

4. Enclosed Limestone valley

Character Areas

- 4A Cam and Wellow Brook Valleys
- 4B Bathampton and Limpley Stoke
- 4C Lam Brook and St Catherine's Brook Valleys
- 4D Lower By Brook Valley
- 4E Perrymead Slopes

Key Features

- **Moderately broad but enclosed river valleys with steep sides separated by areas of low limestone plateaux and High Wold Dip-Slope** forming the principal river systems of the south Cotswolds draining into the Bristol Avon and ultimately the Severn.
- **Strong physical enclosure of valleys** creates a secluded and intimate character.
- **Significant areas of woodland, of which a number are ancient semi-natural woodlands particularly on upper and steeper slopes** add to the nature conservation value of the valleys and form a wooded backdrop to many views in the valleys.
- **Areas under both arable and pastoral use, together with areas of rough pasture and scrub** add contrasting textures and colours to the landscape.
- **Fields of varying sizes, dependent on slope, mainly enclosed by hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees** creates a complex mosaic indicating a range of enclosure histories.
- **Road networks following valley bottoms connecting settlements and ascending valley sides to more isolated dwellings** give the valleys a busier and more developed character.
- **Canals, railways and mills signify the industrial heritage of the valleys** and indicate the importance of the valleys as communication routes.
- **Impressive features of Victorian engineering** to retain the valley sides and allow transport corridors to pass through and across valley systems.
- **Surviving vernacular structures such as terraces of weavers' cottages** provide important evidence of the role the valleys played in the early industrial age.



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Landscape Sensitivity

Sections of the enclosed limestone valleys are quiet and rural and retain a distinct secluded character with strong associations of peace, tranquillity and a sense of remoteness. Landscape character here is strong, and these sections of the valleys are highly sensitive to developments that may compromise these characteristics. Of similar sensitivity are the highly visible landscapes on the upper slopes of the valleys.

The heavily settled areas of some valley floors close to major communication routes are generally less sensitive but should be contained within the existing settlement boundaries. New development should be avoided on visible valley sides. The industrial architecture of many valley settlements is an important characteristic feature and therefore the landscape is sensitive to their loss or degradation.

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Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies and Guidelines	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Suburbanisation of existing rural valley settlements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion of the character of existing small valley settlements and possible amalgamation of separate linear settlements along the valley floor. • ‘Tidying up’ of the landscape in and around existing settlements resulting in the replacement of traditional features such as stone walls with uncharacteristic elements such as garden fences. • Upgrading of minor roads and lanes associated with new development and the introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, street lighting and kerbs. • Erosion of distinctive settlement patterns and loss of small fields and network of narrow lanes associated with houses fringing the valley villages. • Illumination of existing ‘dark skies’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the distinctive rural character of valley settlements and the rural road network of narrow hedged lanes. • Avoid the use of ‘urban style’ construction materials and standardised development layouts. • Counteract the impact of degraded urban edges with new woodland planting that links to existing woodlands on the valley slopes. • Conserve and restore traditional hedgerow boundary features on valley slopes bordering settlements, particularly where they form a backdrop to urban areas. • Conserve existing dark skies by avoiding ‘urban style’ lighting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and distribution of new dwellings/development projects in and surrounding existing valley settlements. • Extent of restoration of derelict features such as stone walls, bridges and stone retaining walls. • Areas of new woodlands created. • Hedgerow condition. 	<p><i>LA Development Plan/LDF policies and Design Guidance</i></p> <p><i>FC/Woodland Grant Scheme and WT for creation of new and management of existing woodland</i></p> <p><i>FWAG</i></p> <p><i>Natural England - Environmental Stewardship and remaining Countryside Stewardship agreements.</i></p>

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<p>Expansion of Bath and larger settlements such as Bradford on Avon, Batheaston and Bathford including pressure for new residential, retail and industrial development along the valley floor adjacent to the AONB.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalescence of existing valley settlements and loss of their distinctive identities. • Expansion of valley settlements onto the highly visible valley sides, which would require significant amounts of terracing. • Establishment of new development in presently rural areas within the Enclosed Limestone Valleys Landscape Type. • Loss of village patterns and creation of rural sprawl. • Urbanisation of the valley floor. • Increase in light and noise pollution. • Loss of tranquillity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development should be concentrated within existing built up areas, and be of high density reflecting the characteristic linear settlement forms. • Counteract the impact of degraded urban edges with woodland planting that links into existing valley slope woodlands. • Encourage the use of local limestone and local vernacular building styles. • Promote the conservation and/or re-use of existing stone/ brick buildings of heritage interest. Where converted to new uses buildings must retain their historic integrity and functional character. Sound conservation advice and principles must be sought and implemented. • Conserve characteristics of remote rural areas within the valleys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New woodland planting to reinforce/consolidate existing valley woodlands. • Inventory of re-use of industrial heritage properties. 	<p><i>LA Development Plan/LDF policies and Design Guidance</i></p> <p><i>LA Conservation/Heritage officers;</i> <i>EH</i></p> <p><i>English Partnerships</i></p>

