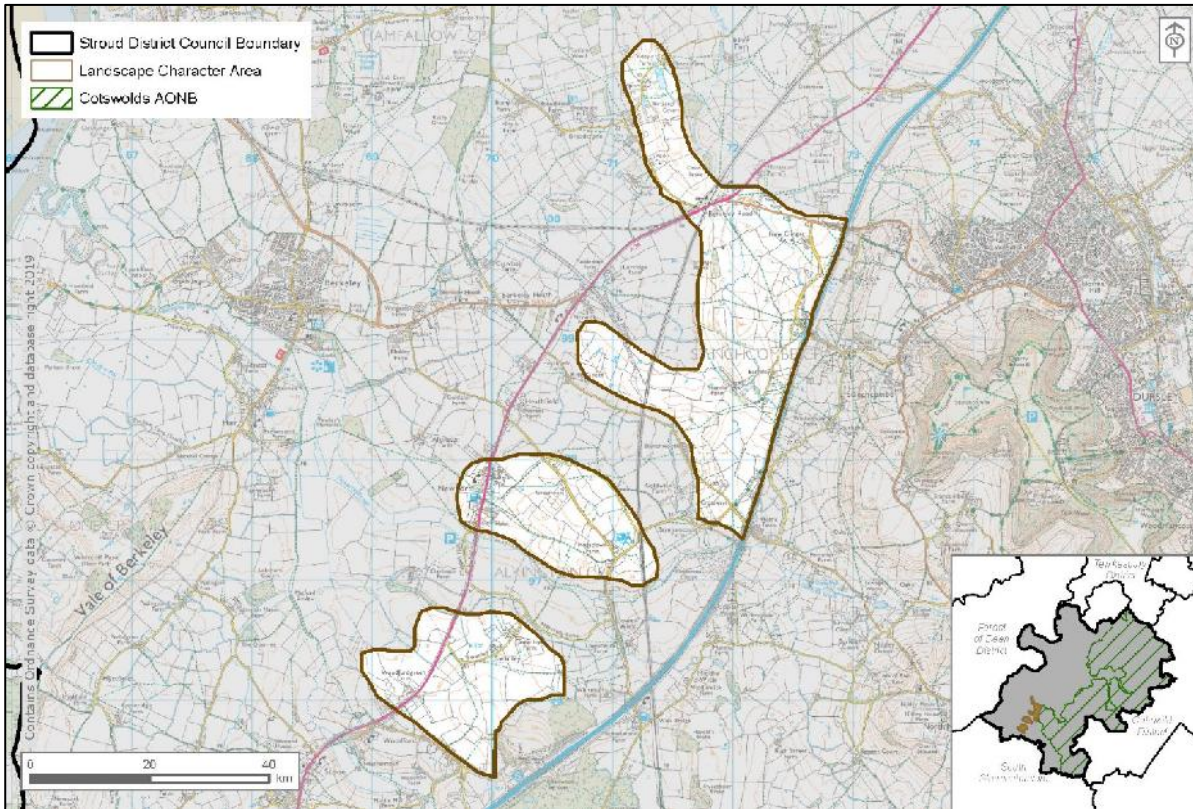
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lowland Plain is an expansive landscape comprised mainly of gravel terraces and head deposits. The plain is bisected by the Frome River Valley LCA and edged to the east by the Escarpment Foot Slopes and Escarpment LCAs. A medium to large scale landscape, due to the large fields divided by low hedgerows.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LCA is dominated by arable farming. Fields are medium to large scale and generally regular and rectilinear. Hedgerows are often clipped low and are mainly elm. The pattern of enclosure is weaker than in the neighbouring Frome Valley and Escarpment Foot Slopes LCAs. Mature oak trees occur in hedgerows and as in-field trees. Scattered small orchards add local interest. There are numerous villages and hamlets scattered throughout the LCA, in addition to scattered farms. Large scale industrial buildings are also a feature adjacent to the motorway and the larger settlements.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The M5 and A38 traverse the LCA from north to south. The Gloucester to Bristol railway is broadly parallel to these main roads. The A4173 crosses through the centre of the northernmost part of the Lowland Plain LCA from north to south. The other roads and lanes within the LCA run generally from east to west, emphasising the pattern and importance of former trade routes between the Cotswold Escarpment and the villages of the Lowland Plain LCA and the Severn Estuary. Most of the LCA is served by a semi-extensive network of footpaths (including part of the Wysis Way) and other public rights of way. These connect the settlements in the LCA to the surrounding countryside.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skylines are often expansive and uninterrupted, occasionally broken by electricity pylons. From Bath Road, where views are unobstructed by trees or settlement the approach towards the Escarpment forms a dramatic backdrop to the skyline. There are several church spires within the LCA which sometimes appear within the skyline.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, the LCA has a strong sense of openness and expansiveness. Single track, winding lanes edged by high hedgerows give a sense of enclosure in places. Away from the major transport routes the LCA retains a strong rural character.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frampton Court Registered Park and Garden (Grade II*) is located in the west of the LCA. There is a parkland estate character associated with Hardwicke Court and Haresfield Court. The LCA contains numerous designated heritage features, including scheduled moated sites, clusters of listed buildings and the Frampton on Severn and Saul Conservation Areas.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The north of the LCA is adjacent to the Cotswolds AONB. This is a landscape which, despite the concentration of communication routes and associated development, is rich in rural and historic character, with a strong pattern of settlement, churches and lanes providing a sense of a landscape long worked and inhabited.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Please note: Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the box entitled 'Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)		L-M			
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)			M		
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)				M-H	
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)					H
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)	L				
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)	L				
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)		L-M			
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)			M		
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas adjacent to the transport corridors will have reduced sensitivity to solar PV development. Contrastingly, the more complex landform in the northern parts of the LCA (associated with the River Frome) have higher levels of sensitivity to solar PV development.</p> <p>More expansive areas (e.g. to the west of the B4008) will be better able to accommodate wind energy development.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Lowland Ridges



