

CHAPTER 18 - Strategy Area: Northavon Vale

This area correlates with the Northavon Vale landscape zone. The current level of woodland cover in the area is very low, being approximately 2.1%.

The Northavon Vale is a gently undulating basin of low-lying ground, with numerous streams and brooks, between the Severn Ridge and the slightly higher ground of the Pucklechurch Ridges before it reaches the Cotswold escarpment. Close to the urban area, the landscape quality is very poor, major roads being the dominant elements. Further north the agricultural character remains, but pylon lines are intrusive. The Frome Valley is an attractive finger of countryside penetrating into the urban areas.

Agricultural land is primarily grade 3, with a small band of grades 1 and 2 to the west of Winterbourne. The area has a high incidence of small tenanted farms, mostly under 20 ha. Dairying is the major full-time farm type, but, as elsewhere in the Forest, this is decreasing; cattle and sheep, arable cropping and horticulture are becoming more prevalent.

As well as being an important landscape feature, the Frome Valley is also one of the strongest wildlife corridors into the city.

Most of this area was in the ancient Forest of Kingswood. Much of the historic interest is concentrated along the River Frome; other elements include the commons and relics of early mining in the north of the area.

The M4 now forms the northern edge of Bristol and creates a considerable barrier to recreational movement out into the countryside. The only attractive route across the motorway within the area is along the Frome Valley walkway. The largest area of public open space is at Oldbury Court.

The priorities in this area will be to:

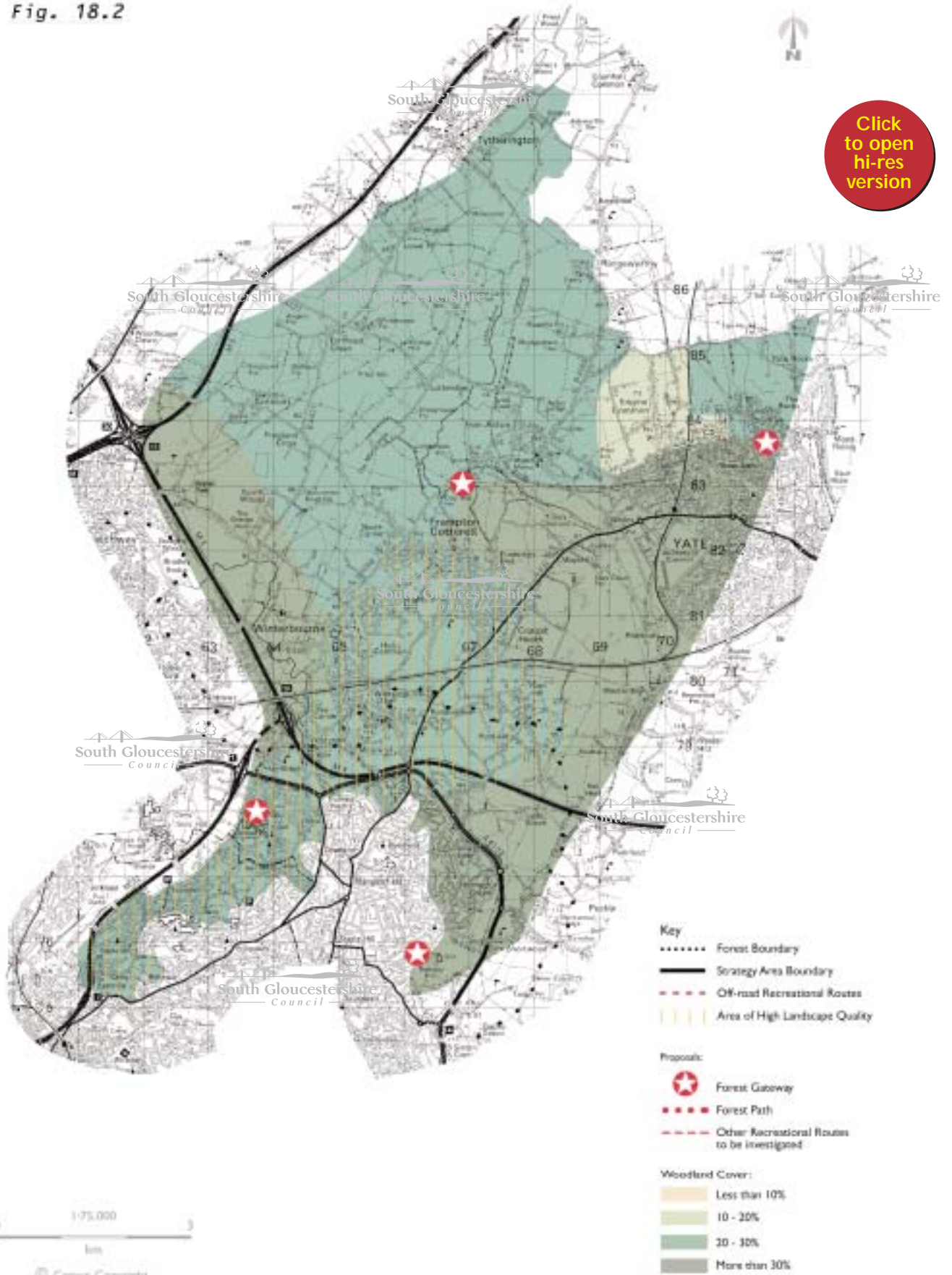
- strengthen the existing agricultural pattern in the north of the area, with small woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees;
 - improve the recreational use of the area, special attention being given to improving access across the M4 and railways;
 - create new areas of woodland for recreation;
 - create a network of wildlife corridors across the area.
- create an attractive, robust transition between the northern edge of Bristol and the countryside, largely through new woodland planting and extending existing woods through natural regeneration;
 - promote an attractive woodland setting to new development at Emerson's Green with good recreational links out into the countryside;
 - establish new woodland to improve the land visually between Coalpit Heath and Yate;
 - strengthen and enhance the existing character of the Frome Valley and promote improved management;