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<p>Isolated development such as new single dwellings on the valley slopes that might compromise rural landscape character, particularly between areas of development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual intrusions introduced to the landscape • Upgrading of minor roads and lanes to and in areas of new development and introduction of suburbanising features such as street lighting. • Erosion of distinctive dispersed settlement character on the valley slopes. • Introduction of 'lit' elements to characteristically dark valley slope landscapes between areas of existing development. • Loss of green space between built up areas on the valley slopes that often provide a green backdrop to settlements on the valley floor. • Suburbanisation of agricultural landscape by the introduction of gardens e.g ornamental garden plants and boundary features, parking areas and conversion of tracks to manicured drives and gateways. • Proliferation of stables and 'white tape' field boundaries for horses and ponies • Loss of tranquillity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve distinctive rural / agricultural landscapes that fringes and forms a backdrop to settlements on the lower valley slopes and valley floor. • Maintain the sense of openness and consider the impact of built development on views to the valley sides from the valley floor and across the valley. • Restore existing stone farm buildings and structures in preference to new built development. Where converted to new uses buildings must retain their historic integrity and functional character. Sound conservation advice and principles must be sought and implemented. • Oppose new housing not for agricultural employment use in open countryside. • Control the proliferation of suburban building styles and materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of historic stone buildings converted and/or restored to residential use. • Number of new isolated dwellings. • Area of green space between built up areas. 	<p><i>LA Development Plan/LDF policies and Design Guidance</i></p> <p><i>EH Guidance</i> <i>Highway Authorities</i> <i>Parish Councils</i></p>
<p>Excessive traffic on minor local roads and lanes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure to improve roads by widening and straightening. • Loss of tranquillity and danger to walkers/riders and other non automotive users. • Damage to verges and roadside boundaries by HGVs and agricultural vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote traffic restriction measures such as lorry routing maps. • Promote shared space and road design to slow and minimise traffic impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of traffic on minor roads/lanes. • Number of traffic restrictions. • Number of shared space schemes implemented. 	<p><i>LA Development Plans/LDF policies</i></p> <p><i>Highway Authorities</i> <i>The Traffic Commissioners</i> <i>NFU & CLA</i></p>

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<p>Road upgrading and improvements, especially of minor country roads, as a result of development or general improvement schemes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of suburban features such as mini roundabouts, kerbs and traffic calming measures. • Use of inappropriate materials. • Loss of roadside hedges and walls. • Loss of verge/roadside habitat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the character of the local road network. • Promote use of design and materials appropriate to local character. • Produce guidance on design and suitable materials. • Promote use of 'shared space' for traffic calming measures in villages. • Seek opportunities to conserve and enhance roadside boundaries and habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of road upgraded or improved. • Number of 'shared space' schemes. • Loss of roadside boundaries/habitat. • Number of schemes that respect/enhance local distinctiveness. 	<p><i>Highways Agency</i></p> <p><i>Highway Authorities</i> <i>Planning Authorities</i></p> <p><i>Parish Councils</i></p>
<p>Dereliction and demolition of old mills, associated structures and landscape features such as mill races, aqueducts etc of industrial heritage interest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of important landmark features and features characteristic of the area's industrial heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert and manage buildings and landscape features of industrial heritage interest. Where converted to new uses buildings must retain their historic integrity and functional character. Sound conservation advice and principles must be sought and implemented. • Conserve historic features. • Conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest associated with mill races, leats and other industrial heritage landscape features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of historic features. • Number of converted buildings. 	<p><i>LA Conservation / Heritage officers</i></p> <p><i>EH</i></p>

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<p>Proliferation and concentration of equestrian establishments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proliferation of stables and other visual clutter such as ribbon fences, jumps, horse boxes, shelters and lighting associated with 'horsiculture'. • Creation of paddocks by sub-dividing fields using post and rail fence or ribbon fences. • Deterioration in pasture quality and over grazing • Pressure to provide new housing for staff and owners. • Excessive use of local roads and paths by horses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourage horse paddocks in visually prominent roadside and valley bottom and valley side locations. • Encourage sensitive design and location of new equestrian facilities. • Oppose over concentration of equestrian ventures in one area. • Ensure all new ventures provide accommodation within new stable buildings. Oppose new housing for owners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of horse paddocks. • Number of equestrian ventures in an area. • Numbers of horses on roads/bridleways. 	<p><i>LA Development Plan/LDF policies</i> <i>British Horse Society/Pony Club</i></p>
<p>Introduction of vertical elements such as communication masts, wind turbines, electricity pylons and large road signs, particularly on valley sides and skylines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of visually intrusive 'urban' features to rural landscapes. • Loss of open character. • Introduction of unnatural movement and loss of tranquillity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve open character by objecting to the development of new masts, wind turbines etc, where these would adversely affect views. • Seek to minimise size and number of roadsigns. • Ensure any wind turbine developments in neighbouring LCTs and areas beyond AONB do not adversely affect views to and from the AONB. • Ensure alternative options have been fully considered. • Minimise impact by locating new communication masts on existing structures or by using existing masts. • Set masts etc against trees. • Bury cables underground. • Consider other renewable energy technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of masts, turbines, roadsigns etc. 	<p><i>LAs - LDF/Development plan policies</i></p> <p><i>Highways Agency, Dept for Transport, Highway Authorities</i></p>