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

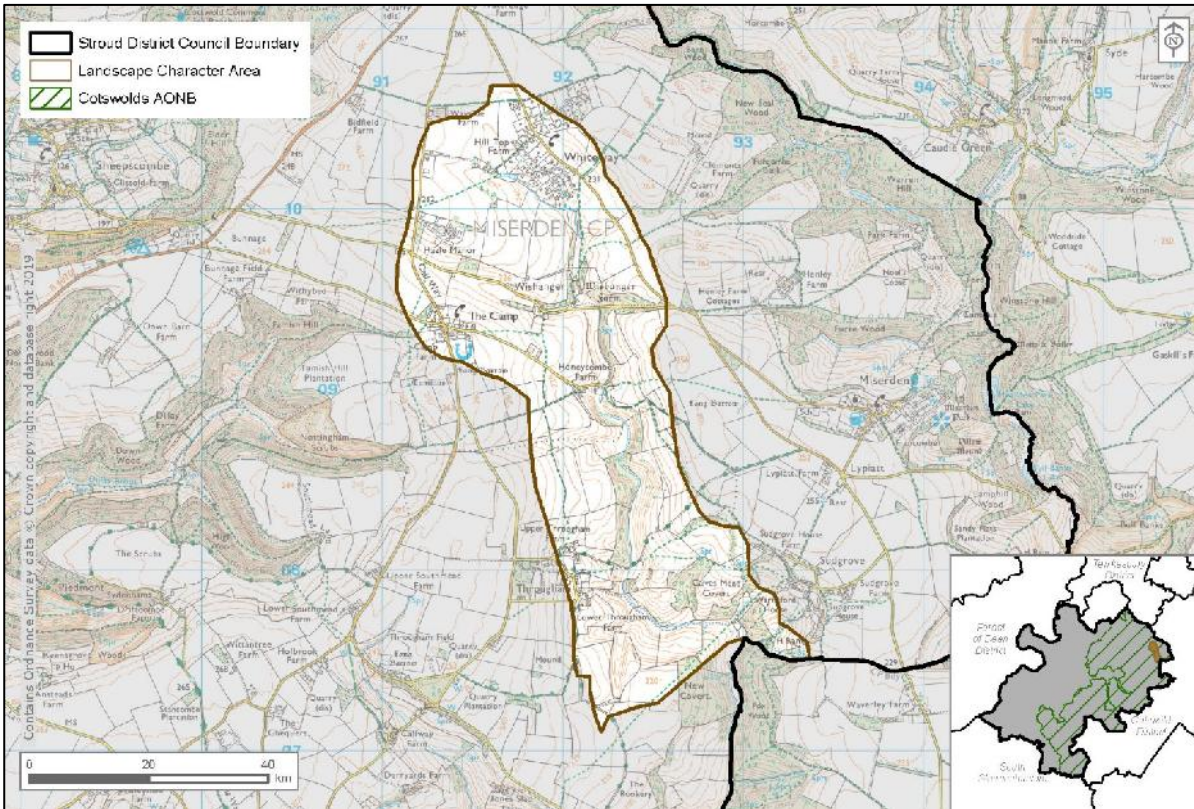
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LCA is characterised by pronounced ridges in the surrounding low-lying vale. Elevation ranges between 20 metres and 55 metres AOD. Steep slopes are associated with watercourses. The scale of the landscape is not uniform but tends to be medium-to-large scale, particularly on the ridge tops.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use is a mixture of arable and pastoral farming. The pattern of enclosure comprises a mixture of rectilinear and irregular fields. Areas of dense tree cover are sparse in this LCA, except for a wooded ridge at Lorrige Blake. Pear and apple orchards are often associated with farms. Roads and laneways are edged by a mixture of clipped and mature hedges, often with mature trees. Settlement is not a significant feature of this LCA, with the exception of the village of Newport which is located adjacent to the A38. Scattered farms characterise the rest of the LCA.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The A38 traverses the LCA. Other roads and laneways are minor and connect the settlements within the Cotswold Escarpment to those on the Lowland Plain and the Severn Estuary. The M5 motorway is adjacent to the eastern boundary of the LCA. The LCA is relatively well served by public rights of way. These are mostly footpaths which probably follow the pattern of old communication and trade routes between settlements.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some skylines are broken by electricity pylons but due to a relative lack of development, skylines are often undeveloped and marked by trees. The Lowland Ridges are locally prominent features within the surrounding lowlands. There are views to the Cotswold Escarpment to the east and the elevated landscape of the Forest of Dean on the other side of the Severn Estuary. The LCA is overlooked from the adjacent Cotswolds AONB.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a sense of openness in parts, particularly from areas of higher elevation and where hedges are low. The landscape can feel relatively enclosed in some areas, particularly where mature hedgerows containing fully grown trees bound the often narrow, winding lanes. Traffic noise from the major routes of the A38 and M5 can intrude on the otherwise rural character of the LCA.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several buildings within the LCA are listed, including the farmhouse and gatepiers at Manor Farm which are Grade I listed.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clearly defined landform of the ridges within the Lowland Ridges LCA and the ridgetop setting of Newport within an otherwise sparsely settled and relatively undeveloped landscape make it a distinct place within its surroundings. The north of the LCA is adjacent to the Cotswolds AONB.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Please note: Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the box entitled 'Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)				M-H	
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)		L-M			
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas which are strongly overlooked from the Cotswolds AONB to the east have higher levels of sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>Steep slopes, including those associated with watercourses, have higher levels of sensitivity to solar PV installations, which would be more visually prominent in these locations.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Rolling Valleys



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

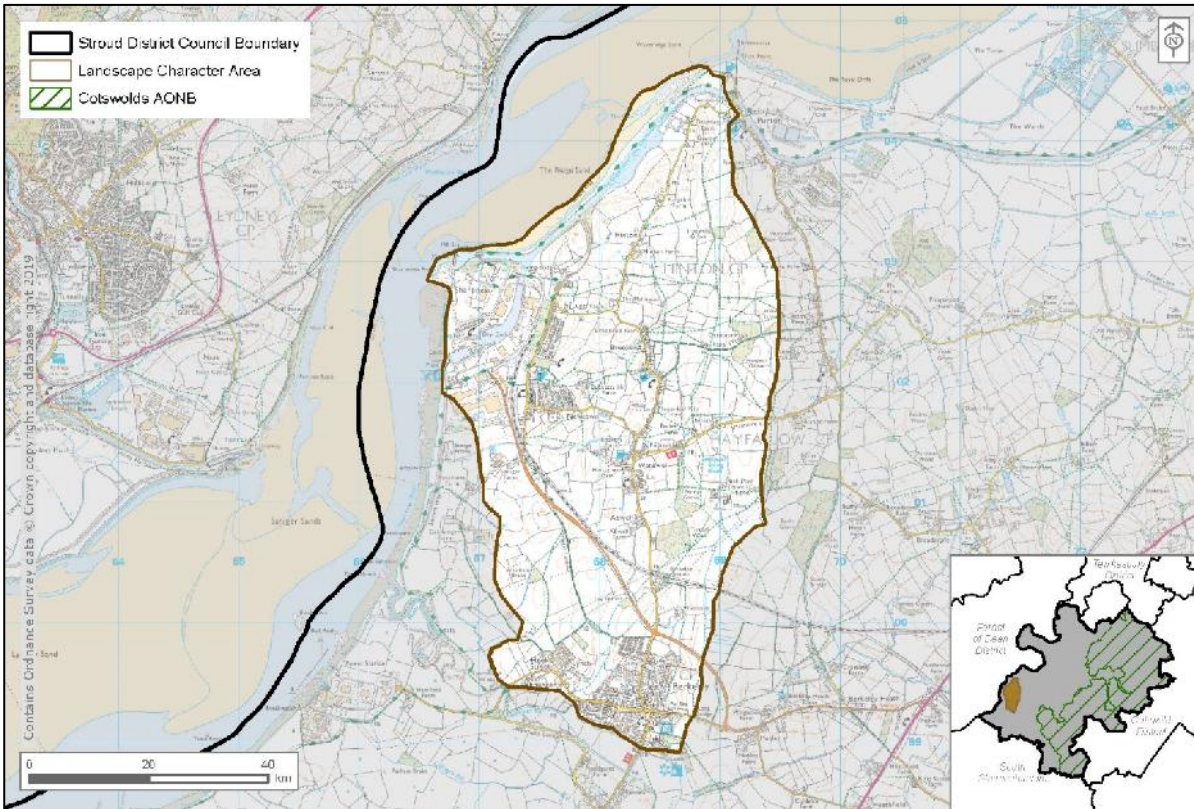
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolling valley topography surrounded by the undulating landform of the Wold Tops LCA. Elevation ranges between 200 and 260 metres AOD. Valleys are characterised by steep lower slopes associated with Holy Brook. Valley heads are often indistinct and open without scrub and woodland.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The upper slopes and valley heads contain large-scale regularly shaped fields. The valley bottom along the course of the Holy Brook is more naturalistic and characterised by several BAP Priority Habitats including deciduous woodland, lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland. Calves Mead Covert Local Wildlife site is situated in the south east. Field boundaries in lower parts of the valley are commonly defined by hedgerows, whereas dry stone walls and infrequent trees are typical of the upper slopes and shallow valley heads. Areas of parkland (particularly at Hazel House) and small woodlands also occur. A rural and naturalistic landscape with settlement limited to occasional farmsteads and three hamlets; the older hamlets of The Camp and Thougham and the 20th century settlement of Whiteway.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access by road is restricted, with several lanes traversing the LCA in the north but none in the south. Many bridleways and footpaths traverse the valleys, with some rights of way following the routes of old lanes.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skylines are often open and uninterrupted by development and often characterised by lines or clumps of woodland and individual trees. There are wide and open views across the valley from open upper slopes. Due to the enclosed landform, there is very limited intervisibility with surrounding LCAs. Despite the sense of enclosure provided by the valley landform, the steep slopes are visually prominent from the opposite valley side and valley floor.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sheltered landscapes of the Rolling Valleys provide a relative sense of enclosure and seclusion in comparison to the surrounding more open and exposed Wold Tops. There are high levels of tranquillity due to a relative lack of sound pollution or built development. Where settlement is present it is visually enclosed and nestled into the landscape, maintaining the rural unbuilt character. The landscape appears well wooded due the presence of trees, both individual and clustered, providing localised visual enclosure.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional farmsteads and old hamlets associated with manor houses contribute to historic landscape character. Most buildings are constructed in a traditional Cotswold vernacular. The landscape has retained its historical rural character with a limited presence of built development, whilst field pattern is largely un-altered. The historic character of settlement here is reflected in the high number of listed buildings, including three Grade II* listed buildings.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open areas on upper slopes with expansive, long-distance views are accented by wooded areas of mature parkland, lines of vegetation following watercourses and small farm woodlands and plantations. The geology of the area is reflected in building materials, with many traditional houses, farm buildings and walls constructed in Cotswold limestone, as well as a presence of traditional Cotswold dry-stone walls.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Please note: Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the box entitled 'Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)					H
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)					H
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)				M-H	
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)					H
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
Open steep valley slopes have higher levels of sensitivity to solar PV installations, as this type of development would be more visually prominent in these locations.					