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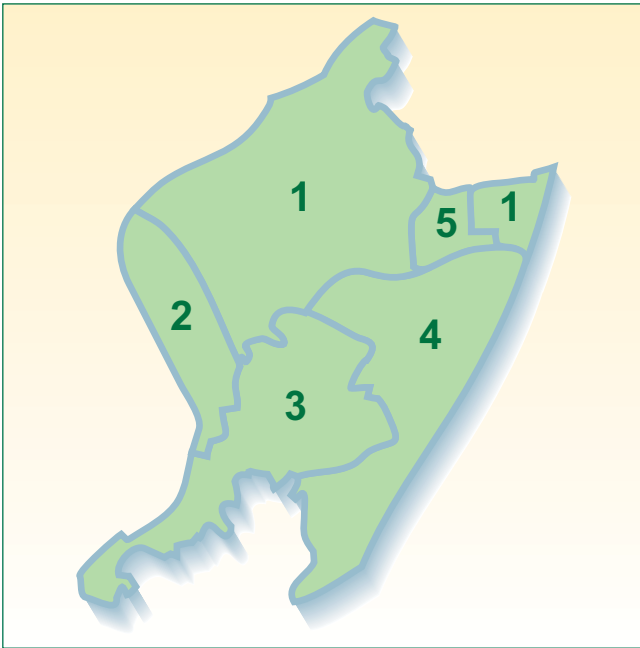
Fig. 18.2

