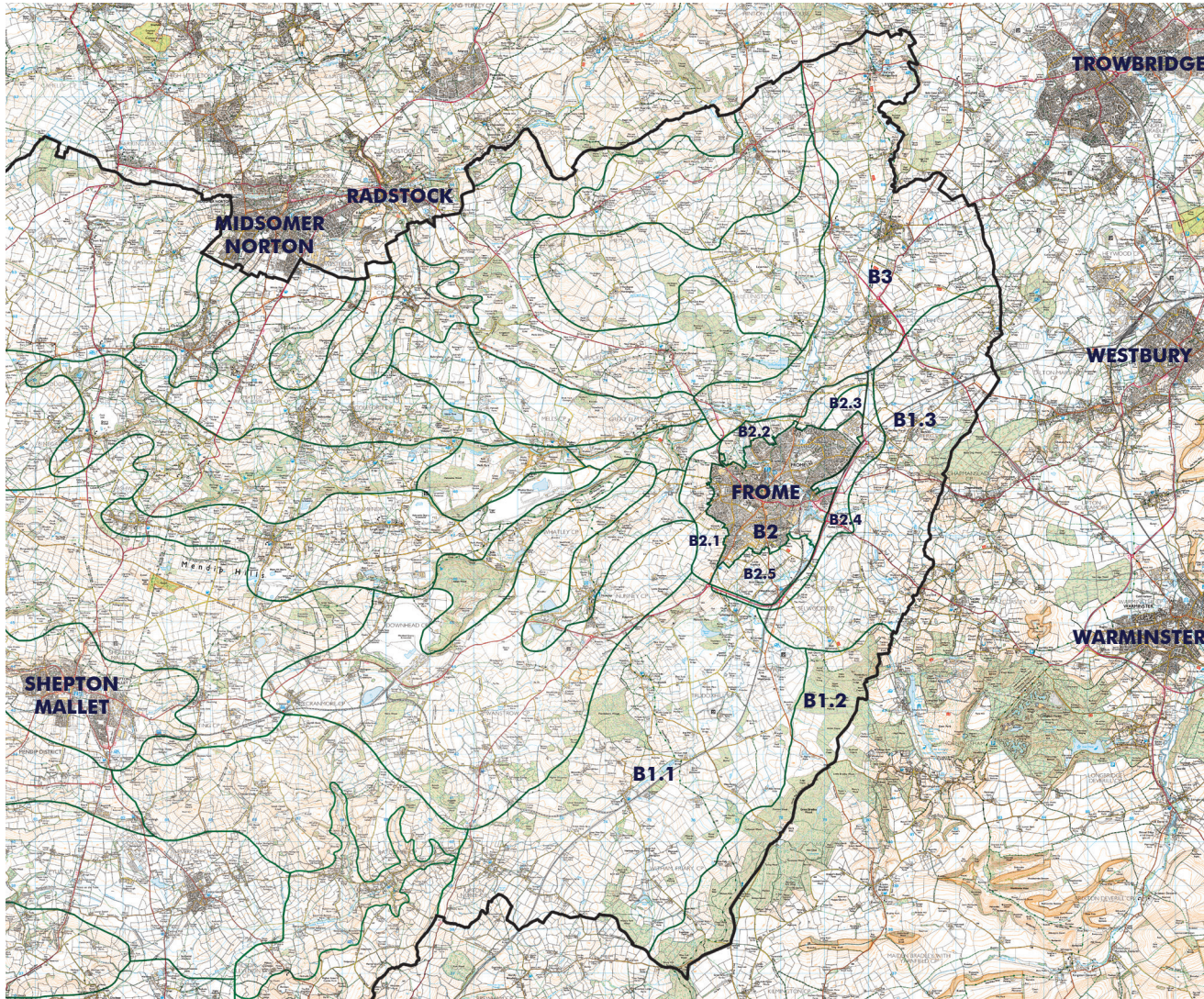


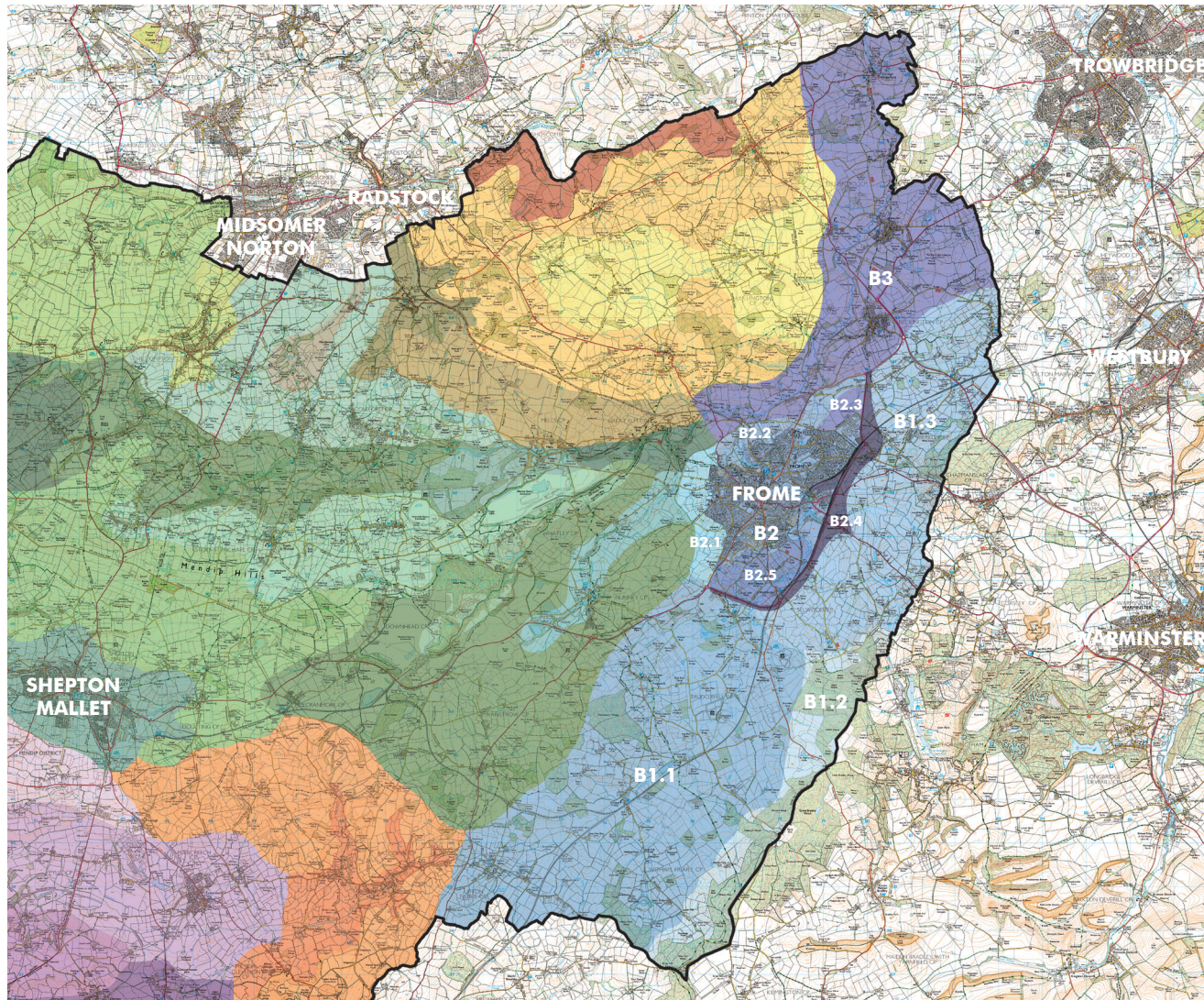
6.3 FROME VALLEY



MENDIP CHARACTER AREAS

- B1 The Upper Frome Valley**
 - B1.1** South West Upper Valley
 - B1.2** Gare Hill Greensand Ridge
 - B1.3** Selwood, Berkley & Rudge Ridges
- B2 The Frome Fringes**
 - B2.1** Marston Gate - Egford Hill and the Leys
 - B2.2** The Watcombe Valley and Cuckoo Lane
 - B2.3** Gipsy Lane, Berkley Lane to Whitechapple Farm
 - B2.4** Frome Bypass and Infrastructure Corridor
 - B2.5** Little Keyford and Blatchbridge
- B3 Lower Frome Valley Spring Gardens, Beckington to Farleigh Hungerford**

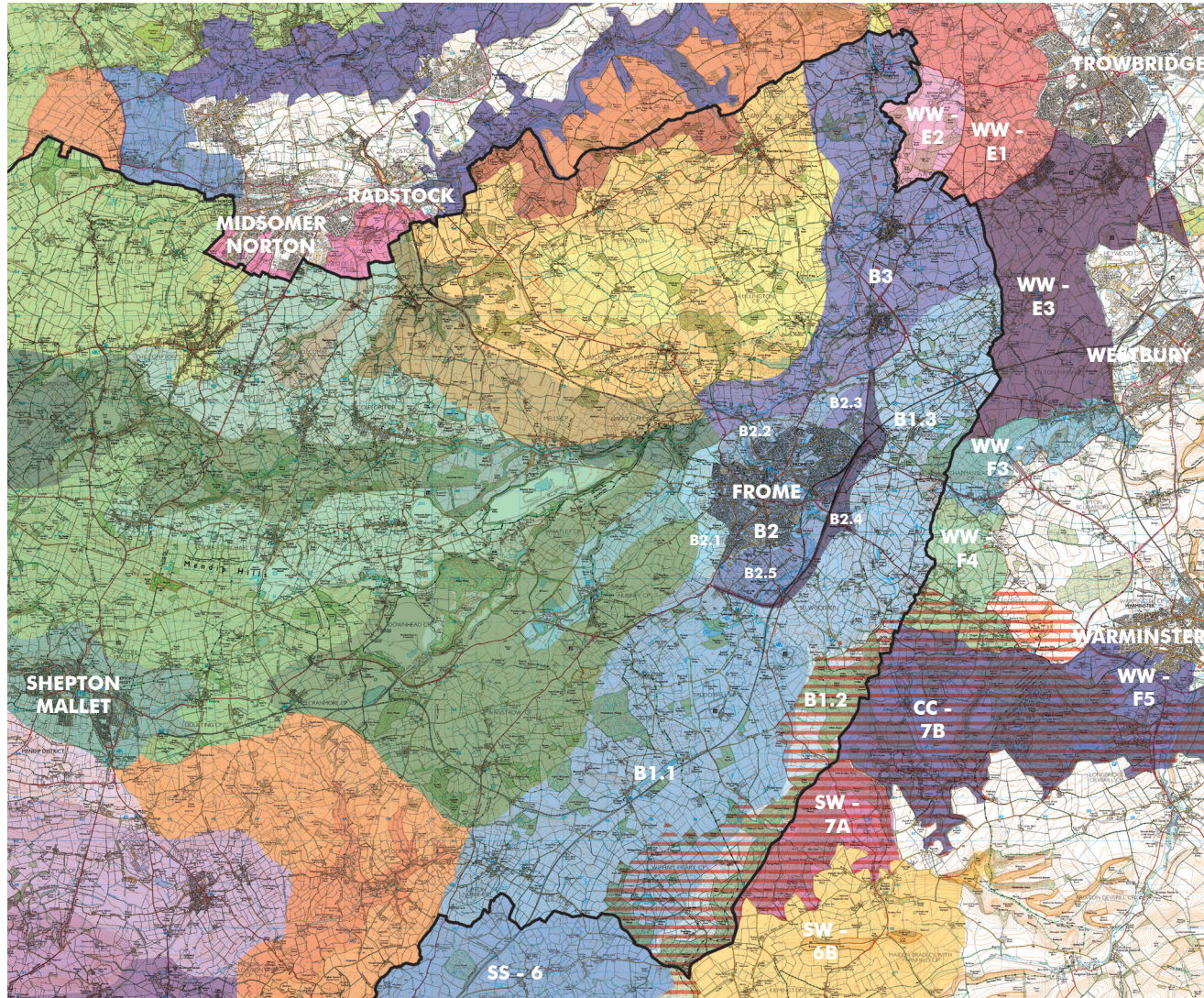
6.3 FROME VALLEY



MENDIP CHARACTER AREAS

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 - B1.1** South West Upper Valley
 - B1.2** Gare Hill Greensand Ridge
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 - B2.1** Marston Gate - Egford Hill and the Leys
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6.3 FROME VALLEY



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 - B2.5 Little Keyford and Blatchbridge
- B3 Lower Frome Valley Spring Gardens, Beckington to Farleigh Hungerford**

ADJACENT CHARACTER AREAS

West Wiltshire

- WW-E1 Wingfield Rolling Clay Lowland
- WW-E2 Belle Coeur Rolling Clay Lowland
- WW-E3 North Bradley Rolling Clay Lowland
- WW-F3 Greensand Hills: Chapmanslade Greensand Hills
- WW-F4 Greensand Hills: Corsley Greensand Hills
- WW-F5 Greensand Hills: Longleat Greensand Hills