Landscape Character Area: Sandstone Ridge



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

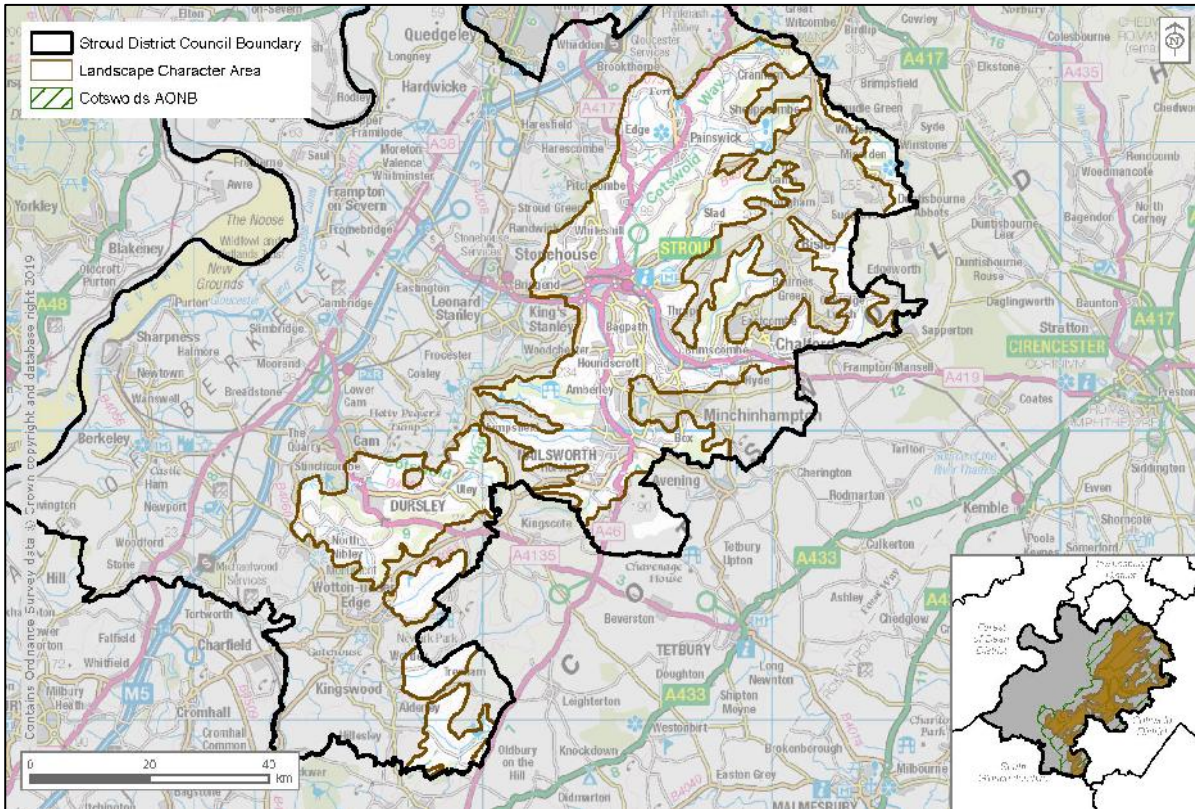
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An undulating ridge which forms part of a larger ridgeline which continues the other side of the Severn Estuary. The northern and western slopes of the ridge tend to be steeper than those to the south and east. The small-scale field pattern contributes to the sense of a small-scale landscape, although between Newtown and Berkeley, the landform becomes broader and fields are large.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use is mixed, with pasture forming the dominant land cover. While the land use is predominantly agricultural, this is also a settled landscape. Development comprises a mixture of industrial buildings, Victorian terraces and modern housing. The landscape is well wooded with hedgerow trees and blocks of mixed woodland concentrated on the eastern side of the ridge. Some of the woodlands are ancient. Hedgerows enclose medium and small-scale fields, providing a strong pattern. Many hedgerows are elm.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The B4066 traverses the southern half of the LCA, terminating at Sharpness. Small lanes cross the undulating hills, connecting farms and settlements. The freight-only railway to Sharpness crosses the LCA. The point at which the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal meets the River Severn lies within the LCA at Sharpness, as well as a stretch of the canal itself. The canal towpath is tracked by a portion of the Severn Way, a long distance walking route. The pattern of footpaths within this LCA is extensive and interconnected and links farms and settlements.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are views east to the Cotswolds AONB escarpment and west across the Severn Estuary towards the Forest of Dean. Views to the River Severn at Sharpness are often obscured by large-scale buildings and structures associated with the docks. The existing wind turbine at Sharpness, pylons and overhead lines are visually prominent on skylines.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a semi-enclosed landscape, with the strong presence of trees, small to medium scale fields and undulating landform contributing to the overall sense of enclosure. There are open views towards the River Severn estuary and the Forest of Dean from the west of the LCA.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some traditional sandstone farmhouses occur along narrow lanes. The docks and associated Gloucester to Sharpness canal and railway line are indicative of the industrial past of the LCA. The moat and fishpond at Wanswell Court is a Scheduled Monument, while Wanswell Court Farmhouse is Grade I listed. There are Conservation Areas at Sharpness Old Dock and at Berkeley Castle. Berkeley Castle and its surroundings within the Conservation Area contain a cluster of listed buildings, including several Grade I listings.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varied settlement types are an important and characteristic feature of this landscape. Industrial architecture at Sharpness Docks is particularly evident and contrasts with the surrounding rural landscape. The location of the LCA adjacent to the Severn Estuary (which is internationally designated for nature conservation) creates a strong sense of place. There are several locally designated Key Wildlife Sites including Berkeley Heath Water Meadows and Wanswell Hay Meadows.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)				M-H	
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)		L-M			
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)				M-H	
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)				M-H	
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>The more undulating landform in the north of the LCA has greater levels of sensitivity to solar PV development, which are likely to be more visually prominent in these locations.</p> <p>Areas characterised by existing large-scale industrial development and/or existing vertical structures such as pylons have reduced sensitivity to small-scale and medium-scale wind turbines.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Secluded Valleys