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1. Latteridge



2. Bradley Stoke



3. Frome Valley



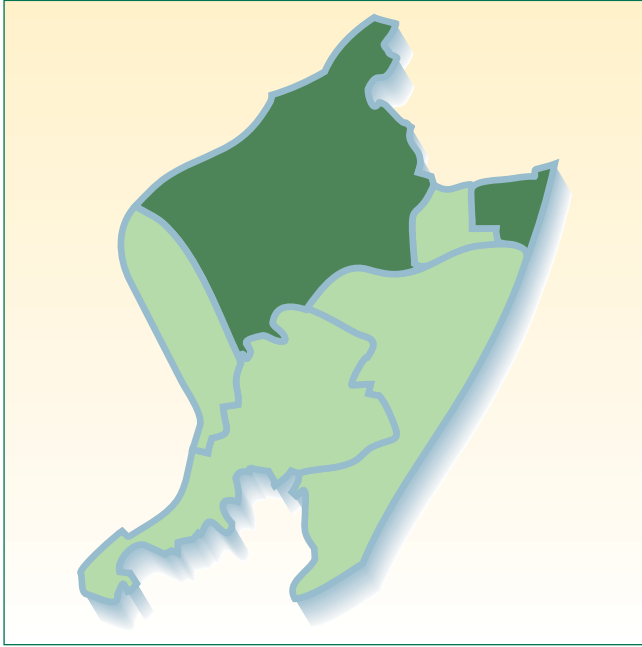
4. Westerleigh



5. Engine Common

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Latteridge



Description

An open, low-lying basin of undulating ground with several streams and brooks. An area of mainly dairy farming in small fields, with strong low hedges and very little woodland cover. It is sparsely populated, with scattered farms and unexpanded villages. The rural character is disrupted by the numerous pylon lines which congregate north of Latteridge. There is some recent localised hedgerow removal. Single oak trees in hedgerows and within fields are a feature of the area.

Existing woodland cover: 1.0%.

Local strategy

Landscape improvements to create a well-wooded agricultural landscape with medium to large-scale woodlands predominantly on the slightly higher ground and visually linking the area to the Severn Ridge. Woodlands will be designed to reduce the negative visual impact of the pylon lines and the urban edge, some larger areas providing for recreation.

Proposed woodland cover: 20-30%

Woodlands

- Encourage management of existing woodland.
- New woodland will be established within the existing field systems to strengthen the existing landscape pattern.
- Energy crops may be appropriate in this area.

Wildlife

- The strong hedgerows adjacent to water-courses and rights of way will form major links in developing the wildlife network in the area. The improved management of existing hedgerows, and the planting of oak trees within hedgerows and fields, will be encouraged.
- Less intensive agriculture along all water-courses will be promoted.

Heritage

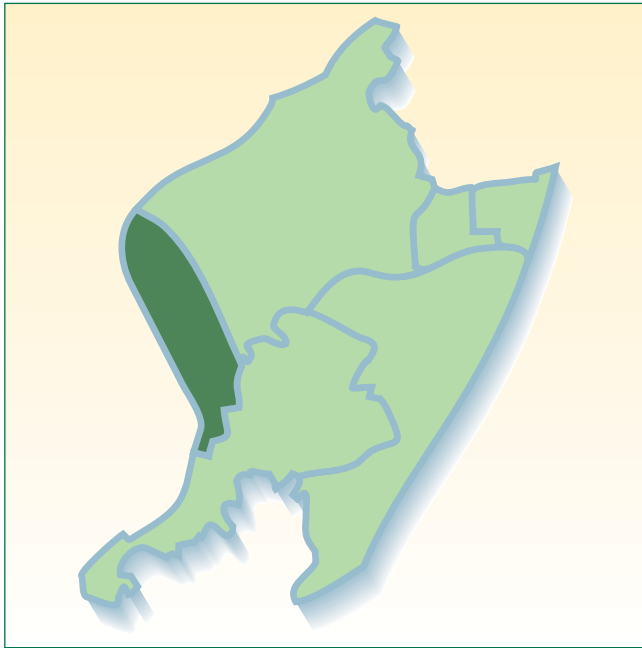
- Iron Acton has a conservation area.

Recreation

- The Round Avon Ride and the Jubilee Way cross the area.
- There are attractive footpaths and bridleways, but the network is fragmented, so emphasis should be placed on creating circular routes from Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Yate.
- A primary aim of new woodlands should be to create recreational facilities.

