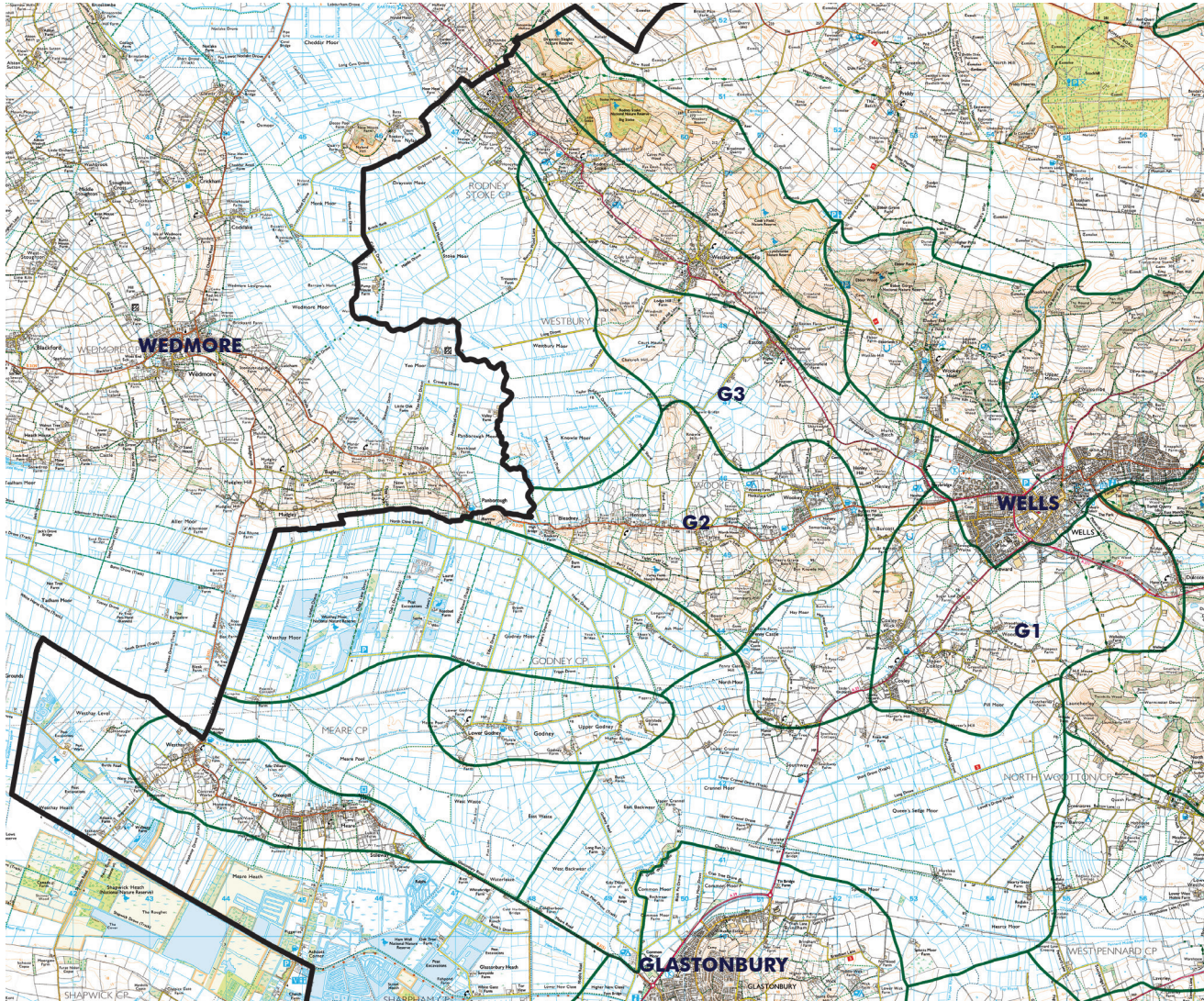


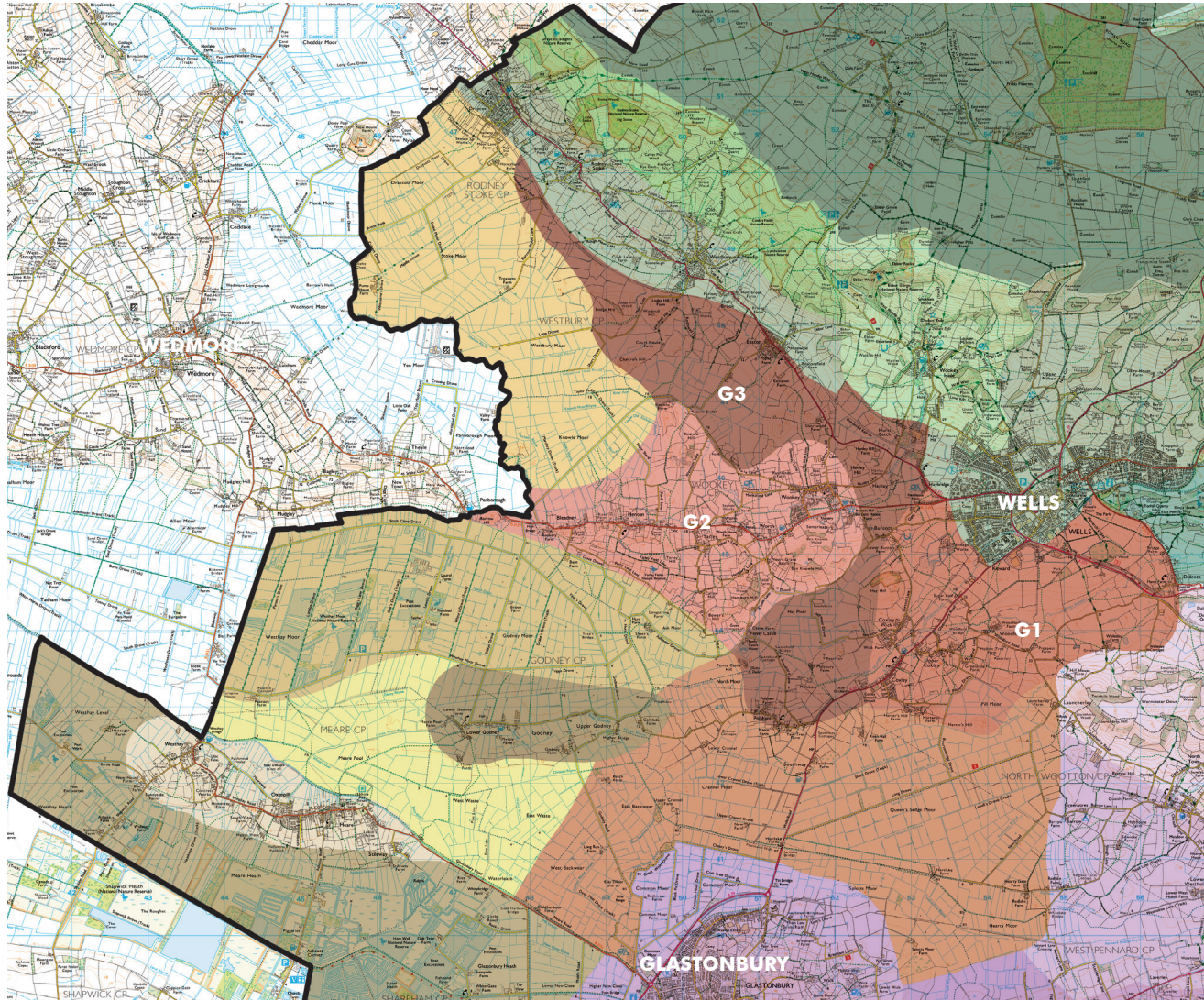
## 6.8 WOOKIE ISLANDS



### 1.0 MENDIP CHARACTER AREAS

- G1** Lower Sheppey Valley
- G2** Bleadney - Wookey Ridge
- G3** Polsham - Lodge Hill Hillocks