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<p>Loss of vernacular architectural features such as old barns and industrial heritage features such as mills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erosion of the historic character of the landscape and important links to the area's industrial past. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the conservation and/or encourage the restoration of existing stone buildings and industrial buildings of historic or heritage interest in preference to new built development in rural areas where appropriate. Encourage opportunities for the conversion of mills and barns to new visitor uses and local industries. Stabilise ruins and enhance their immediate setting to increase the contribution they make to local landscape character. Conserve races, mill ponds, leats and meadows which relate to mill sites recognising and enhancing their nature conservation interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of existing stone buildings converted and/or restored. Number of industrial heritage buildings converted and/or restored. 	<p><i>LA Conservation/Heritage officers;</i> <i>EH</i></p>
<p>Piecemeal decline in woodland cover and species rich grasslands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of the wooded character of some stretches of the valleys and the setting of some villages. Degradation and loss of woodland habitats, ancient semi-natural woodland, species rich grasslands and wildlife corridors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve, enhance and restore existing valley side woodlands through effective long term management and replanting, but avoiding areas of nature conservation interest such as species rich grasslands. Give priority to planting on areas where woodland cover has been lost, particularly on arable areas, and encourage natural regeneration, particularly in proximity to ancient woodlands. Create areas of wet woodland and riverine habitats along the course of rivers and streams. Encourage farming practices that protect areas of species rich grassland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of broadleaved ancient woodland. Area of new woodlands created. Area of species rich grassland. 	<p><i>FC/Woodland Grant Scheme and WT for creation of new and management of existing woodland</i> <i>LA in conjunction with NE/LWT for management of species rich grasslands</i> <i>FWAG/NFU/CLA guidance</i> <i>Natural England - Environmental Stewardship and remaining Countryside Stewardship agreements</i> <i>EA/management and 'Local Contribution' initiatives for river habitat enhancement</i></p>

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<p>Agricultural intensification along the valleys and in the neighbouring uplands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field amalgamation along the valley bottoms and loss of hedgerows in favour of post and wire fences. • Eutrophication of water courses from farm run off resulting in a decline in biodiversity of riverine habitats. • Increased risk of flooding from agricultural run off. • Localised poaching of wet riverside pastures by sustained grazing of large herds. • Increased conversion of pasture to arable land. • Loss of already limited areas of ancient broadleaved woodland and species rich grasslands due to agricultural improvement. • Damage to and loss of archaeological sites and field monuments from conversion of pasture to arable and from intensification of grazing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect watercourses from the effects of eutrophication by ensuring farmers adopt mandatory requirements for the application of fertilisers and pesticides within NVZ, and the creation of buffer zones. • Monitor river nutrient levels. • Encourage initiatives that seek to restore or enhance the quality of watercourses and their habitats. Including low intensity grazing along riverside meadows. • Object to proposals to convert pasture to arable where archaeological sites/field monuments may be lost or damaged. • Encourage low intensity grazing or restrict access by livestock where archaeological sites/field monuments may be lost or damaged. • Discourage conversion of pasture to arable land. • Protect remnant areas of ancient woodland and species rich grassland. • Encourage small-scale farming and encourage woodland and boundary management. • Ensure that new farm buildings do not have an adverse visual impact on the wider landscape. • Seek to conserve traditional farm buildings. • Encourage hedgerow management and protection of traditional field patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and distribution of specific 'healthy river' indicator species. • River nutrient levels. • Length of hedgerows. • Area of permanent pasture. • Area of ancient woodland. • Area of species rich grassland. 	<p><i>FWAG/EA re NVZ and riverine habitat management and monitoring</i></p> <p><i>Natural England - Environmental Stewardship and remaining Countryside Stewardship agreements</i></p>