Cranborne Chase

- CC-7B Penselwood - Longleat Hills

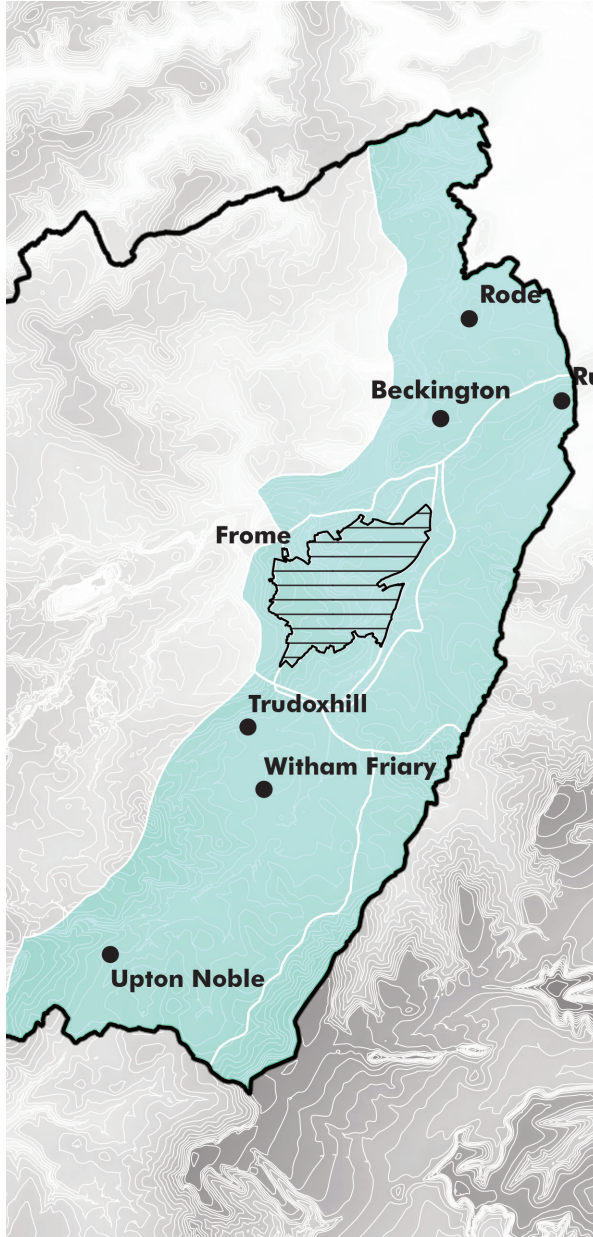
South Wiltshire

- SW-7A Longleat - Stourhead Greensand Hills
- SW-6B Kilmington Terrace

South Somerset

- SS-6 Escarpments Ridges and Vales East of Yeovil

SETTLEMENTS IN FROME VALLEY



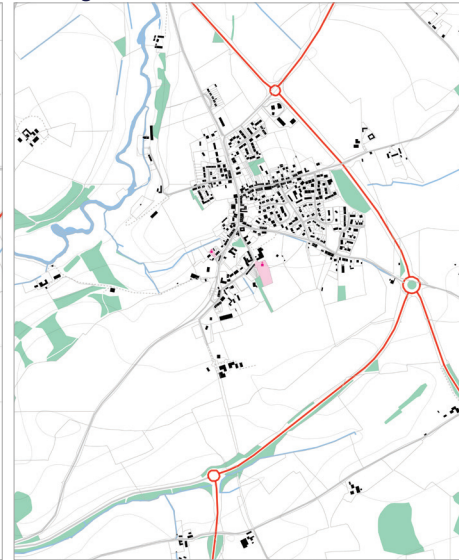
Minor Settlement Pattern Examples

Typical village settlement patterns only

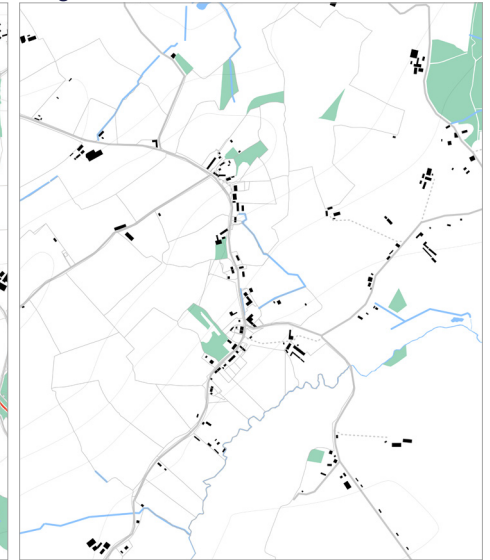
Rode



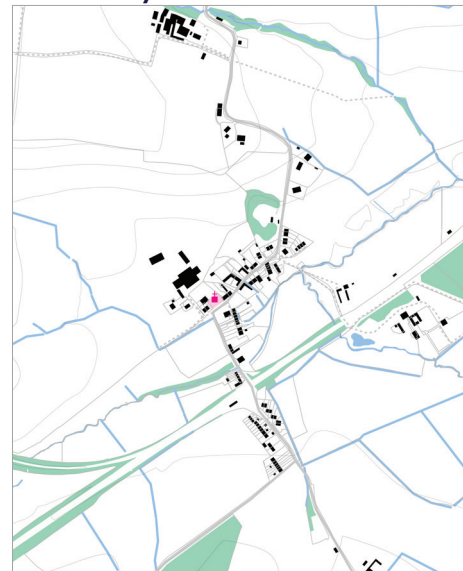
Beckington



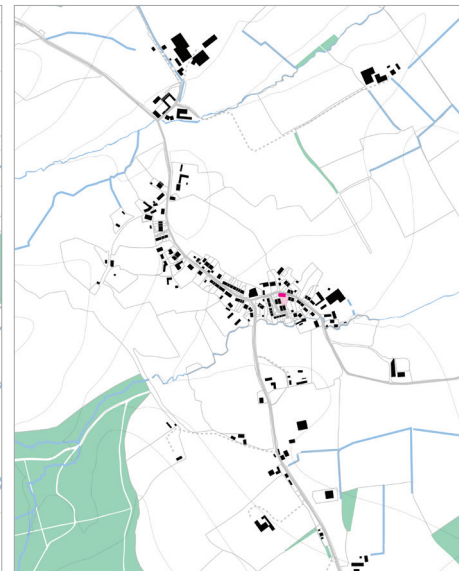
Rudge



Witham Friary



Trudoxhill



Upton Noble



6.3 LCA – B1 - THE UPPER FROME VALLEY

- 6.3.1 The River Frome rises on the high ridge close to the village of Upton Noble. The course of the river through the eastern part of the MDC area divides between three distinct sections.
- 6.3.2 The Upper Frome, the main headwater catchment for the river upstream of Frome. This is comprised of a small wide valley or vale that wraps around the South West, Southern and Eastern sides of the town. These comprise LCA 1 (LCA B1.1, B1.2 and B1.3).
- 6.3.3 The section of the river close to the town (town excluded from this study) is included – LCA area B2).
- 6.3.4 The section downstream of the town starting where it joins with the Mells River and flows past Beckington and Rode before marking the county boundary up to Farleigh Hungerford. (LCA B3).
- 6.3.5 These form the basic divisions between the Frome Valley Character Areas (LCA's B1 – B3). With the consideration of the town extending out from the built up area to include the landscape that fringes the edge of the town – LCA B2.
- 6.3.6 The first of these, the Upper Frome Valley is subdivided into;-

- B1.1 The South West Upper Valley
- B1.2 The Gare Hill Greensand Ridge
- B1.3 The Selwood, Berkley & Rudge Ridges

Note B1.1 and B1.2 reverse order from 1997 study.