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Bradley Brook



Description

An urban fringe landscape, with a characteristic mix of land uses including the motorway, riding stables, go-karting, golfing, tipping and wind surfing within stark agricultural landscapes. The M4 is a prominent feature in the area and a major barrier to movement from the urban area out into the countryside.

Existing woodland cover: 1.2%.

Local strategy

Significant landscape change to create a well-wooded recreational area for local people based on the Bradley Brook corridor. Access will be improved from Bradley Stoke into the countryside. Large woodlands will be established adjacent to the M4, to soften the urban edge and enclose spaces for informal activity. Large new areas of woodland will be promoted to the north of the M4 as a way of reducing the impact of its proposed widening.

Proposed woodland cover: over 30%.

Woodlands

- Extensive new woodland adjacent to the M4 with small-scale native planting adjacent to the Bradley Brook corridor.
- Considerable opportunities for community woodland planned and managed by local people for recreational use.

Wildlife

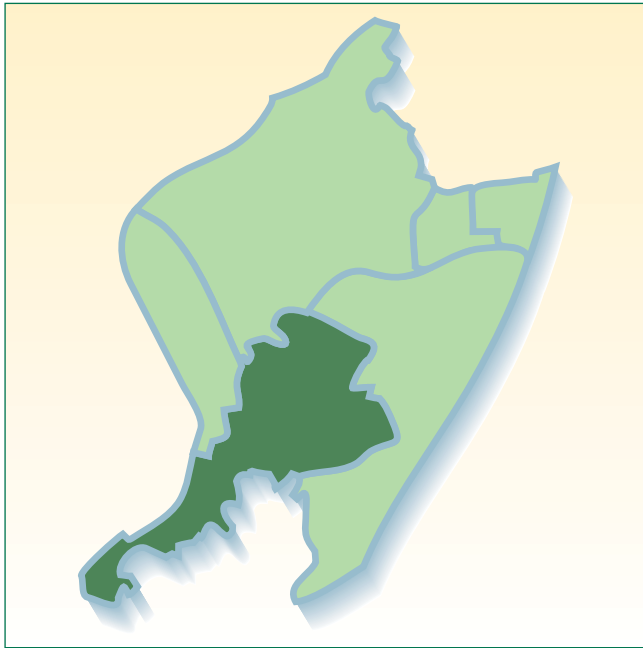
- The establishment of the recreational access route along the Bradley Brook into the countryside will incorporate the enhancement of the route as a wildlife corridor with new planting and improved management.
- The area has only 1% existing woodland cover; half of this occurs in Savage's Wood, which is also an ancient woodland, so every opportunity should be taken to connect this wood to new woodland planting.

Recreation

- Access from Bradley Stoke to the countryside is very poor and the M4 presents a major barrier to movement. There is a need to create an improved route across the M4 for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The Community Forest Path establishes a route connecting the area to countryside north and south.
- There is an opportunity to create a gateway at Monk's Pool.
- A minor route could link Bradley Brook Reserve with the Frome at Hambrook.
- A link from Winterbourne to Bradley Stoke, via Monk's Pool and Winterbourne Barn should be considered.

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Frome Valley



Description

A small river valley with attractive gorges where it cuts into Pennant Sandstone at Stapleton, Frenchay and Winterbourne amongst urban development, with small fields of pasture, poor hedgerows and small woods on steep slopes. An attractive, enclosed and intimate landscape under great pressure from urban areas. Adjacent to the river, tranquil pockets remain, major roads being the most disruptive elements.

Existing woodland cover: 7.25%

Local strategy

Conservation and enhancement of existing character, strengthening and extending the concept of a finger of countryside penetrating into the city. New woodland to integrate and strengthen the existing tree cover, softening the urban edge and screening new roads. Interesting views will be protected. The whole valley merits its own management strategy to integrate the needs of woodland management, wildlife, heritage and recreational use. Woodland planting will be promoted as a way of reducing the impact of the M4.

Proposed woodland cover: 20-30%.

