

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Lulsgate Plateau

This area contains the Ashton Vale landscape zone and western part of the Dundry and Plateau landscape zone. The existing woodland cover for the whole area is approximately 20%.

The steep slopes up to the Lulsgate Plateau area to the west of Dundry are covered in the largest woodlands in the Forest. The undulating top is dominated by Bristol Airport. Close to Bristol the land-form becomes less pronounced and the woodland cover is reduced, leaving the A38 and the edge of Bristol as intrusive elements in the countryside.

Ashton Vale occupies the low ground between the Severn Ridge and the Lulsgate Plateau. This is a slightly undulating pastoral landscape with little woodland, small fields and strong, low hedges. Being the low ground between two higher areas, the Vale contains a concentration of settlements and transport routes which fragment it. On the edge of Bristol, the tree cover is drastically reduced, and previously tipped ground and the A370 become visually intrusive.

The farmland is predominantly grade 3 with areas of grade 1 and 2 in the Ashton Vale near Nailsea. The airport, reservoirs, quarrying and tipping are significant non-agricultural land uses. There are fewer tenanted farms than in most of the Forest; the range of farm sizes is fairly typical. As in the rest of the Forest, the predominant farm type is dairying and, although this is decreasing, it has not been at such a rate as in some parts of the Forest. There has been an increase in the beef herd and in sheep farming.

There are large areas of ancient woodland and significant areas of existing nature conservation interest, particularly in association with common land and unimproved grassland. These tend to be concentrated in the west of the area.

Barrow Court and Felton Common are the most evident historic landscape features.

The recreational use of the area is currently very limited and there is great potential for new recreational use, particularly in association with the existing woodland and the Barrow reservoirs.

The priorities in this area are to:

- improve the urban edge of Bristol visually, largely through new woodland establishment to create a well-wooded landscape;
- encourage the management of the existing woodland;
- improve the boundaries of the airport visually;
- establish new recreational routes through the area and particularly between Nailsea and Bristol and between Bristol and the woodlands near Cleeve;
- promote the recreational use of the existing woodland and Barrow reservoirs;
- improve the wildlife corridors, particularly by extending woodland cover towards Bristol, and improving the management of brook corridors;
- improving management of existing hedgerows, with new tree planting and pollarding in the Ashton Vale.

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Lulsgate Plateau

Fig. 18.5

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Copyright. (Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. South Gloucestershire Council L100652/2002



Click to open hi-res version

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Lulsgate Plateau



1. Cleeve



2. Lulsgate



3. Barrow



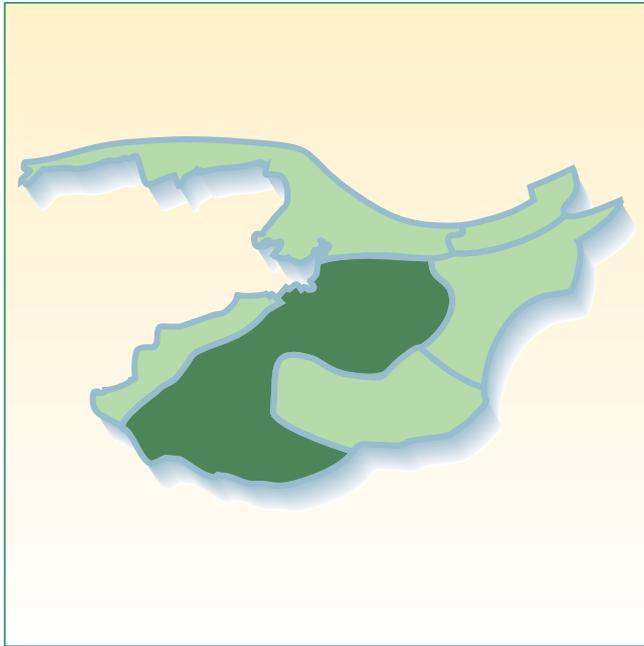
4. Brockley



5. Yanley

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Lulsgate Plateau

Cleeve



Description

A fragmented plateau land-form with deep combes cutting into the higher ground. Large areas of woodland are concentrated on the steep slopes and within Goblin, Brockley and Bourton combes, which have high landscape, wildlife and recreational value. The subzone includes two of the largest woods in the whole Community Forest, one of which is over 450 ha. Farmland exists within the woodland framework but is largely concentrated on the top of the plateau around the airport. The north of the area is being extensively quarried.

Existing woodland cover: 36.4%.