B1.1 THE SOUTH WEST UPPER VALLEY

- 6.3.7 The high ground ridge around Upton Noble forms the watershed between the Frome and Brue River catchments. The main road from Nunney Catch to Bruton climbs up on to the narrow ridge top that separates the Frome from the Batcombe valley. A tributary stream starts close to a spring near a high point at around 180 m AOD.
- 6.3.8 With the softer lias geology underlying this area the landform of the ridge and main part of the valley is rounded and gently rolling. As a wide shallow valley with extensive views across its width, the landform is best described as a small vale. This cuts west to east with smaller scale side valleys and streams connecting from the north and south.

6.3.9 The Frome catchment is further contained to the north by the rolling hills and valley landform around Wanstrow (LCA-A11 which drains north into the Nunney Brook Catchment joining the Frome further downstream). To the east a more distinct ridge encloses the area near Marston Park / Trudoxhill. The main Frome to Shepton Mallet Road follows this high ground rising to around 130 m AOD.

6.3.10 On the south side the land rises up to a more dominant ridge that defines the district boarder with a heavily wooded escarpment slope. With the ground level at the top edge of this area at 240 m AOD and with extensive mature plantations this area acts as a backdrop to many views from both within and beyond the LCA (the forest ridge is identified as LCA B1.2 below).



Green Lane near Cloford Common

6.3.11 Within this section of the river corridor the Frome is more of a small scale stream than notable river. With the heavy clay soils the field boundaries include many small drainage ditches and areas of grassland appear wet underfoot with patches of sedge growth. There are also a few ponds around Witham Friary and Marston.

6.3.12 Tree cover includes many roadside and field hedgerow trees with a few free standing field trees. Alongside the backdrop of the forest on the southern ridge (LCA B1.2) the area includes many areas of deciduous woodland. These include some larger blocks of Ancient Woodland.

6.3.13 Within the lower parts of the area the gently rolling landform is predominantly pasture farmland with small scale irregular pattern of hedged fields. Some localised areas of arable production occurs on the occasional flatter fields. With the small scale rolling topography areas of older enclosure patterns are evident within parts of the area. This links with the ancient woodland and other aspects of historic interest

6.3.14 The area is crossed by the line of a Roman Road that passed to the east of Witham Friary. The line no longer appears on modern O/S mapping but historic mapping shows it passed close to the Carthusian Priory, also to the east of the village. The Priory remains as a scheduled monument, bisected by the mainline railway. The nearby medieval Fish Ponds lie outside of the selected area.

6.3.15 At the eastern end of the area, close to Frome the area of Marston Park is one of the largest registered historic parklands within the district (Grade II). This includes areas of Ancient woodland and a good collection of parkland trees. The Marston Park also

includes a small lake. The parkland and grand house is visible from viewpoints outside of the estate boundary.

6.3.16 Alongside the parkland a smaller area of Scheduled Ancient Monument protects the site of a moated house - this being Marston Moat, which 'is believed to be the site of the manor house of the Bigot family who held it from before 1195. The Historic England Citation notes the family incurred the displeasure of Edward II for fortifying it without a licence. Fraught family history is also connected to the nearby Marston park for which the citation notes that the Manor of Marston Bigot was held by the Crown after the execution of Charles, Lord Stourton in 1557.

6.3.17 The area is sparsely populated with the settlement being focused in the two small villages of Upton Noble, and Trudoxhill and the hamlets of Witham Friary and Tytherington. These are all located off the main roads and connected by only small often single-track winding lanes. The settlements are relatively far apart and not well connected; there are other sporadic farmsteads and individual properties but the area has a distinctly remote character. At the same time the area is crossed by the mainline railway linking Frome and Bruton and the mineral line to Tor Works Quarry. These lines generate some unexpected occasional noise intrusion, At the same time this section of railway provides the longest section of mainline track within the district – approximately



View from Good Hill Lane - Upton Noble

5 miles of continuous attractive countryside and no urban development in view.

6.3.18 In respect of other infrastructure the area is crossed by a power transmission line and includes three small solar farms. These are encountered as local intrusions into what is otherwise a strongly distinctive and attractive countryside.

6.3.19 A very small part of this LCA overlaps with the Cranborne Chase AONB area. A section of the Macmillan Way extends through the area north south crossing the River Frome near Witham Friary. A number of other paths form long sections between lanes and villages providing a remote access experience. The main area of ancient woodland within the LCA, Postlebury Wood has footpath access cutting through the centre of the woodland block.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / REFERENCES

EH list entry citations for moat and park

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1016302> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001149>].

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA – B1.1 THE SOUTH WEST UPPER VALLEY	
PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
• Wide shallow vale head of the Frome valley • Area contained by steep forested ridge to the south & rising undulating ground to the north • Wet clay soils, small ditches, streams & occasional ponds • Blocks of ancient woodland • Small scale irregular field patterns	• Small remote villages and hamlets • Area served by winding single track lanes • Main line railway and mineral line • Power transmission line • Solar farms partially hidden from roads although gateway views reveal presence
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
• Extensive area of parkland estate at Marston • Including parkland & veteran trees • Mansion house visible from public roads	• Area feels generally remote and isolated • Unspoilt villages and countryside • Areas of good degrees of tranquillity occasional disturbance from rail lines and views of pylons
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
• Marston Park – Extensive parkland landscape with specimen parkland and veteran trees • Marston Moat SAM • Historic sites Roman villa & Priory SAM & Fish Ponds • Long distance footpath route across whole area	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	
• Views within & across LCA to wooded ridge limited views beyond limits of LCA • Attractive countryside • With recreational routes	

B1.2 THE GARE HILL GREENSAND RIDGE

6.3.20 Although part of the upper Frome Valley and the backdrop to the low vale described in LCA B1.1 the southern edge of the landform is noted as a separate character area. This covers an area of more steeply sloping high ground on the district boundary. This is a narrow band of landscape on the district boundary which continues east across the county boundary into Wiltshire and to the south west into South Somerset.

6.3.21 The area is heavily wooded with a mix of woodland types. A significant proportion of the deciduous area is identified as ancient woodland. Alongside this there are areas of some extensive conifer plantation.

6.3.22 Some pockets of farmland are included within the LCA. There are areas of smaller scale fields on steeply sloping land and generally bounded by adjoining forest.

6.3.23 The area includes a few farmsteads and the tiny hamlet of Gare Hill. Minor roads drop off the top of the ridgeline (from a road on the county boundary above). These provide occasional dramatic views out over the vale below.