Woodlands

- Encourage management of existing woodland, particularly on steeper slopes, and investigate additional recreational use.

- New, predominantly broadleaved planting of small and medium-sized woodlands to extend tree cover into the urban edge.
- Opportunities for extensive community woodland development.

Wildlife

- An area of great wildlife value and a major wildlife corridor into the heart of the city, it will be strengthened with improved links into urban areas along its route.
- Investigate natural regeneration as an option when establishing new native woodland adjacent to ancient semi-natural woodland.

Heritage

- The earliest settlement in the Frome Valley was probably at Bury Camp in the eighth century BC.
- Other strong visible historic associations are connected with water mills, weirs and small stone bridges across the river. Pennant Stone quarries in the valley produced much of the stone used in vernacular buildings and field walls. Winterbourne Viaduct and the mining remains at Ram Hill are also notable features of the area.
- Maintenance of walls of local stone will help to retain the local character.
- Oldbury Court is on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.
- The Stapleton, Frenchay, Hambrook and Frome Valley Conservation Areas cover a large part of the corridor where it enters Bristol.

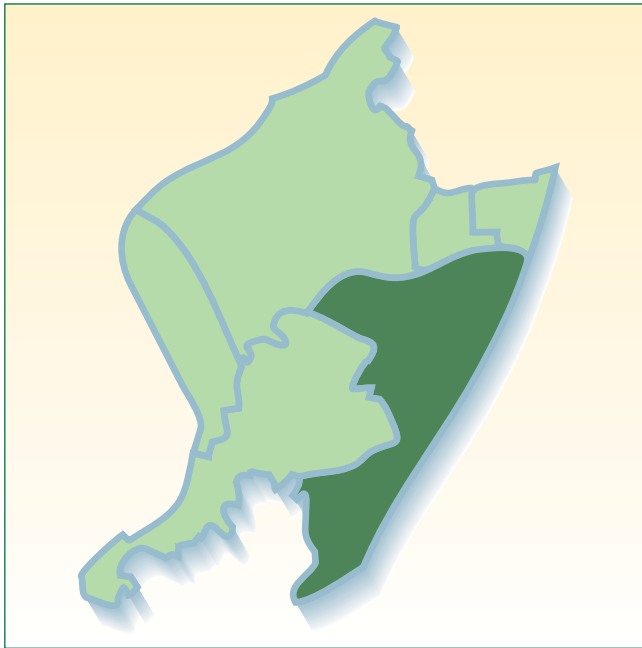
Recreation

- The Frome Valley Walkway, is an important key access route and a guide has been produced but there is a need to ensure that the route is sign posted and clearly identified from within the urban areas and from surrounding areas. Gateways could be created at a number of points along the river, e.g. Snuff Mills.
- The Round Avon Ride goes through the area and the Community Forest Path creates a valuable link to the east and west.
- Eastville Park could be developed as a major gateway site and there is an opportunity to create a minor gateway site within the environs of Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath.
- There is a particular need to improve bridleway routes in this area.



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Westerleigh



Description

An agricultural landscape on low undulating ground sandwiched amongst urban development. The pastoral landscape has poor hedges and little woodland, with commons a feature of the area, but it is the pylon lines and roads which dominate the landscape. Close to the edge of Frampton Cotterell, a small-scale, attractive agricultural countryside remains.

Existing woodland cover: 0.8%.

Local strategy

Significant landscape change towards a well-wooded agricultural landscape with increased tree cover to soften the urban edges and enhance the countryside, particularly between Coalpit Heath and Yate. New woodland establishment will be concentrated on the industrial edge of Yate and will aim to reduce the impact of the pylon lines and the M4 and enhance the views from the major road and rail routes. New woodland planting in association with the M4 and development at Emerson's Green.

Proposed woodland cover: over 30%.

Woodlands

- Encourage management of existing small woodlands, including those which have naturally established on the railway embankments and are now prominent features in the landscape.
- Extend existing landscape pattern with a network of small woodlands within an enhanced field pattern.