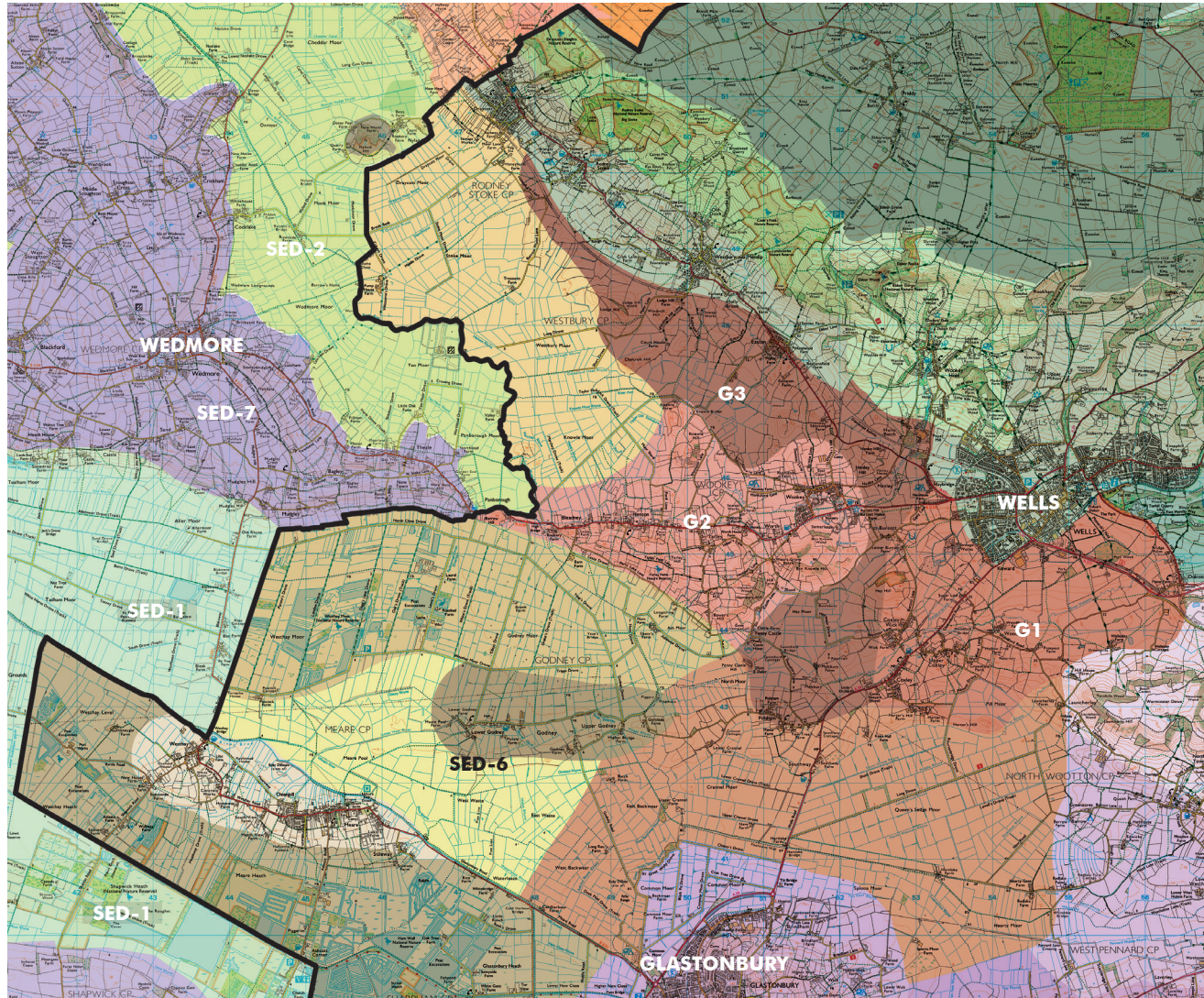
## 6.8 WOOKIEY ISLANDS



### MENDIP CHARACTER AREAS

- G1** Lower Sheppey Valley
- G2** Bleadney - Wookey Ridge
- G3** Polsham - Lodge Hill Hillocks

## 6.8 WOOKIE ISLANDS



### MENDIP CHARACTER AREAS

- **G1** Lower Sheppey Valley
- **G2** Bleadney – Wookey Ridge
- **G3** Polsham – Lodge Hill Hillocks

### ADJACENT CHARACTER AREAS

#### Sedgemoor

- **SED-1** Levels and Moors: Peat Moors
- **SED-2** Levels and Moors: Clay Moors
- **SED-7** Lowland Hills: Isle of Wedmore

## 6.8 WOOKIE ISLANDS

6.8.1 As set out within the geological overview section (5.1) the area to the south of the Mendip ridge was at one time at the toe of the high mountain range formed by the uplifted geology. The subsequent erosion of the high ridge during the Triassic period and then later impact of glacial melt waters rushing down from the areas to the north deposited substantial materials to the south of the Mendips. These materials dropped into a shallow sea with a coastal edge along the margin of the hills. The sea levels and deposition fluctuated with the distance out from the land and glacial periods. The resultant complex geological and topographic condition has created a distinctive and interesting landscape of low rolling often sculptural hills sat below the Mendip scarp.