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

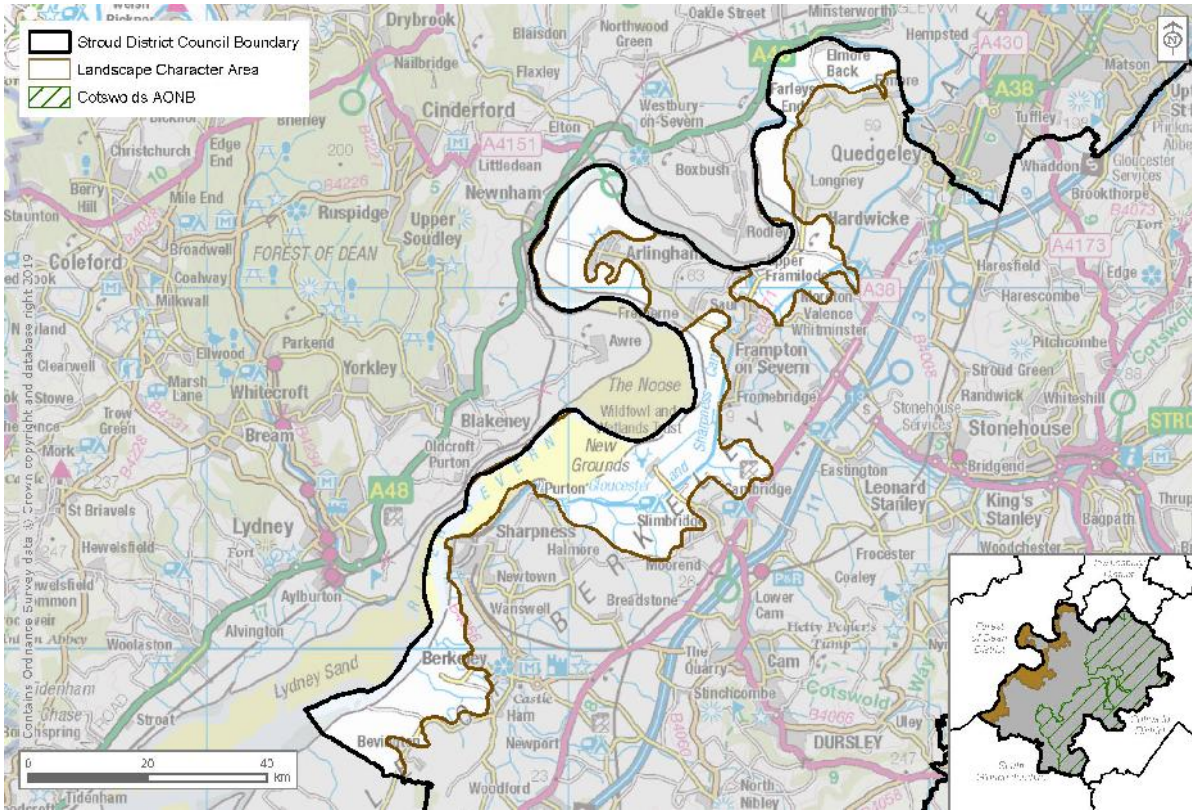
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheltered, narrow valleys with steep sides which cut deep incisions into the Cotswold Escarpment, creating a small-scale and intricate landscape. In several places, the steep upper slopes transition to the Wold Tops LCA. Valleys in southern part of the District tend to be smaller scale. Watercourses are frequent and include the River Frome and Nailsworth Stream which drain towards the River Severn.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pattern and scale of fields is mixed. Fields tend to be more open where valleys meet. Most unwooded land on gentler slopes is pasture and meadow, with arable fields occurring occasionally. Valley floors are often pasture. Extensive tracts of woodland and scrub follow the valley rims. A large proportion is ancient woodland. Woodland tends to be broadleaved on the upper slopes, with gentler slopes supporting commercial forestry. BAP Priority Habitats are frequent and include deciduous woodland, lowland calcareous grassland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland meadows, traditional orchard and extensive areas of woodpasture. Natural heritage designations are frequent and include Key Wildlife Sites, National Nature Reserves, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation and Local Geological Sites. Large scale settlement has a significant presence, with the towns of Stroud and Nailsworth and several other large villages. Settlements are associated watercourses, canals and the railway line on the valley bottom. In more rural areas settlement tends to be concentrated on the gentler slopes.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The A46 runs through the LCA from north to south, branching off into the A4173 at Pitchcombe. Served by an extensive network of roads and lanes winding through valley bottoms and sides, sometimes climbing the slopes with hairpin bends. An extensive network of footpaths are often remnants of historic communications and trade routes. The Wysis Way and Cotswold Way long-distance recreational routes, both traverse the LCA.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skylines are dominated by trees and woodland and are sometimes punctuated by development. There are frequent views of the Cotswold Escarpment and other surrounding ridges. Skyline features within the character area include church spires and towers such as the Grade I listed church of St Mary in Painswick, and the church of St James in Dursley.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong sense of enclosure is provided by the valley sides and tall hedges, many of which contain mature trees. Occasionally a sense of expansiveness occurs in locations where valley hillsides lack extensive tree cover. In most places there are high levels of tranquillity, although urban development can detract from this.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alongside the many listed buildings (including farm buildings and manor houses), the landscape features multiple Roman barrows and Villas several of which are scheduled monuments. There are many Registered Parks and Gardens including Stancombe Park (Grade I), Lypiatt Park (Grade II*) and Miserden (Grade II*), among others. Conservation Areas are frequent within small villages as well as an extensive industrial conservation area following the River Frome, Stroudwater Navigation Canal and the Nailsworth Stream. This industrial heritage is evident in its stone and brick mill buildings.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most land falls within the Cotswolds AONB and exhibits special qualities such as views to the Cotswold Escarpment, limestone grasslands, dry stone walls and buildings of local Cotswold stone. The steep valley sides have limited development and the landscape has retained much of its traditional rural character. There are significant areas of Open Access Land including Rodborough Common.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Please note: Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the box entitled 'Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)					H
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)					H
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)					H
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)			M		
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)				M-H	
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas which are strongly overlooked from the surrounding elevated LCAs have higher levels of sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>Steep slopes which lack woodland coverage and screening, including those on the valley sides, have higher levels of sensitivity to solar PV installations, which would be more visually prominent in these locations.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Severn Vale Grazing Marshland