- Develop community woodlands adjacent to the urban edge at Mangotsfield, Coalpit Heath, Frampton Cotterell and Yate.
- Extend recent tree planting on The Common, Yate out into the countryside as community woodland.

Wildlife

- Conserve and enhance the wildlife interest of the river and wetland sites.
- Encourage the strengthening of watercourses as wildlife corridors into the urban areas.
- Plant adjacent to the existing wildlife corridors of the railway embankments to reinforce them.

Heritage

- The four commons in this area all have public access and are important for recreation.
- Although surrounded by urban development, pockets of land retain a small-scale, unimproved agricultural character with small fields, stone walls and stiles; this character should be retained and strengthened wherever possible.

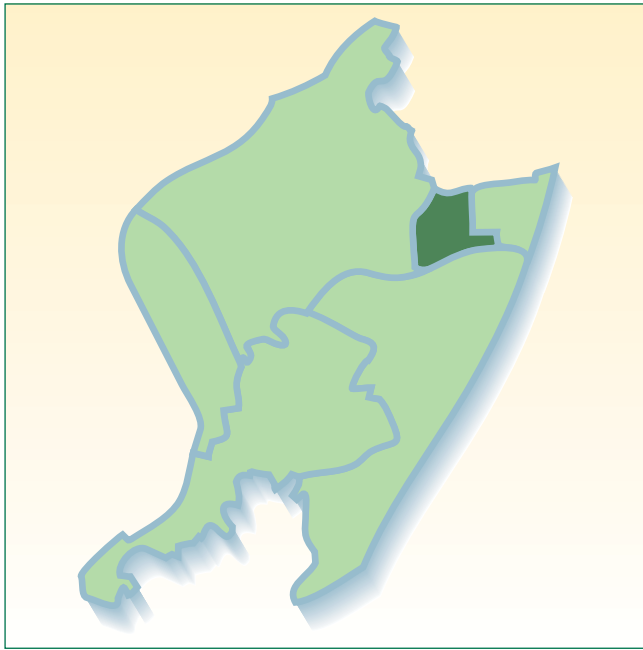
Recreation

- The Frome Valley Walkway, the Dramway Path and the Round Avon Ride all provide valuable recreational resources for the area.
- The Community Forest Path will help improve connections to the west and south.
- Opportunities exist to provide woodland with free and open public access and to create a network of short circular walks from urban areas.
- There is a great need to improve the bridleway network.
- The major road and rail corridors create considerable barriers to movement.
- The commons are a valued recreational resource; there is an opportunity to use The Common, Yate and Rodway Hill as gateways out into the wider countryside.
- An opportunity exists to ensure that if the M4 engineering improvements and development at Emerson's Green go ahead, they enhance access to the countryside rather than constrain it.
- Improve Mangotsfield to Yate route.



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Engine Common



Heritage

- There are few tangible remains of the coal-mining industry that shaped this area.

Recreation

- There is a need to improve pedestrian links into the centre of Yate and to the Frome Valley Walkway.
- A link could also be established through the area on to the Jubilee Way, which runs just to the north.
- There is also a need to improve routes for horse-riders.

Description

A small-scale, semi-urban landscape with strong hedgerows and tree groups associated with old mine workings. Housing is spread along all the roads. There are small areas of pasture, unimproved grassland and 'horsiculture'. This is a complex, fragmented landscape but one of distinctive character. The south of the area is affected by the industrial edge of Yate.

Existing woodland cover: 0.4%.

Local strategy

Landscape improvements to the south-east boundary of the area with the industrial edge of Yate whilst conserving the intrinsic character of the rest of the area.

Proposed woodland cover: 10-20%.

Woodlands

- The strong hedgerows make the area appear more heavily wooded than it is.
- There is an opportunity to strengthen the woodland character within the existing field pattern with small woods and copses, including opportunities for community woods involving local people.

Wildlife

- Reinforce existing wildlife corridors through the area.