Local strategy

Conservation of the existing well-wooded character, with new tree planting complementing the existing structure and hedgerow improvements enhancing farmland structure. There is an opportunity to enhance the view from roads and to increase tree cover in the less well-wooded area to the north of the airport.

Proposed woodland cover: over 36%.

Woodlands

- Management of existing woodlands will be promoted and opportunities for additional recreation use will be investigated.
- Small-scale new woodland planting will be concentrated to the north of Bristol Airport and in small copses within agricultural areas, thus strengthening the existing hedgerow pattern.

Wildlife

- A third of the woodland is ancient, over 300 ha in total. A large area of the woodland is an SSSI and much of the rest is of wildlife interest.
- Linking existing woodlands will be a priority in this area; a particular opportunity exists between Scars and Bourton Combe.

Heritage

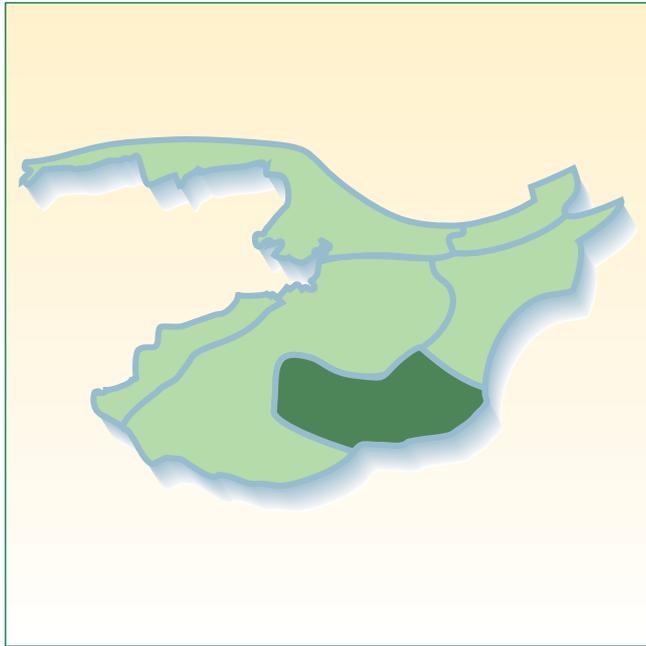
- Barrow Court is on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.
- The hill-top settlements along the top of the scarp slopes could become points of interest in any development of walking routes through the woodland.

Recreation

- This area has great recreational potential with large areas of existing woodland, which could accommodate significant public use. However the nature conservation interest would need to be given careful consideration in the creation of any new recreational uses.
- Any recreational development of the woodland should include a recreational route linking the area with Bristol and Nailsea.

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Lulsgate Plateau

Lulsgate



Description

The plateau top is dominated by Bristol Airport and the A38 with its associated clutter of fencing and signage. The surrounding fields are large with poor hedgerows and little tree cover. Felton Common, an open exposed area of unimproved grassland, is an important local feature. The area has a well-populated and busy character.

Existing woodland cover: 1.4%.

Local strategy

Landscape improvements including increased tree cover, aviation controls permitting. There will be particular emphasis on visually improving the airport boundary and the new route of the A38. Landscape improvements to the golf course should include small-scale new woodland planting of non-exotic species. The common will be managed for its wildlife and recreational value.

Proposed woodland cover: 10-20%.

Woodlands

- Encourage co-ordinated management of existing woodlands and extend these with new planting to create a network of woods, particularly to the north of the airfield, and on sloping ground to the south and east of Felton Common.
- Improve hedgerow management, including the establishment of new hedgerow trees.

Wildlife

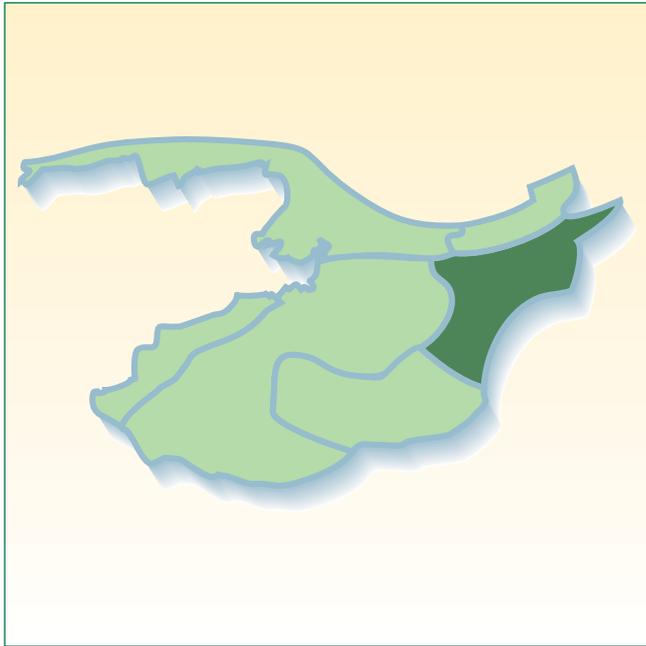
- This area forms the boundary between a well-wooded landscape to the west and an area of little woodland cover to the east. It is therefore important to reinforce wildlife corridors across the area. To some extent, this can be achieved by extending the woodland network, but, where flight restrictions preclude this, a high emphasis should be put on developing a strong network of hedgerows which could also enhance the chain-link boundary fences to the airport.