6.8.2 The pattern of landform varies allowing the subdivision into three distinct areas.

- LCA G1 - The Lower Sheppey Valley includes the landscape stretching out from Wells to Harters Hill.
- LCA G2 – The Bleadney – Wookey Ridge includes a dense cluster of low ‘island’ hills along the B3139
- LCA G3 – The Polsham – Lodge Hill Low-lying Rolling Farmland; includes more dispersed ‘island’ hills

## LCA G1 - THE LOWER SHEPPEY VALLEY

6.8.3 The River Sheppey flows in a small scale valley near Dulcote within LCA A6; to the west of the village the valley cross section opens up to a much wider shallow landform that extends out from the edge of Wells. To the south east the high ground of Launcherley / Worminster Down (LCA E1.2) contains the view. This high ground drops down into a lower more subtle ridge that extends to Upper Coxley. To the south of this ridge is the start of the low lying moors; two small island hillocks rise out of the flat landscape as Harters Hill and Harters Farm (Special Landscape Feature (SLF)). To the west of Coxley Hay Hill completes the bowl of landscape to the south of Wells.

6.8.4 The River Sheppey flows across this low landscape with a shallow fall of around 20 m drop over around 3.5 km. The low ridge and hills generally sit at around 30 – 40m AOD, with Hay Hill rising to 85 m AOD.

6.8.5 The landscape is predominantly farmland with only small areas of woodland; (mainly what was once Park wood now separated into two blocks by the A371 main road). The larger part of Park Wood is also identified as an SLF and provides enclosure to the area of the Bishops Palace Parkland to the north (also part of the same SLF). The fields are noticeably larger scale regular shape and sized with mainly arable production. The fields are divided by a mix of low hedges and fences. The line of the river stands out as having more hedgerow trees along its course.



The Bishop's Palace Parkland - Wells

6.8.6 The area is crossed by the A371 Shepton to Wells road and the A39 Glastonbury Road. The A371 is a section of modern road built to run parallel with the disused railway (link from Wells to Evercreech). As a single carriageway landscaped route the road does not stand out as a major modern highway. The adjoining disused railway is laid out as a shared pedestrian / cycleway and forms part of Sustrans Route 3.

6.8.7 The Wells end of this road and the Glastonbury Road run into the suburban edge of Wells. Modern housing, edge of town supermarket and hotel facilities stand out as a more urban edge to the settlement. The Glastonbury Road out of Wells to Coxley also includes a few commercial developments that front on to the main road. Within the village long sections of the main road has housing fronting on to the route.

The village is spread out into clusters of housing between Coxley, Upper Coxley and Coxley Wick; with some areas set back on smaller side roads. The disused section of Wells to Glastonbury Railway line also lies in behind the main road frontage with the line marked by a small cutting and tree lines (to the north and west of Coxley).

6.8.8 The boundary to the edge of Wells is more open on the southern and western sides (this contrasts with the interface of the AONB in LAC A4.4). The urban edge to the west of the city is an unrelieved sharp division between modern residential development and large open fields. The major sewage treatment works also adds to the urbanised edge character.

6.8.9 The WWII Green Line defences (refer to section 5.2) can be traced across this LCA area with occasional

pillboxes around Coxley and in the edges of woodland at Park Wood. These link up with a greater concentration of defences on the Kings Castle Hill (LCA A6).

6.8.10 Closer in to Wells the landscape of the Bishops Palace extends out across the lower slopes of Tor Hill. The area is designated as historic parkland reflecting the area of former deer park. The parkland area includes a scatter of remaining parkland trees mainly at the northern end. The larger part of the parkland is open fields. The designated area includes a hard surfaced path extending out from the city towards Dulcote. As a firm route that leads out from a corner of the Bishops Palace moat the path is well used by visitors to the City and provides views out across the landscape to the south (including the wider part of this LCA and the Worminster Down SLFA).



The Park near Constitution Hill

6.8.11 There are important views back to Wells where the City, Cathedral and the impressive spire of St Cuthbert's church are seen with the backdrop of the Mendip scarp behind. The views also include the wooded Tor Hill (National Trust land) on the edge of the built-up area that helps frame some views and is also part of the setting of the Palace. The City is generally well contained by landscape and the exposed edge of the historic centre leads directly out into the open landscape. On the south western edge of the town the mix of larger scale and more recent development is visible in views as more of a suburban edge.

6.8.12 In addition to the route across the Bishops Palace Park, the wider area includes various PROW path routes leading out from Wells and concentrating around Coxley. The Monarch's Way links the Palace to Park Wood and crosses Sustrans Route 3. The Sustrans route includes a short section of off-road shared path on the other former railway line link towards Shepton.