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

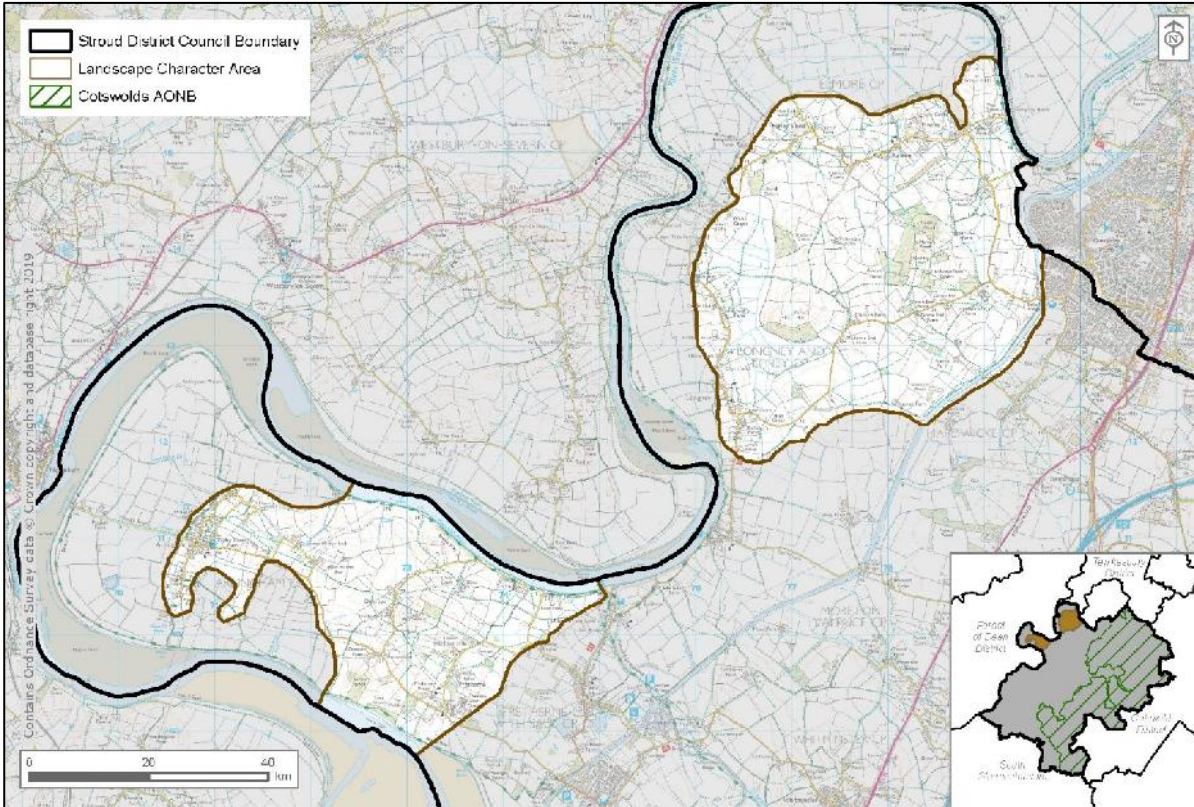
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open flat landscape with extensive views across a large scale rectilinear field pattern. Most of the land is below 10 metres AOD. The flat landform with large fields often divided by ditches or low hedgerows results in a large-scale, expansive landscape.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grazing marshes which cover this landscape are used for cattle and sheep as summer pastures due to waterlogging of the fields in the winter months. Fields often appear large due to the ditches that divide them, although occasionally they are lined with pollarded willows, alder or post and wire fencing. The landscape is interspersed with significant areas of semi-natural habitat including mudflats and wet grassland. Much of this is internationally designated as part of the Severn Estuary SPA/SAC/Ramsar site. The LCA is sparsely populated due to the inherent flood risk. Dwellings are mostly limited to isolated farmhouses, excepting the small settlements of Upper Framilode and Epney.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads through the area are limited and generally consist of single track unenclosed routes, which follow the line of field boundaries and often end in dead ends or at farm buildings. The density of footpaths that cover this area varies, leaving some areas inaccessible. This landscape contains stretches of the Severn Estuary long distance footpath and off-road sections of National Cycle Route 41.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skylines are generally open due to the limited woodland cover within the LCA. Pylons and overhead lines cross various parts of the landscape and form prominent skyline features. There is intervisibility with the elevated woodland of the Forest of Dean located to the west. The Triassic Ridge LCA is prominent in views from the south of the Severn Vale Grazing Marshland. Flood embankments can restrict views of the estuary.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of woodland in the landscape emphasises the large-scale and sense of openness with the LCA. There are areas of localised enclosure where trees occur. A remote and peaceful landscape with strong associations with the estuary and water. There are some detracting features including the large structures associated with Berkeley Power Station and Sharpness to the north.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LCA includes parts of Arlingham Conservation Area and the Stroudwater Canal Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (which extends the length of the canal). The pattern of drained fields around Slimbridge dates from the sixteenth century when the landscape known as The Rhine of New Grounds was drained. The Gloucestershire and Sharpness Canal is an important remnant of the LCA's industrial past.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent areas of water contribute to the scenic character of the LCA, with views over the estuary creating a strong sense of place. The LCA is characterised by a high concentration of wetland habitats, including ditches and the distinctive colours and textures of wet pastures, reed and willow. The unimproved nature of the pastures is an important and valuable characteristic.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Please note: Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the box entitled 'Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)		L-M			
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)			M		
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)				M-H	
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)					H
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)	L				
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)		L-M			
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)			M		
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)				M-H	
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas which are strongly overlooked from higher ground including the Triassic Ridge and Severn Vale Hillocks LCAs have increased levels of sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>Areas characterised by existing large-scale industrial development and/or existing vertical structures such as pylons have reduced sensitivity to small-scale and medium-scale wind turbines.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Severn Vale Hillocks



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

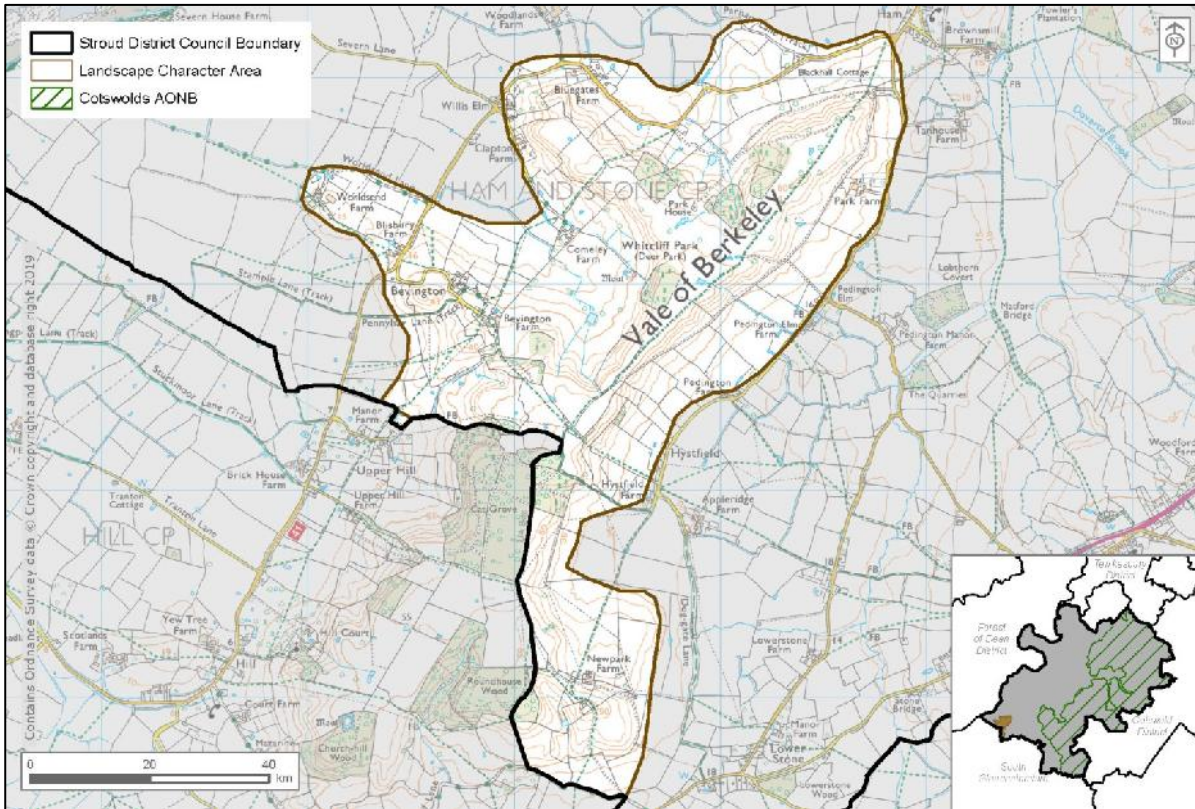
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knolls of higher land composed of clay, head and gravel terraces. Distinctive hills include Monk's Hill, Hockley Hill, Windmill Hill and Barrow Hill. • The undulating landform ranges between 10 metres and 62 metres AOD. • The scale of the landscape varies according to the landform, field pattern and tree cover. Open areas to the north of Overton have a large scale, while well-wooded areas south of Elmore are more enclosed and intricate.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use is a mixture of well-drained pasture land and arable farming. Field pattern varies considerably from small linear strips to medium scale rectangular fields. Field boundaries are also varied, with a mixture of hedgerows, ditches and fencing. • Well wooded with significant blocks of ancient woodland and hedgerow trees. • Settlement consists of a mixture of linear hamlets and a dispersed pattern of relatively large farm complexes.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads comprise narrow sinuous lanes which traverse the landscape. There are no major roads. • An interconnected network of public footpaths provide access, including parts of the Severn Way. National Cycle Route 41 (on road) crosses through the northern section of the LCA. • Part of the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal runs through the LCA.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher land forms a strong visual barrier between River Severn and the Severn Plain. • Pylon and overhead lines cross through both parts of the character area and form prominent skyline features. • Skylines are usually marked by the frequent trees and woodland within the landscape which are often located on elevated ground. Church towers also form occasional features. • There is intervisibility with the Cotswolds AONB to the east and the Forest of Dean to the west.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sense of enclosure varies depending on the landform and woodland cover. • A traditional rural landscape, with few modern influences. • The open slopes of the hills are visually prominent in a local context.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parkland estate character is associated with Elmore Court and Wick Court. • The settlements contain listed churches including the Grade I Church of St Mary in Arlingham, Grade I Church of St John the Baptist in Farley's End and the Grade I Church of St Lawrence in Longney. These often form landmark features.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape has a clear visual unity and identity and is distinct from the surrounding less elevated landform. The location of the LCA adjacent to the Severn Estuary results in a strong sense of place. • Most of the buildings are made from brick and there is little modern development or infill, giving rise to an overall traditional vernacular character.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Please note: Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the box entitled 'Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)				M-H	
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)			M		
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)				M-H	
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas which are steeply sloping and/or overlooked from the wider landscape have increased landscape sensitivity to solar PV installations.</p> <p>Existing pylons near Arlingham create vertical structures on the skyline and increase the ability of the landscape to accommodate small-scale wind turbines in this part of the LCA.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Triassic Ridge