Recreation

- Felton Common is a well-used local recreational resource.
- The Round Avon Ride crosses the north of the area.
- The golf course and plane-spotting bring people into the area. Facilities for these users should be enhanced.
- Circular walks should be developed from Felton.

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Lulsgate Plateau

Barrow



Description

This gently sloping lower part of the plateau on the edge of Bristol has mixed agricultural use, with three large reservoirs and a water-treatment works. High Ridge common has a strong local identity. The A38 and A370 and the urban edge of Bristol are visually intrusive. There is a poor hedgerow pattern and few hedgerow trees. The large area of woodland around Barrow Hospital is of limited visual impact. There are two quarries in the south of the area.

Existing woodland cover: 6.2%.

Local strategy

Significant landscape change to create a well-wooded area of countryside with recreational use on the edge of Bristol. Major roads and the water works will be contained within a network of existing and new woodland. The wedge of land adjacent to Bedminster Down will be a focus for landscape improvement works, as will the A38 road corridor. Strengthen hedgerow patterns with related planting and enhance the link into the city from Bedminster Down.

Proposed woodland cover: over 30%.

Woodlands

- Encourage the management of existing woodland.
- Develop a network of small and medium-scale woodland especially on the steeper slopes down to Ashton Vale.
- There is an opportunity for community woodland to be developed and managed by local people.

Wildlife

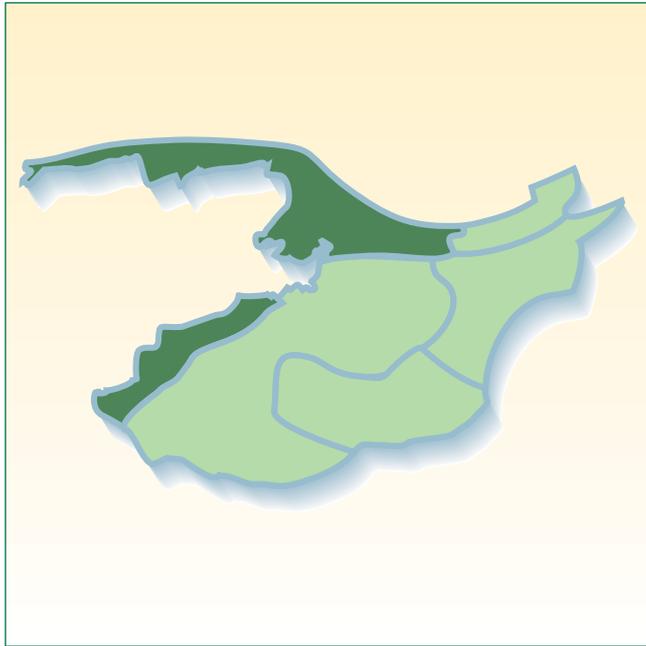
- Conserve existing sites of wildlife value associated with reservoirs and grassland.
- Develop wildlife corridors from Barrow Woods into the urban area and enhance Colliter's Brook as a wildlife corridor.
- Promote conservation management of both woodland and open habitats.

Recreation

- Recreational use of Bedminster Down and Highridge Common will be enhanced with improved links into the countryside and circular walks.
- The Community Forest Path will be used to create links to the countryside to the north and south.
- A gateway site will be investigated on Bedminster Down, with good pedestrian access established through to Windmill Hill.
- A golf course has been developed which will cover a large part of this area.
- The reservoirs are currently used for fly-fishing, and Bristol Water plc has planning permission to develop one of the reservoirs as a water sports centre offering day-ticket dinghy sailing, windsurfing and canoeing; it is hoped to develop the site within the next few years.