6.8.13 The LCA area is not particularly tranquil on its northern side the built up edge, A371 and A39 provide background noise and visual distractions. Further south views of the east west power transmission lines cross adjacent moor area. The long distance path and Sustrans recreation routes are well used but do sit close to the City and A371

| KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA G1 - THE LOWER SHEPPEY VALLEY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide open vale contained by high ground of adjacent LCA. Also shallow ridge and minor hillocks.</li> <li>River Sheppey meandering course</li> <li>Open large scale farmland</li> <li>Occasional field trees and small woodland blocks</li> <li>Declining collection of parkland tree</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Wells sits as backdrop to open expanse of landscape</li> <li>Historic core links directly to area of historic parkland</li> </ul>                                                                                                           |
| LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intensive farmland management resulting in thin hedge &amp; tree coverage</li> <li>Presence of main road links</li> <li>Disused rail line – partially used as cycle track</li> <li>Powerline visible</li> <li>STW visible in landscape</li> </ul>                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open expansive landscape</li> <li>Areas of diminished interest due to intensive farm management</li> <li>Busy recreational routes out from town well used providing access to open landscape &amp; long views but not tranquil or remote</li> </ul> |
| SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered historic landscape (in decline as only few parkland trees remain)</li> <li>Palace Fields &amp; Park Wood form a continuation of the historic landscape (SLF)</li> <li>Former railway – partially reused as cycleway</li> <li>Harters Hill – hillock landforms (SLF)</li> <li>WWII Defensive line</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wells forms important back drop to open landscape with Cathedral and St Cuthbert's Church as major landmarks.</li> <li>Pen Hill Mast also on Mendip ridge above the city</li> <li>Views out to Worminster Down</li> <li>Wide ranging views from popular walking route</li> </ul>                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

**LCA G2 - THE BLEADNEY - WOOLEY RIDGE**

6.8.14 The B3139 links Wedmore to Wells along a ridge of high ground between areas of the low lying Moor. On either side of this road the landscape includes a series of small rounded hills that rise steeply out of the surrounding flat landscapes. A series of small settlements are strung out along the line of the main road with Wookey at the eastern end of the ridge.

6.8.15 This area includes the main concentration of Wookey Island Hills. Several of these are standalone hills rising from around 20 m AOD up to 50 – 60m as distinct conical hillocks. At the far western end of the LCA Barrow Hill (SLF) marks the district boundary as a small steep tump. Alongside these individual hills the Hembury, Callow and Yarley Hills are all connected as one larger ridge. The area includes some low-lying land between the various hillside slopes mainly on the north side of the ridge. While this is a continuation of the Westbury Moor area the containment of the high ground means these are more intimate and enclosed than the wider Moor landscape.

6.8.16 With the steep and complex slopes and varied aspects the landscape is comprised of small irregular fields. These are generally enclosed with tall hedges with a good coverage of hedgerow trees. Steep slopes of Hembury Hill and Ben Knowle Hill include some small areas of woodland. The Yarley Hill area includes some south facing unimproved grasslands part of which are managed as the Yarley Fields Nature Reserve. On the flatter land near Wookey the fields are larger with more mixed grazing and arable use.

6.8.17 As an area of relatively dry high ground the area is more settled than the Moors to the north and south. This is concentrated as small hamlets along the line of the B road and in the larger village of Wookey. Wookey includes a small medieval Bishops Palace (SAM). In addition to this, off the line of the main road, the smaller lanes lead to small groups of houses and individual cottages. Although settled, with the majority of the side roads being only winding single tracked lanes, the landscape can also feel remote.

6.8.18 The area is generally well served by a network of footpaths and minor lanes. These include small greenway / tracks at Yarley Hill and Buttice Lane that provide a different more enclosed experience. Several but not all of the hill tops can be accessed via the footpaths. The Yarley Nature Reserve is open to public access and includes interpretive signage. Overall the network provides for a range of walks through very varied landscape all within short distances (although with some steep climbs).