6.3.24 This area broadly overlaps with the Cranborne Chase AONB area. A section of the Macmillan Way extends through the woodlands and then down a pronounced section of the steep open farmland hillside below.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA – B1.2 -THE GARE HILL GREENSAND RIDGE	
PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
- Steeply sloping greensand ridge - Area stands high above valley floor & opposite side (LCA B1.1) - Forested ridge with occasional pockets of farmland - Mixed forestry with conifer & ancient woodland areas	- Small hamlet at top of ridge - Isolated Farmsteads on lower slope
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
Managed forest	- Remote location quiet back roads generally quite tranquil - Sheltered forest environment
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
Forest area forms important backdrop to many distant views from MDC district area to the north	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	
Scenic forest with glimpsed views out to wider landscape	



View from Witham Friary towards Gare Hill

B1.3 THE SELWOOD, BERKLEY AND RUDGE RIDGES

- 6.3.25 The Gare Hill ridge described in LCA B1.2 ends just north of the Iron Age fort of Roddenbury Hill (at Timbers Hill). In this location a small stream valley cuts across the district boundary with the stream (Redford Water) flowing from the outfall of the Longleat lakes. This tracks north to join with another small stream the Rodden Brook that then joins the Frome on the outskirts of the town (within the LCA B2.3 area). The Rodden Brook also rises outside of the MDC area on the north side of the landmark Cley Hill. These and other small stream valleys form a low rolling landform between East Woodlands and Lower Rudge. A watershed close to Berkley Cross divides the area into the Frome catchment and a stream flowing out of the district into Wiltshire to join the River Biss; a tributary of the Avon.
- 6.3.26 The low-lying landscape overlies the Oxford / Lias clays found on the south eastern edge of the district. The nature of the farmland as an area based on heavy clays is reflected in the number of place and farms with 'Marsh' in the name.
- 6.3.27 The topography rises again on the edge of the district with the climb up Lodge Hill. An extensive area of woodland that straddles the county boundary as Berkley Wood / Black Dog Woods. These form a continuation of the elevated back drop of Forest that encloses the southern outlook from Frome and areas to the north. The gap between the sections of Forest here and in LCA B1.2 is filled with blocks of woodland set further back into Wiltshire and the distinctive profile of Clay Hill.

6.3.28 The area lies within the former Royal hunting ground of Selwood Forest and the small-scale rolling landform and heavy soils may have helped preserve some historic character. The woodland of Berkley Wood and several smaller areas of outlying woodland near Berkley and Standerwick (White Row) are ancient woodland. These link with the small-scale farmland landscape of irregular hedged fields often of Medieval origin. The area would have been overlooked from the Iron Age fort of Roddenbury Hill (now lost in beech forest). Traces of a later Anglo Saxon fortification are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument within the fields just below the Iron Age site.

6.3.29 The Royal Forest connection is recognised in the identification of a group of veteran oaks near the East Woodlands church of St Katherine (Grade II*). The church and its setting on the edge of the forest and in a small cluster of properties has a remote and unspoilt historic character. This is again reflected in the presence and settings of two other churches; the isolated Rodden Manor and Berkley Church and a number of other small listed manor and farmhouses within the LCA.

6.3.30 A larger area of historic character landscape also exists at the northern end of the area in the form of the Standerwick Court with the large main house overlooking parkland. The area is relatively well contained within its own setting and the landscape planting of the modern A36 route.

6.3.31 The area is predominantly farmed as pasture grazing with occasional areas of arable forage production.

6.3.32 The area is crossed by the busy A36 trunk road in the northern edge of the district and bounded by the Frome bypass and railway on the west side (LCA B2.4). Smaller back roads link Frome to the A36 via

Berkley and Chapmanslade and at Warminster; as convenient connections to the trunk road these can also be relatively busy. The rest of the area is served by much smaller winding lanes serving only smaller collections of farms and properties. These routes are mostly contained within hedges and provide few views back to the town or other villages. Away from the main roads the area can feel quite quiet and remote despite its close proximity to Frome.

6.3.33 The railway cuts through the landscape near Berkley bringing occasional noise intrusion. Power transmission lines cross the area in part following the railway corridor. The Frome bypass is set low in cutting and contained by mature planting for most of its route within the LCA.

6.3.34 The presence of settlement within the area is limited. Berkley, Standerwick and Rudge are noticeable as clusters of residential development with a focus of some community features such as the church, school or pub. The cattle market complex at Standerwick registers as a small area of larger scale buildings but is well contained in the landscape. The larger



Berkley Lake

scale commercial business development on the Frome bypass is visible from points within the LCA and gives strong indication of the proximity of Frome; there are only a few other glimpsed views to the post war housing edge of the town. The area is generally quite contained with few views out beyond the district or the character area. Cley Hill is often glimpsed as the main local landmark, the Westbury White Horse is also in view from points in the northern part of the LCA. More open long views are gained on the rising ground on the very edge of the district; these can include the Pen Hill Mast visible from Lodge Hill and Whiterow 25 Km (15 miles to the west).

6.3.35 The lanes and footpath network links out from Frome providing connections from the crossing points of the bypass to the small lanes and longer routes to the woodland ridge area. Sustrans Route 24 links from the edge of the Frome bypass to East Woodlands and on to Longleat. At the northern end of the LCA area some of the minor lanes suffer from significant fly tipping issues which detracts from their potential attraction as recreational routes.

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS FROM '97 ASSESSMENT

Line adjusted on edge of Rudge Ridge (LCA B3) and to edge of Frome bypass (LCA B2.4)

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA – B1.3 - THE SELWOOD, BERKLEY AND RUDGE RIDGES	
PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
- Rolling lowland small valleys contained by higher ridgelines and woodland backdrop - Small streams and other small scale ditches - Heavy clay soils - Areas of ancient woodland and significant veteran trees	- Dispersed limited settlement of small hamlet and frequent farmsteads - Ancient monument forts, historic farmsteads, manor houses and churches - Occasional glimpsed intrusions of post war residential and commercial development - Locally busy main roads and trunk road
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
- Pastoral farmland with occasional areas of arable. - Small scale irregular hedged fields - Moderate intensity input managed grasslands and hedge lines - Agricultural activity / Commercial Forestry/ Minerals	- Areas of surprisingly remote landscape in close proximity to town. Elements of busy road, railway and powerlines present but often subsumed within the landscape and only seen in glimpsed passing views. - A36 traffic and close to bypass road noise more intrusive. - Extensive fly tipping in lanes close to urban area – strongly detrimental to quality of environment.
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
- Areas of accessible Ancient Woodland - Two ancient fortified SAM features from different eras in close proximity. Isolated rural churches with distinctive landscape settings and nearby historic buildings. - Listed farm houses and other historic buildings; including Standerwick House and associated parkland. - Berkley Lake	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	
Cley Hill and Westbury White Horse local landmarks (outside of MDC). Pen Hill visible as distant reference point. Glimpsed long / panoramic views from edge of forest on higher ground of district boundary.	