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

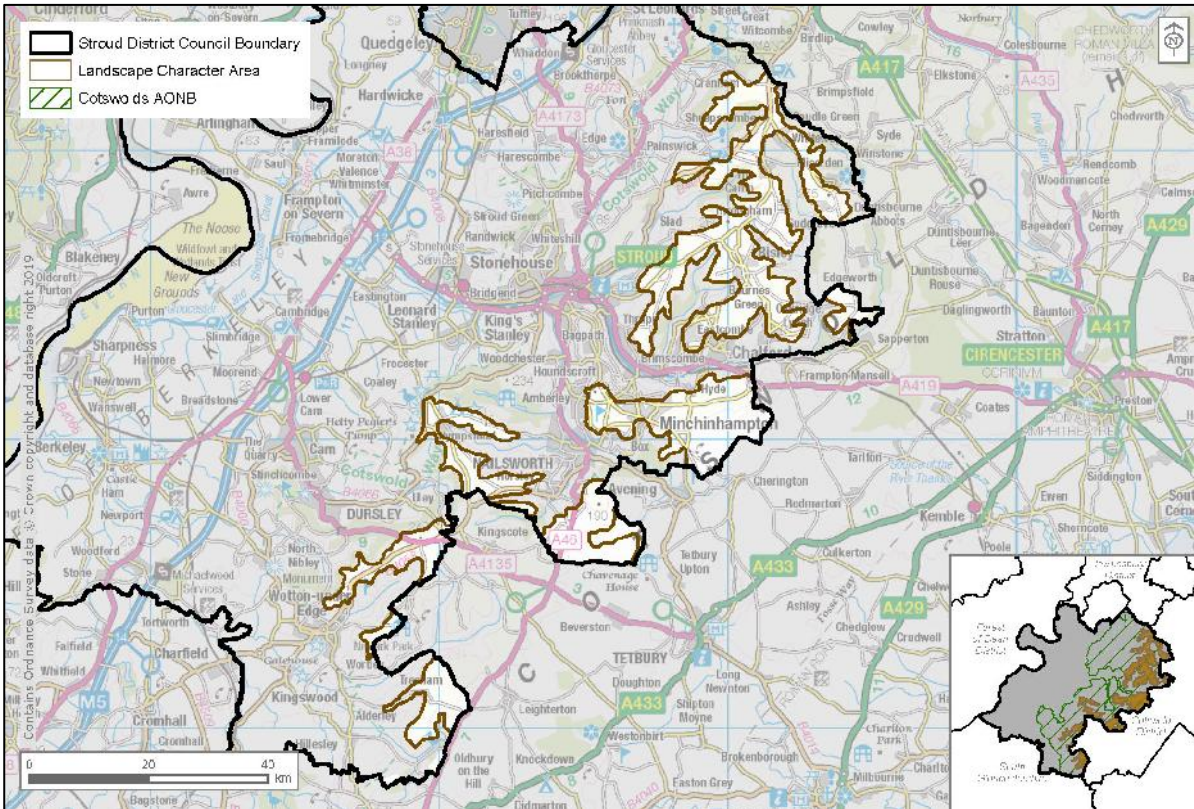
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distinctive ridge rising abruptly out of the gentle topography of the surrounding vale landscape to an elevation of approximately 50-55 m AOD. • The slopes become progressively steeper towards the top of the ridge. Medium-large scale fields sweep up the valley sides.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitcliff Deer Park, closely associated with Berkeley Castle to the north comprises the majority of this landscape. Groups of pine and mature oak give a strong sense of parkland and the park is locally designated as a Key Wildlife Site • Pasture is the dominant land use with rough grazing and scrub restricted to steeper slopes. Mixed woodland blocks occur along the ridge. • Settlement is not a significant feature of this landscape.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a relatively inaccessible landscape. There is one minor rural road which leads to the hamlet of Bevington. There is pedestrian access to the ridge, with one public footpath crossing its length and connecting it to a small local network of others.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ridge forms a prominent feature in the skyline when viewed from the surrounding gentle topography within and beyond this LCA. Individual parkland trees mark the skylines. • The ridge provides an elevated viewpoint offering long distance views towards the distinctive and undeveloped skylines of the Cotswolds AONB escarpment and the elevated landscape of the Forest of Dean.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong sense of openness on top of the ridge and in some of the larger fields on the ridge slopes. • The views in all directions offered by the elevation of the ridge, including those towards the Forest of Dean and River Severn and towards the Cotswolds AONB provide a sense of expansiveness. • Where clumps of trees and hedgerows are more prominent in the landscape there is a greater sense of enclosure.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitcliff Deer Park is designated as part of the Grade II* Berkeley Castle Registered Park and Garden. It is the last operational medieval deer park of the many deer parks noted in the Severn Vale in the 16th century. • There is a moated site within Whitcliff Deer Park which is a Scheduled Monument. • The high brick wall surrounding the park was built in the 18th century when the park was enlarged.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parkland qualities of this LCA, the consistency of its land use and its distinctive topography provide a strong sense of place. • The panoramic views offered by the elevation of this landscape and its position between the Cotswold AONB and the Forest of Dean make it a distinctive landmark feature.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)					H
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)					H
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)				M-H	
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)					H
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Parts of the LCA within the Grade II* Berkeley Castle Registered Park and Garden have high sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>The steep slopes rising to the ridge have higher levels of sensitivity to solar PV installations, which would be more visually prominent in these locations.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Wold Tops