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<p>Decline in grazing stock on valley slopes and areas of common land (Bannerdown).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrub encroachment and loss of species rich grassland due to invasion of dominant grass species. • Development of secondary woodland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve areas of open pasture and common. • Consider traditional management regimes to limit scrub encroachment on areas of semi natural grassland. • Re-introduction of grazing on semi-natural grasslands/improvement of existing grazing regimes. • Produce guidance on scrub management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of scrub on upper slopes and common land. • Area of species rich grassland. • Area of semi-natural grassland under appropriate management. 	<p><i>FWAG/NFU/CLA guidance</i> <i>Natural England - Environmental Stewardship and remaining Countryside Stewardship agreements</i> <i>Local land owners</i> <i>AONB project - aerial photography</i></p>
<p>Planting of energy crops such as Miscanthus, short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss or seasonal interruption of views particularly from roads and public rights of way and views along the valley. • Loss of permanent pasture. • Damage to archaeological sites and historic landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure energy crops are not planted where they would restrict or intrude into views, particularly open views across the landscape and on skyline sites. • Do not plant on semi-natural habitats, permanent pasture or on sites with national and local BAP species that could be affected in a negative way. • Do not plant on sites where archaeological sites could be damaged or where significant historic landscapes would be adversely affected or on sites where features of geological or geomorphological importance would be obscured. • Produce guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of energy crop planted. • Number of sites impacting on BAP species. • Number of archaeological sites and areas of historic landscape affected. • Number of geological and geomorphological sites affected. 	<p><i>FWAG/NFU/CLA guidance</i> <i>DEFRA Guidelines</i> <i>County archaeologists, Wildlife Trusts, Geoconservation Trusts and RIGS Groups</i></p>

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Climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to lead to an increase in the severity and frequency of storm surges and flooding of valley meadows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect unstable river banks to avoid erosion through storm surges through proposals which maintain the natural character of the river. • Ensure any flood defence construction takes account of landscape character and local distinctiveness. • Prevent development on floodplain meadows to enable river to flood wet meadows to reduce flash flooding further downstream. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor habitats and species associated with river and riverside habitats for signs of change. • Frequency of flood events. 	EA/management and 'Local Contribution' initiatives LA Ecologist/LWT/BAP & HAP
Reversion of previous industrial landscapes to rural and unmanaged state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of blackthorn scrub and sycamore thickets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage scrub clearance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of sycamore thicket and scrub. 	<i>LA/LWT/BCTV initiatives</i>
<p>Development of scrub and trees on roadside verges.</p> <p>Mowing of verges at inappropriate times of the year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of views from the public highway. • Loss of open character. • Loss of roadside grassland habitat. • Damage to hedges and dry stone walls. • Loss of characteristic flora. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key views from roads. • Manage/remove verge scrub and trees. • Reintroduce appropriate verge management and mowing. • Ensure appropriate timing of mowing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of key views opened up. • Length of verge cleared. 	<p><i>Highway Authorities</i></p> <p><i>Local authority landscape and ecological officers.</i></p> <p><i>Landowners adjacent to the highway.</i></p>

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<p>Damage to field monuments and archaeological sites and the historic environment from farming operations, tree root damage, woodland management operations and tree planting and recreational activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to important archaeological sites and important landscape features. • Loss of traditional field patterns. • Loss of traditional field boundaries, particularly dry stone walls and hedgerows. • Loss of locally distinctive features such as stone stiles. • Damage caused by livestock. • Damage caused by recreational activity. • Encroachment of scrub onto archaeological features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform landowners of important archaeological sites. • Protect all upstanding archaeological sites and consider the impact of development on their landscape setting. • Restore the wider setting of key monuments to ensure that they do not read as islands amidst a sea of arable farming. • Raise awareness of the historic environment and of the SMR as a source of information. • Provide guidance on managing the historic environment to farmers and land owners. • Retain traditional field patterns and field boundaries. • Ensure tree planting does not take place on archaeological features. • Control scrub and manage existing trees on archaeological features to minimise damage for example by root damage or wind-blow. • Minimise or prevent damage to the historic environment by recreational activity by working with landowners to prepare site management plans and if necessary limit access. • Repair badly eroded features such as earthworks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of damage to archaeological features. • Number of archaeological features under suitable management. • Number of sites with management plans. • Take up of ES schemes which include measures to conserve the historic environment. 	<p><i>EH/LA Co Archaeologist</i></p> <p><i>FWAG/NFU/CLA re guidance to farmers</i></p> <p><i>LA LDF/Development Plan policies</i></p> <p><i>Natural England - Environmental Stewardship and remaining Countryside Stewardship agreements</i></p> <p><i>FC & EWGS</i></p>
<p>Loss of and damage to geological features due to tree growth, erosion and change of land use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of sites that provide an understanding of the Cotswold landscape • Loss of visible features such as rock faces and river meanders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify important geological features and ensure they are conserved and appropriately managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of geological features in good condition. 	<p><i>RIGS Groups/Geoconservation Trusts</i></p> <p><i>Universities/study groups</i></p> <p><i>Natural England/FWAG/CLA</i></p>