B2 FROME FRINGE LANDSCAPE

- 6.3.36 This area is a mix of the various landscapes that abut the built-up area of Frome. They are defined by the presence of the settlement edge which has some impact on the character and often the quality of the landscape. In most instances there is an overlap with the landscape character areas extending out from the 'Fringe' landscape zone. The degree to which there is a clear boundary between these areas and the outlying countryside differs markedly; some simply merge with no obvious demarcation, others are clearly defined by physical features.
- 6.3.37 The Fringe Landscape is subdivided down into five smaller areas with some subtle distinctions as set out below.
- B2.1 Marston Gate – Egford Hill and the Leys
 - B2.2 The Whatcombe Valley and Cuckoo Lane
 - B2.3 Gypsy Lane to Whitechapel Farm
 - B2.4 Frome Bypass and Infrastructure Corridor
 - B2.5 Little Keyford and Blatchbridge
- 6.3.38 The common characteristics to all the above derive from the presence of the urban edge which helps define the overall B3 LCA.
- 6.3.39 While the town centre established around a monastery in the seventh century; the outer edges are much more modern. The core of the town contains several conservation areas which relate to the interesting historic centre and a number of smaller neighbourhoods. Some of these were connected with former industrial areas (the town developed around a number of different industrial activities).

The outward visibility and various parts of the town are defined by the local topography. The higher parts of the settlement, located to the west, slope inwards to where the river valley meanders through the town centre. The eastern part of the town being lower and more gently sloping. Much of the town including most of the historic development is visually contained within this landform such that there are few locations outside where the overall scale of the settlement can be appreciated.

- 6.3.40 As the town expanded with significant areas of post war housing, for the most part this has also been contained by obvious natural limits. In some places the old vegetation patterns of hedge lines or tree cover encloses the urban edge. In others the very outer edges of the development sit on sections of the skyline above slopes that have prevented further expansion. In these locations a small number of houses are visible from distant external viewpoints giving a disproportionate degree of visual impact.
- 6.3.41 The Frome Bypass constructed in the 1980's takes an alignment starting to the north east near Beckington around the southern side of the town to Marston Gate on the west. The central sections of the route site relatively close to the built-up area while the junctions at either ends are set further away. The central section of the route is close to the mainline railway and power transmission lines.
- 6.3.42 After nearly 40 years the landscape mitigation along the route is well established. For much of its route the line of the road and associated railway now define the line between the fringe landscape and the wider countryside outside the bypass.

B2.1 MARSTON GATE - EGFORD HILL AND THE LEYS

- 6.3.43 The western edge of the town is defined by the natural topography. Much of the existing post war development has extended up to the top edge of a steep scarp. From Marston Gate around to Critch Hill the development extends up to form the skyline in views from the open countryside to the west (out towards Nunney). From Critch Hill around to Egford Hill the buildings are set back with school playing fields located on the flat hilltop and hedgelines visible as the skyline to the valley below.
- 6.3.44 More modern development is located above Vallis Vale where The Leys development sits right on the edge of the ridge top. While the buildings are set down a bit from the open field the two-story light grey elevations are visible from points to the north west (the development faces out towards Buckland Dinham). The west facing slopes end at the A362 main road out of the town.
- 6.3.45 The hillside slopes below this edge are uniformly steep and a fairly constant profile. The areas are open farmland comprised of small irregular hedged fields with occasional hedgerow trees. The landscape is managed farmland with few recreational footpaths providing access from the residential areas.
- 6.3.46 At the northern end of this LCA the hillside slope flattens out around the corner of the Leys. A public footpath out from the town at this point marks the start of the East Mendip Way. The route connects the edge of the town with paths into Vallis Vale and the Mells River Valley (designated Special Landscape Feature Area (LCA A10.3). This area provides a strong semi natural experience within close proximity to the town.

6.3.47 The area appears well used for informal recreation as a dog walking circuit around the shallower sloping fields. There are also expansive panoramic views out to the west that include looking out along the Mendip ridge to the Pen Hill Mast. The three towers of Cranmore, Ammerdown and Alfred's are all visible along with several of the larger wind turbines at Wanstrow and Chewton Mendip. There is also a glimpsed view from the East Mendip Way back to the east to the Westbury White Horse (see section 5.10).

6.3.48 As most of this sub area faces west with paths and properties enjoying the long views out over the wider landscape, there are many opportunities for good sunset views. Likewise, the early morning illumination of the landscape can be spectacular.



View from Marston Lane, Frome

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA – B2.1.- MARSTON GATE - EGFORD HILL AND THE LEYS	
PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
- Steep west facing scarp slope - Open farmland with limited woodland/tree cover - Irregular small-scale fields on steepest slopes - Large arable fields on other areas	- Sharp change in topography defines settlement edge - Skyline developments in places
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
- Arable areas of intensive management - Thin hedge line pattern	- Perceived Characteristics - Open expansive outlook from town edge dramatic change from built up area - Influence of urban area limited to presence of properties – minimal infrastructure - Background noise of town relatively low (compared to being in the town) - Some access to areas of strong semi natural character & spectacular views – creates attractive conditions short distance from urban edge (although much is private land).
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
- The Leys Hill panoramic view along the Mendip Ridge - Start of the East Mendip Way & link to Vallis Vale - Sunset and sunrise views	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	
Views out west to Pen Hill, Cranmore Tower, Alfred's Tower and Ammerdown includes several of the larger turbines & quarry faces.	

B2.2 THE WHATCOMBE VALLEY AND CUCKOO LANE

- 6.3.49 To the east of the A362 the landform changes from the west facing hillside slope to the east slope of the River Frome Valley. The area overlooks a small more intimate section of valley that includes Whatcombe Farm and Selwood Manor.
- 6.3.50 The eastern side of the valley is a small group of fields and some small woodland areas around the Farm and Manor house. The area is crossed by a number of public rights of way which provide views across to housing developments on Innox Hill. The hillside also provides views out towards the Orchardleigh Ridge (LCA C2). The base of the valley contains some development, a sewage treatment works and the mineral line railway (link to Whatley Quarry LCA - 10.3).
- 6.3.51 The area extends around the end of the Packsaddle ridge to overlook the area where the Frome joins the Mells River. While this is part of a wider section of valley, the intimate scale landscape of small fields continues around to Cuckoo Lane. The views across to the Orchardleigh ridge and glimpsed views of housing estates on the skyline continue. The landform and hedges prevent the whole area being seen as one area from most views.
- 6.3.52 A main road (Coalash Lane /Iron Mill Lane) acts as a busy back road route around the town. This route includes a few views of any of the main post war housing estates on the top edge of the hill; but the overall impression is of a rural setting to the road. The hamlet of Spring Gardens appears as a separate cluster of development on either side of the main built up area.

6.3.53 Cuckoo Lane is a narrow road linking the lower road to the top of Oldford Hill road. This sits in the landform enclosed by a small rise in the ground to the north. The fields on either side of this are small steeply sloping paddocks some of which appear to be abandoned. The laybys and gateways on the lane have suffered from fly-tipping and include some signage to discourage this.