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

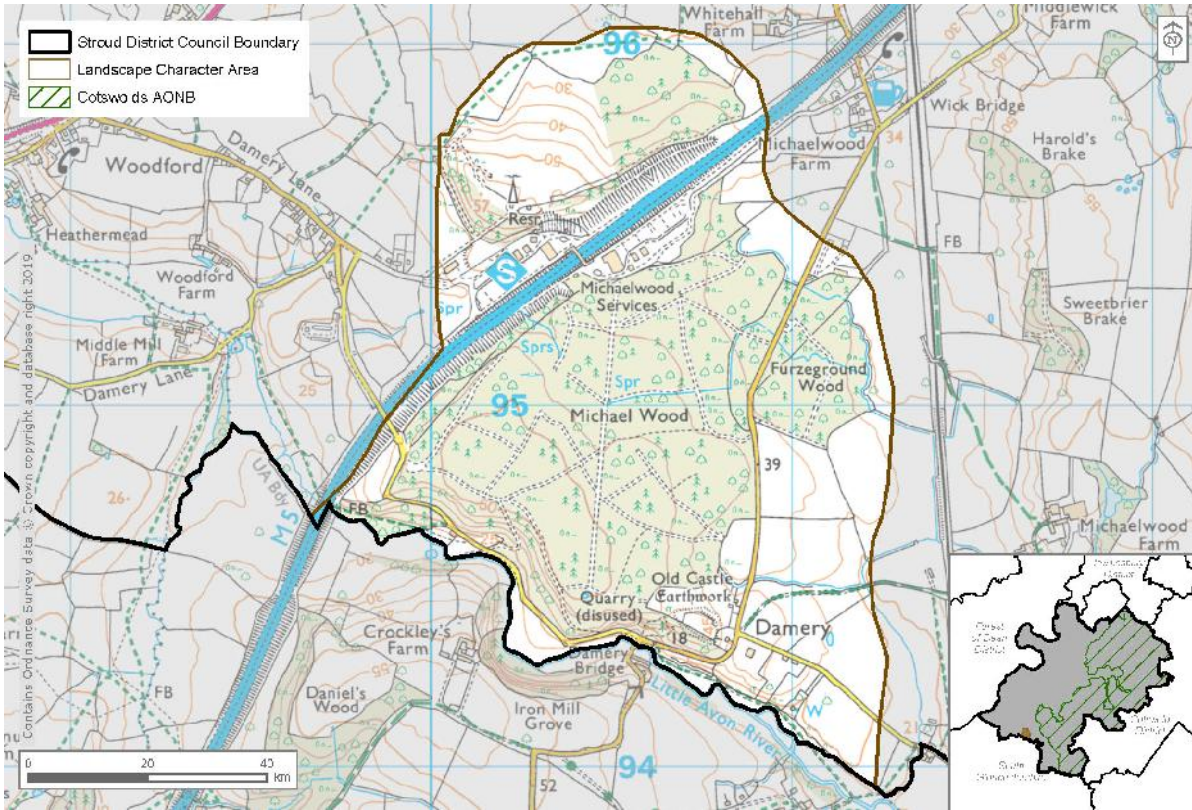
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An elevated, undulating dissected plateau, reaching a maximum elevation of 281 m AOD. Topography is gently undulating and steepens dramatically adjacent to the Secluded Valleys LCA which dissect the Wold Tops LCA and create distinct valley heads. The scale of the landscape tends to be medium-large on the plateau tops, with large fields and low field boundaries. In places, woodland creates enclosure and a perception of a smaller-scale landscape.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale, open fields which are primarily used for arable farming, with mixed boundaries of dry-stone walling, hedges and post and wire fencing. The linear pattern of regular, rectangular enclosure is evidence of a more recently enclosed landscape and contrasts with the surrounding valley LCAs. Settlement sparse and is sited in parts of the landform which provide shelter from the exposed landscape, often adjacent to the Secluded Valleys LCA. In some areas parkland planting influences the otherwise open landscape, as in the vicinity of the Miserden Estates. Some areas of ancient woodland are locally designated Key Wildlife Sites. Other Key Wildlife Sites include semi-natural grassland, such as Cherington Banks.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The A46 runs through a small section of the LCA in the south of the area. Minor rural roads commonly follow the ridgelines and are often lined with dry stone walls. An interconnected network of public rights of way which includes part of the Wysis Way long-distance route. Rights of way often include old laneways/tracks which provide access between settlements.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to its large-scale and relative openness, skylines are often expansive. Built features marking the skyline include the spire of the Church of All Saints in Bisley and a single wind turbine at Lynch Knoll near Nympsfield. In places the LCA overlooks the neighbouring Secluded Valleys and Rolling Valleys LCAs, however this intervisibility can be limited by the presence of woodland at the valley tops. Elsewhere views span the valleys to the elevated ground of adjacent parts of the Wold Tops and Escarpment LCAs. Skylines in the LCA are marked by mature hedgerow trees and telegraph posts, although the large-scale character of this landscape dwarfs these elements. Larger features such as electricity pylons (including Calf Way near Througham and The Firs and Wysis Way near Bisley) are more intrusive on skylines.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong sense of openness contributed to by the presence of significant patches of common land, such as The Park in Minchinhampton and Minchinhampton Common. Where arable farming predominates and field are large, there is a sense of a prairie type landscape which can contribute to a sense of remoteness. Woodland and trees create a localised sense of visual enclosure where present.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roman roads and prehistoric barrows are scattered throughout the area and are often designated as Scheduled Monuments. The landscape provides rural setting to scattered listed buildings. Estates, such as Miserden and Newark Park, and Registered Park and Garden Lypiatt Park, contribute to time depth. Small disused quarries provide evidence of past industrial uses, supporting clumps of trees and blend with the generally broken pattern of woodland.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LCA is within the nationally designated Cotswolds AONB and features epical qualities of the AONB including limestone grassland, dry stone walls, country parks, ancient woodland, limestone building materials and prehistoric archaeology.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)				M-H	
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)					H
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)					H
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)			M		
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)				M-H	
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas with greater intervisibility with surrounding LCAs have an elevated sensitivity to wind developments, which may dwarf the smaller scale intricate valleys the overlook.</p> <p>More steeply sloping areas in the LCA such as where the LCA transitions to the neighbouring valleys have a greater sensitivity to solar PVC development as slopes are visually prominent, particularly in the absence of woodland.</p> <p>Areas with larger scale fields divided by only stone walls w such as near Minchinhampton have an elevated sensitivity to solar developments as walls offer less screening to these developments than areas with mature hedgerows.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Wooded Cambrian Ridge