Barrow Hill near Panborough



View from Buttice Lane footpath towards Easton

- 6.8.19 The area includes opportunities for high degree of tranquillity and unspoilt landscape along with the biodiversity interest of the wildflower grasslands. There are also opportunities for panoramic views across the landscapes of the Moors to the south and up to the Mendip Scarp to the North. These include views to the Pen Hill Mast and the Glastonbury Tor and to the Strawberry Line villages.

| KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA G2 - THE BLEADNEY - WOOKEY RIDGE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied landforms of Wookey Islands – conical hills &amp; hillocks &amp; the Yartley Ridge</li> <li>Includes some areas of flat moors landscape between hills.</li> <li>Small areas of woodland on some hills – prominent as on steep slopes above flat landscapes</li> <li>Areas of small-scale irregular field patterns</li> <li>Predominantly grazing with a few areas of larger arable fields</li> <li>Areas of rich unimproved grassland /wildflower meadows</li> <li>Winding tall hedged lanes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>String of small villages along main road link</li> </ul>                                                                                                                              |
| LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single tracked lanes</li> <li>Main road link Wedmore to Wookey</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intimate small-scale landscape off beaten track</li> <li>Occasional contrasts with expansive hilltop views</li> <li>Opportunities for remote isolated tranquil experiences</li> </ul> |
| SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ben Knowle Hill – Geological RIG site – identified for deposits of Celestite (Strontium Sulfate) (SLF)</li> <li>Barrow Hill - (SLF)</li> <li>Yartley Nature Reserve – Unimproved Grasslands</li> <li>Wookey Bishops Palace</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views out from hilltops over flat moors landscape &amp; up to Mendip scarp</li> <li>Glastonbury Tor &amp; Pen Hill Mast</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

#### SPECIAL REFERENCES INFORMATION

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1013588>

## LCA G3 - THE POLSHAM - LODGE HILL LOW-LYING ROLLING FARMLAND

- 6.8.20 This area extends from Polsham around the western side of Wells and along the northern side of the LCA G2 area. This connects up a collection of the smaller individual Triassic island hillocks that stand out in this area. The landforms in the northern part of this LCA merge into the lower slopes of the Mendip scarp and the edge of the Westbury Moor. The area is interlinked with the more open moor landscapes to the north west and south west.
- 6.8.21 The landforms are distinctive rounded hillocks separated by areas of flat low-lying farmland. The hills include areas of small irregular hedged fields. The low-lying land is subdivided by numerous ditches many of which are also irregular shaped and treelined. The area includes minimal woodland.
- 6.8.22 The area has only occasional farmsteads or individual properties. This Strawberry line villages are located on the northern edge of this LCA; and the former railway line skirts the edge of the character area. Aside from the disused railway the area includes very little other infrastructure; sections of the line have provided space for small areas of development. The A371 main road introduces some background noise to the area. The other parts of the landscape are relatively tranquil away from the road and in areas with limited views to the villages.
- 6.8.23 The area includes a few minor drove roads or lanes and occasional paths but is not extensively crossed by rights of way. Those paths that do connect up provide a varied landscape experience with occasional access onto parts of the island hills and views to the Mendip Scarp. With the very small scale and lightly trafficked roads and few properties the area can feel remote.



Hembury Hill from Haymoor Drove

| KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF :- LCA G3 - THE POLSHAM - LODGE HILL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PHYSICAL/NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | SETTLEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE                                                                                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of smaller 'Wookey Island Hills'</li> <li>• Small areas of flat low-lying moors between</li> <li>• Merging with Strawberry Line base of Mendip scarp</li> <li>• Hills include small fields</li> <li>• Minimal woodland cover</li> <li>• Good coverage of hedgerow trees</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally only occasional farm buildings within main area of LCA</li> <li>• Expanded village of Easton on edge of area</li> </ul> |
| LAND USE/MANAGEMENT/HUMAN INFLUENCES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS                                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed farmland predominantly improved grassland.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for remote and tranquil experience</li> <li>• Areas vary from intimate greenway to open expansive views</li> </ul>  |
| SPECIAL FEATURES – NOTE NOT ALL FEATURES DESIGNATED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fenny Castle Hill – Motte &amp; Bailey Castle location SAM &amp; SLF</li> <li>• Disused railway line – Strawberry Line (Note a short section at Westbury-sub-Mendip was used as an air strip, the landing was apparently challenging with a curved runway, telegraph poles and broken asphalt now closed – with a footnote due to “incapable pilots”.</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.ukairfieldguide.net/airfields/Westbury-sub-Mendip">https://www.ukairfieldguide.net/airfields/Westbury-sub-Mendip</a></li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                            |
| LANDMARKS, VIEWS AND VIEWPOINTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views out from hilltops over flat moors landscape &amp; up to Mendip scarp</li> <li>• Pen Hill Mast</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                            |



Godney Flood  
Levels - Photographs  
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