6.3.54 The central part of this LCA includes a number of footpath links that follow the river and provide connections from the residential areas at the top of the hill down towards Coalash Lane (these continue to cross the river at Spring Gardens and on up into Orchardleigh Park). An area on the Whatcombe Farm hillside is identified as land acquired by the community as an open space. The land appears to be still grazed as part of a farm and the public access via the established public footpaths.



View over Whatcombe Fields - Frome

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA – B2.2 - THE WHATCOMBE VALLEY AND CUCKOO LANE	
PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
• Enfolded landform • Irregular small scale field patterns • Hedged & treed landscape	• Glimpsed views to urban development • STW & busy back roads • Smaller presence of Spring Gardens
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
• Low key grazing • Small areas appear abandoned • Fly tipping issues	• More intimate landscape
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
• Watcombe Fields Local Community Owned Green Space • Occasional pill box WWII defences part of the Green Line	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	
• Views out to Orchard Leigh Ridge	

SPECIAL REFERENCES INFORMATION

<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/wild-whatcombe/>

B2.3 GIPSY LANE/BERKLEY LANE TO WHITECHAPPLE FARM

- 6.3.55 To the north of Frome the edge of town is defined by the top of Oldford Hill. Travelling out from the town there is a sharp cut-off between the built-up area and the rural landscape on the main road. Some development exists around the bottom of Oldford Hill but with the topography and tree cover of the town edge this reads as a separate pocket of settlement.
- 6.3.56 Gypsy Lane then defines the existing edge of residential development on the high ground to the east of Oldfield Hill. The lane is bounded by tall well established hedge lines (including some elm regeneration). Beyond this the land slopes gently to the north, and glimpsed views across to Whiterow Hill are available from a few gateways and gaps. A flatter plateau of land to the east is partially occupied by a small coach depot and the Frome Rugby Club pitches, pavilion and car park.
- 6.3.57 The lane continues around (as Berkley Lane) to cross the Frome Bypass and on to Berkley (LCA B2.4). The lane forms the boundary to the built-up area and contains a substantial commercial warehouse and mixed commercial development to the east. This development is unusual as a prominent development large scale set of buildings that present an open frontage on to the bypass. As such the development announces the presence of the town out onto the bypass more directly than any other part of the settlement edge.
- 6.3.58 The route of Gypsy Lane provides access to some small areas of residential development and includes a short section of 'urban' cycleway with street lights. A small area of static caravan development also



View from Berkley Lane towards Whiterow

fronts on to Gypsy Lane on the open countryside section to the north.

6.3.59 The quiet back road nature of the lane appears to attract a significant fly tipping problem, with most gateways and gaps extensively tipped in. This also extends out into the lanes beyond this character area in some of the back lanes around Berkley.

6.3.60 The landscape is made up of the playing fields and varied sized agricultural fields. The field boundaries are hedged with tall hedges and occasional hedge line trees. The fields are mainly arable on the plateau and grazing on the steeper area next to Oldford Hill.

6.3.61 Some medium distance views are gained out from the lane and from the playing fields. These are across the low angled sloping land to the higher ground around Whiterow Farm. Glimpsed views of the Oldford Creamery are available and the Orchardleigh Ridge close down the views to the North West.

6.3.62 There are few public footpath routes out into the landscape in this area and the lanes are made less attractive to users due to the fly tipping. The Berkley Lane route provides a potential recreational connection to the landscape beyond the bypass.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA – B2.3 - GIPSY LANE/BERKLEY LANE TO WHITECHAPPLE FARM	
PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
- Hill & plateau landscapes - Mixed landscape of small fields, sports facilities & larger open fields following landform	- Edge of town residential areas defined by Oldford Hill & tree lined lane - Large commercial area contained by bypass overbridge
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
- Mix of developments within character area - Bypass and large commercial site - Extensive fly tipping - Nearby pylon line and bypass	- Lane starts as low key pleasant residential setting - Intrusive elements of development & fly tipping combined with back road location on edge of urban area create threatening character
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	

B2.4 FROME BYPASS AND INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR

6.3.63 The Frome Bypass is noted as its own character area as part of the Fringe Landscapes. The route is a single carriageway road but built to more modern design standards than many other equivalent roads within the district. The section of road approaching Frome from the end of the Beckington Bypass (a short section of busy dual carriageway) is predominantly three lanes (single westbound with a dual/climbing lane eastbound). This section is set in the base of a minor valley and contained by mature highway planting (further detail in LCA - B3).

6.3.64 The main sections of the bypass road are relatively straight links between roundabouts enclosed by substantial planting. Glimpsed views of urban development and the railway are available from the carriageway. The most western section of the route is a dramatic straight climb/descent of the Marston Hill. As a busy relatively fast road the route generates significant noise to the landscape areas immediately adjoining.

6.3.65 The adjoining mainline railway is on short sections of embankment and in cutting. Blocks of trees between the road and railway (including the highway landscape) provide a screen and separation between the two.

6.3.66 Viewed from the outside the bypass and railway are visually well contained with only the glimpsed visual intrusion of passing traffic. The corridor also includes a power transmission line on the rural side of the bypass.

6.3.67 The bypass includes a few minor lane crossings and over bridges but generally acts as a barrier to recreational out to the countryside to the southeast.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA – B2.4 - FROME BYPASS AND INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR	
PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
- Modern roadway set within mature landscape (40 years+) - Rock outcrops in cutting add interest	- Substantial commercial development fronts on to otherwise rural section of road - Glimpsed views of residential developments
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
Power transmission lines & mainline railway also occupy corridor	- Generally reads as green corridor contained within landform & roadside plantations - Fast busy corridor - Crossing points at grade feel hostile to walking / cycling - Over bridges provide brief view down to route
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
Route contributes to sense of rural district with limited views to commercial / urban development & strong landscape containment.	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	



Frome Bypass viewed from Berkley Lane

B2.5 LITTLE KEYFORD AND BLATCHBRIDGE

6.3.68 The bypass and rail corridor contains a significant area of open land on the southern edge of the town. This is crossed by a small main road link from Frome out to the Blatchbridge Roundabout (the B3092). The lower portion of this area includes the meandering course of the River Frome and its associated small flood plain.

6.3.69 The land rises to the edges of the town. The landform is gently rolling with varied slopes and aspect. An area of more dramatic steeper slopes adjoin a large meander in the course of the river close to the town edge. The valley is cut across by the railway link into Frome. The area is broken down into a mix of field sizes with some gently sloping larger arable fields and areas of steeper grazing.

6.3.70 A number of smaller lanes connect across the area and back into the town (in places there is a sharp contrast between the character of the rural lanes and the urban development areas). A few individual clusters of properties are located along these side lanes. Some areas of new housebuilding are evident on the northern parts of the LCA and further land is identified in the local plan as allocated / future housing land.

6.3.71 Views exist from the higher parts of this area out towards the wooded ridges of East Woodland and towards Maiden Bradley, with Cley Hill also frequently visible. While a tract of landscape is in view there are few identifiable viewpoints in the wider countryside viewing back at the town edge.