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

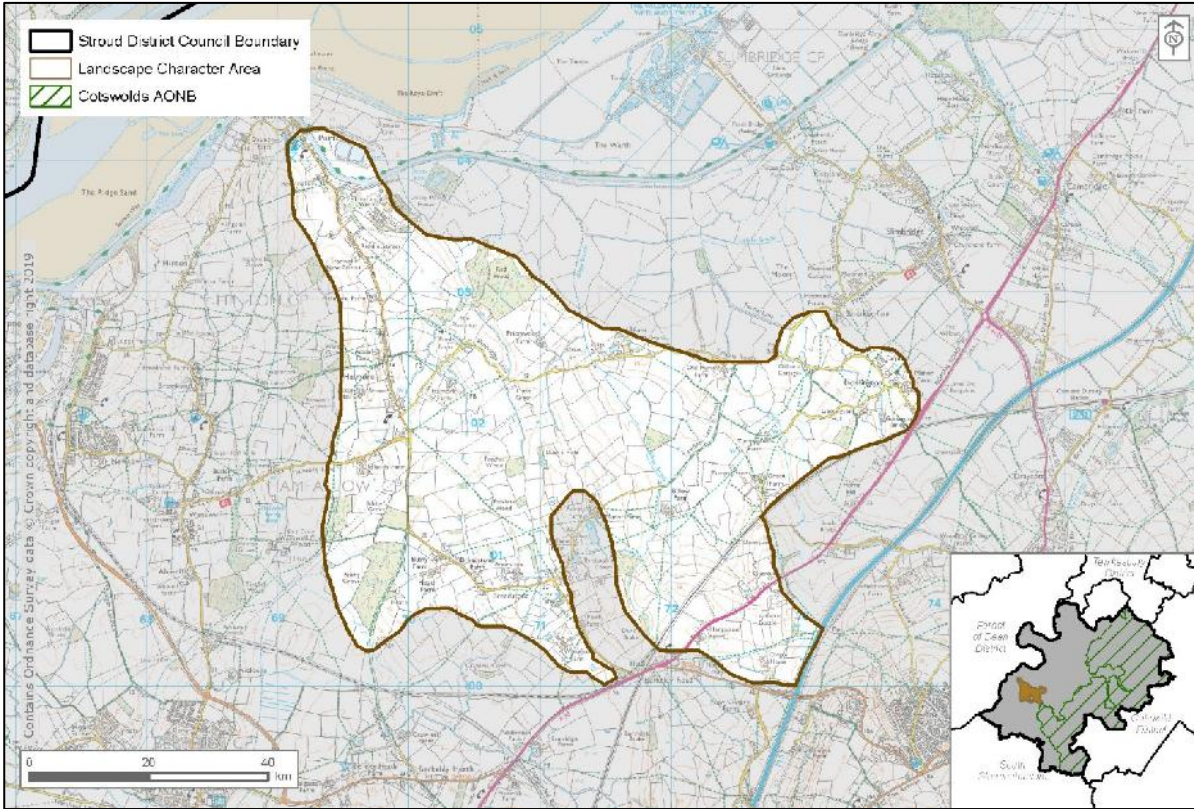
Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent rounded ridgeline (extending beyond the District boundary) within the Severn Vale which rises to approximately 57 metres AOD. • The landform is dissected by Little Avon River forming a deeply incised sinuous valley running east-west (also forming the District boundary with South Gloucestershire). The M5 motorway is in cutting as it passes through the LCA.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The land use is predominately woodland and is comprised of several ancient woodlands. The character of the woods is affected by the high proportion of recent conifer planting. Peripheral areas include pasture and the motorway service station. • Fields tend to be medium scale and are enclosed by low cut hedgerows. • The LCA is mostly unsettled except for a scattering of houses along the lane at Damery.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The M5 motorway (in cutting) is a dominant feature crossing north-east to south-west through the LCA. • Other roads are limited to narrow rural lanes, including a twisting lane which follows the deeply incised river valley and a lane which skirts the eastern edge of Michael Wood. • Occasional footpaths and bridleways provide access, although these are sparse. Michael Wood and Furzeground Wood are private, with no public access.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The woodland and the mast associated with Michaelwood Service Station form local landmarks on skylines, particularly when viewed from the west. • Where views are not restricted by woodland, there are high levels of intervisibility with the distinctive escarpment landform of the Cotswolds AONB to the north-east and the Tyndale Monument at North Nibley.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense woodland creates a strong sense of enclosure. • A traditional rural landscape which is impacted by the influence of noise and movement from traffic on the M5. • The low-cut hedgerows which bound the fields in the east create a sense of openness, with long views across the adjacent countryside towards the Cotswolds Escarpment.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Old Castle Earthworks Scheduled Monument is located at Damery. • Evidence of previous quarrying activity adjacent to the river remains visible in the landscape. • Buildings tend to be constructed in a traditional stone or render vernacular.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite its limited extent this landscape has a strong character and sense of identity. The sinuous incised river valley with its steep banks, woodland and winding rural lane is particularly scenic. • Although the hills rise to only just over 50m, the landform and distinctive woodland form a local landmark within the surrounding lower lying regions. • The views to the Cotswold escarpment over the north of the Kingswood Vale result in a strong sense of place.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)				M-H	
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)		L-M			
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)					H
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
<p>Areas which are strongly overlooked/intervisible with the Cotswolds AONB have higher levels of sensitivity to all the renewable energy development scenarios considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment.</p> <p>Areas which are visually screened by existing woodland and vegetation will have reduced landscape sensitivity to solar PV development. The steep slopes associated with the Little Avon River Valley are highly sensitive to all scales of solar PV development.</p>					

Landscape Character Area: Wooded Lowlands



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

Criteria	Description
Landform and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undulating, low lying landscape which rises to the east. The landscape is carved by small watercourses, including Billow Brook. • In the south east of LCA, the slopes become more complex and dramatic as the landscape transitions to the Escarpment Foothills LCA. • The frequent woodland and small field sizes create a small-scale and intimate landscape.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary land use is pasture, interspersed with some arable. • There is a slightly irregular and small-scale field pattern. Fields are enclosed by hedgerows which contain frequent mature trees. • The LCA has a strong wooded character, with frequent areas of deciduous or mixed woodland occurring amongst the agricultural land. There is also an area of ancient woodland at Red Wood and orchards are often associated with farms. • Minor linear settlements and scattered farms occur throughout the landscape.
Tracks / transport pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The A38 briefly crosses through the south-east part of the LCA, and the M5 is located on the south-eastern boundary. Other roads are minor rural lanes. The mainline railway is parallel with the A38. • Access via a network of footpaths, including parts of the Severn Way which briefly crosses the northern edge of the LCA. Lip Lane, Ironmonger's Lane and Twyditch Lane are old tracks which are now bridleways.
Skylines / intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two parallel routes of pylons and overhead lines cross the landscape from north-east to south-west, and form prominent skyline features. • Skylines are often marked by the frequent trees and woodland within the landscape. • There are expansive views from the higher ground in the south-east of the LCA. • There are views to the distinct coniferous woodland skylines of the Forest of Dean to the west.
Perceptual qualities including sense of openness/enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The frequent woodland and tree cover creates a sense of enclosure and secluded character. From some elevated areas with larger fields separated by low cut hedges there are longer views and a resulting sense of openness. • A traditional agricultural landscape, with few modern influences.
Historic Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature free-standing oak trees in fields create a parkland character in some locations. • Several of the farm buildings in the landscape are Grade II listed. Most of the buildings in the LCA are constructed in a red brick vernacular with slate roofs. • The small-scale and slightly irregular field pattern indicates that some enclosures are likely to be medieval in origin.
Scenic and special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong sense of the historical pattern of this landscape with old farm settlements and orchards located amongst the wooded, small scale pastures. There have been limited modern intrusions, development or agricultural changes.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

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Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Small-scale wind turbines (<60 metres)			M		
Medium-scale wind turbines (60-100 metres)					H
Large-scale wind turbines (100-150 metres)					H
Very large wind turbines (150-200 metres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Small solar PV installation (<5 hectares)		L-M			
Medium solar PV installation (5-20 hectares)			M		
Large solar PV installation (20-50 hectares)				M-H	
Very large solar PV installation (50-100 hectares)					H
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
Areas which are visually enclosed by the landform and existing woodland and vegetation have reduced sensitivity to solar PV development, as the vegetation can contribute to visual screening.					