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Lulsgate Plateau

Brockley



Description

Ashton Vale is a pastoral valley bottom area, with small fields, a fairly strong hedgerow structure but little woodland cover. Being the easiest route between two areas of high ground, it contains a concentration of settlements and transport routes. Views up to wooded slopes are an important feature.

Existing woodland cover: 3.1%.

Local strategy

Landscape improvements towards an attractive pastoral valley with a generally open character within a framework of small-scale tree planting and regenerated field boundaries. More extensive planting should be restricted to urban edges and along the A370, and to enhance the line of the railway line.

Proposed woodland cover: 10-20%.

Woodlands

- New woodland establishment will be within the existing field pattern of a scale similar to Watercress Wood.
- There will be improved management of existing hedgerows and the re-establishment of pollarded willows.
- Energy crops may be appropriate in this area.

Wildlife

- The watercourses will be promoted as wildlife corridors and wherever possible these will be linked to the wooded slopes on either side.
- Lower intensity agriculture will be encouraged adjacent to watercourses.

Heritage

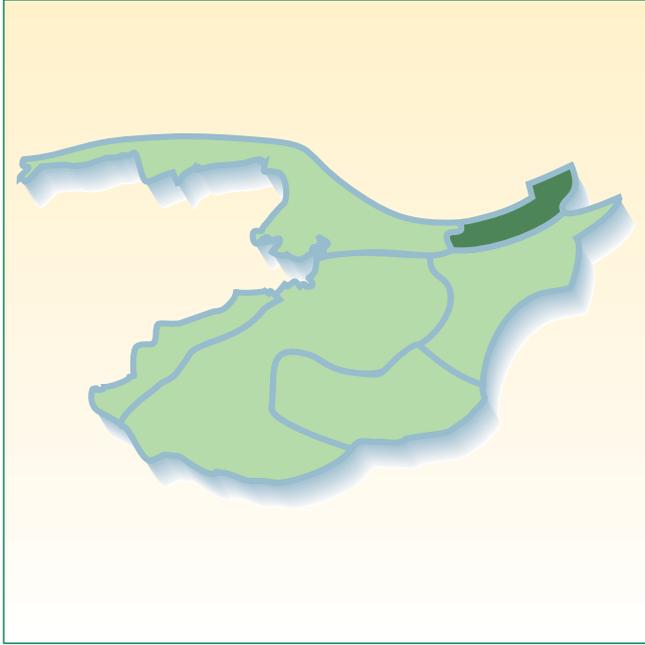
- The conservation areas of Backwell, Yatton and Congresbury are adjacent to this area.

Recreation

- The Round Avon Ride crosses the area close to Nailsea.
- There is a need to create a recreational route along the vale from Nailsea to Ashton Gate but access is most difficult at the pinch-point in the vale, containing two main roads and a railway line.
- There is an opportunity to create a gateway at Backwell Lake with recreational links to the wooded slopes to the north and south.
- The railway line should be promoted for access out of the city to the area. Yatton Railway station is also a good link with the Cheddar Valley Railway Way which links the Community Forest with the Mendips.
- Creating a cycle path along the disused railway line between Clevedon and Yatton would be a valuable recreational link adjacent to the Community Forest area.

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Lulsgate Plateau

Yanley



Description

Ashton Vale is an urban fringe landscape, with large fields, old landfill sites, poor or non-existent hedgerows and little or no tree cover. The industrial edge of Bristol is a prominent feature and the A370, railway and pylon lines fragment the area. Views up to Ashton Court and the well-wooded Severn Ridge are an important feature.

Existing tree cover: 0.9 %.

Local strategy

Significant landscape change towards a well-wooded recreational area through substantial tree planting, linking to adjacent woodland. Screen planting is needed to absorb the intrusive urban edge and reclaimed land. Views to and from the A370 will be improved.

Proposed woodland cover: over 30%.

Woodlands

- Extensive planting reflecting local land-form to establish a network of woodland managed for conservation and recreation.
- Opportunity for extensive community woodland development with the involvement of local people and substantial public access.

Wildlife

- A major objective in this area will be to enhance Ashton Brook and Colliter's Brook as wildlife corridors; this will include developing wildlife links through to Barrow Woods, a substantial area of ancient woodland.

Heritage

- There is a conservation area at Yanley.

Recreation

- The Community Forest Path crosses the area, creating a good link through to Ashton Court and Dundry. There is a need to develop circular walks from this path and to create urban links with it.
- Recreational links should also be developed along the valley bottom towards Nailsea; a cycle path along this route might also be used by commuters.
- Improved access to the countryside to the south of Long Ashton.