6.3.72 The area is evidently under positive agricultural management and includes interest of small fields,

clusters of tree cover and historic character buildings. As an area contained by the bypass and accessed by small scale back lanes the area feels relatively secluded. Away from the new housing developments the area has the sense of being an area of intact countryside. However, the various routes (lanes and footpaths) eventually lead to development or the bypass reinforcing the sense the area is sandwiched between the two.

6.3.73 Some fly tipping was evident at the time of the original site field work with much cleared on a later revisit. This clearly impacts on the condition of the landscape, but must also impact on farm management with many field gateways blocked with obstacles to try and prevent or discourage the activity.

6.3.74 The area appears well used for informal recreation. This includes a series of short footpath links between the lanes and a longer route along the base of the valley (due to the presence of the railway only sections of this sit alongside the river). The higher lanes and paths provide the long views to Cley Hill and the Greensand Ridge. These routes may in time link with areas of open space provided as part of the new housing developments under construction. A Sustrans cycle route also provides a connection through the area on the back lanes between the town and out to the Longleat estate (route 24 connects Bath to Eastleigh in Hampshire).



Little Keyford Lane, junction with footpath 14 40 looking east to Cley Hill across old deer park (Image provided by MDC Councillor Kay)



Birchill Lane junction with B3092 looking SE to Blatchbridge
(Image provided by MDC Councilor Kay)



Nr Junction Little Keyford Lane with No Name Lane looking south towards Gare Hill
(Image provided by MDC Councilor Kay)

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS FROM '97 ASSESSMENT

Minor adjustments around boundary of Frome Bypass (LCA B1.3)

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- B2.5 LITTLE KEYFORD AND BLATCHBRIDGE	
PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
- Contained area enclosed to north by town edge and to south and east by bypass and railway - Varied landform with Keyford side valley, open hillside and main river valley - River Frome water course present but set low in the landscape – channels, weirs and former mill structures in places	- LCA defined by presence of built up area; in many areas development bounded by natural features – steep slopes, hedge lines, but in instances boundaries poorly integrated with original landscape. - Views out to Greensand Ridge over upper Frome valley area - Southern perimeter includes bypass, rail and powerline all within combined corridor; infrastructure contained by & set low landscape but forms dominant barrier between areas.
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
- Most of the area maintained as active farmland, mixed livestock and arable. Occasional pockets of unmanaged small scale fields - Fly tipping issues in places	- Areas not tranquil due to proximity of town edge and traffic/rail noise - Some parts relatively 'unspoilt' despite presence of built up edge, network of minor lanes contrast strongly with built up edge - Long views out and positive managed foreground landscape help to diminish impact of adjoining development. Most recent edges appear as more harsh less cared for interface
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
- Sustrans route out from town towards East Woodlands and Longleat Forest - Walled boundary to Keyford House (walls and house Grade II listed).	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	
- Views out to Greensand Ridge LCA B1.2 and B.13 - Frequent views to Cley Hill - Alfred's Tower also visible	

B3 LOWER FROME VALLEY - SPRING GARDENS TO FARLEIGH HUNGERFORD

- 6.3.75 Immediately downstream of Frome the river is joined by the Mells river creating a more substantial water course. At this point the valley also opens out to a slightly wider cross section and includes minor flood plains. From the upper upstream sections within Frome to the edge of the district the river has been managed as the source of power for numerous mills. The water level and character of the river maintained by regular weirs, often with mill leats or islands remaining as part of the historic river management.
- 6.3.76 The valley cross section occupies most of the character area and is quite consistent from Frome to past Rode. The base of the valley closes into a smaller scale steeper sided section around Tellisford and Farleigh Hungerford. To the east of the valley the landform opens out into a gently rolling plateau landscape extending to the east of Beckington to the MDC and County boundary. This is mirrored to the north of Woolverton and Rode on the west side of the river to Farleigh Castle.
- 6.3.77 This whole area again lies within the outline of the Norman Royal Forest of Selwood. Farleigh Wood stands out as the only sizeable area of ancient woodland within the character area. This sits close to areas of early enclosure landscape and the historic site of the two Farleigh Castles. An impressive veteran Oak stands as a local landmark tree on the Farleigh road. The remains of the earlier castle sits in an imposing position over the river and while the castle walls are the most obvious element of historic interest the landscape to the north of the main walls is part of an extensive SAM.

6.3.78 Much of the rest of the landscape between Frome and the village of Rode is more modern and larger scale enclosure pattern, particularly extending across the gentle landform of the plateau landform. Despite the move to more efficient farming landscape a trace of the more prehistoric human presence is marked by the remains of a Bronze Age burial between Rode and Rudge. The Devils Bed and Bolster are seen as small standing stones but mark what was at one time a long barrow. Located on a small ridgetop this feature could be seen as a link in the pattern of prehistory within the Mendip area and the prehistoric landscapes of Wiltshire to the east.

6.3.79 The agricultural land use is a mix of livestock grazing and arable production. In this area the greater proportion is in arable production. With grazing concentrated on the steeper sections of the valley sides.

6.3.80 With the more exposed landscape of the plateau the distribution of farms and individual dwellings is sparse. The larger villages of Beckington and Rode and the hamlets of Woolverton, Tellisford and Farleigh Hungerford are set down into more sheltered locations. Beckington, Rode and Woolverton all prospered from the wool trade, with the river proving the power for processing and the locality having good access to the markets of Bristol and Bath. The villages have more clearly defined centres and a few more significant buildings than other comparable settlements elsewhere in the district.



View from Whatcombe Fields towards Orchardleigh

6.3.81 The A36 Bristol to Southampton trunk road passes through the area with a short section of dual carriageway providing a bypass to Beckington. Strategic connecting roads linking this to Frome and Trowbridge create some of the most heavily trafficked routes within the MDC area. Aside from these the area contains limited infrastructure development. The historic use of the river for powering mills has been revived with the creation of a number of small scale hydroelectric schemes; typically occupying former mill sites.



View from Whatcombe Fields to Spring Gardens

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- B3 LOWER FROME VALLEY - SPRING GARDENS TO FARLEIGH HUNGERFORD	
PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS	SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
- Main river valley - Modest scale river and flood plain landscape - Areas of gently rolling plateau - Limited woodland cover	- River character created with engineering for numerous mills (inc. weirs and mill leats and islands) - Larger scale wool trade villages - Modern roadscape and heavily trafficked route of A36 and other strategic links.
LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES	PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS
- More intensely managed mixed production farmland - Moderate scale field pattern with mix of enclosure eras	- Presence of major roads and built up area limits opportunities to find tranquil environments – Tellisford section of valley more enclosed and remote. - General quality of landscape diminished around roadways, although outlook from roads generally very good.
SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED	
- Farleigh Castles - Scheduled Ancient Monument with civil war history and newer castle house and parkland setting. Wider area identified as Special Landscape Feature. - Tellisford Packhorse Bridge and Hydroelectric Mill	
LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS	