



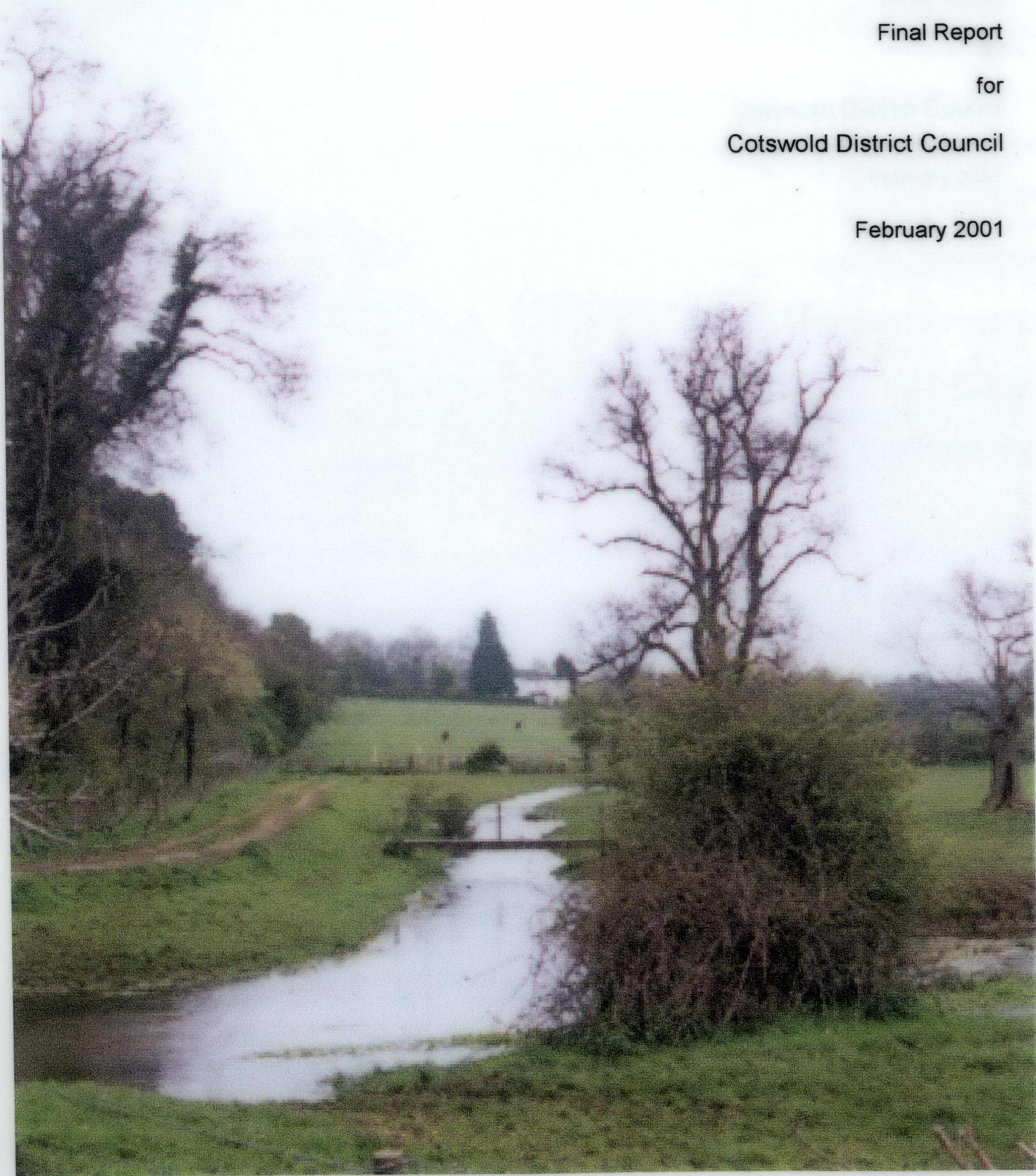
Local Countryside Designation Review: Special Landscape Areas

Final Report

for

Cotswold District Council

February 2001



Local Countryside Designation Review: Special Landscape Areas

Final Report

for

Cotswold District Council

February 2001

WHITE consultants

35 Severn Grove

Cardiff

CF11 9EN

Tel: 029 2064 0971

Fax: 029 2066 4362

Email: sw@whiteconsultants.prestel.co.uk

Cover: View of the Thames near Kemble

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>		<i>After Page</i>	
SECTION A: INTRODUCTION		FIGURES		
1.0	Introduction	3	Figure 1: Kemble/Ewen Special Landscape Area	12
2.0	Planning Context	4	Figure 2: North Cirencester Special Landscape Area	14
3.0	Rationale and Evaluation Criteria	7	Figure 3: Coln Valley north of Fairford Special Landscape Area .	16
SECTION B: SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS		Figure 4: Barrington Downs Special Landscape Area	17	
<i>Special Landscape Areas recommended for designation</i>				
4.0	Kemble/Ewen	11	Figure 5: Moreton-in-Marsh Surrounds Special Landscape Area	19
5.0	North Cirencester	13	Figure 6: Norton Hall Special Landscape Area	20
6.0	Coln Valley north of Fairford	15	Figure 7: Long Newnton/Fosse Way Special Landscape Area	21
7.0	Barrington Downs	17	Figure 8: Southrop Special Landscape Area	22
8.0	Moreton-in-Marsh Surrounds	18	Figure 9: Fyfield Special Landscape Area	23
9.0	Norton Hall	20		
<i>Existing Special Landscape Areas not recommended for redesignation</i>				
10.0	Long Newnton/Fosse Way	21		
11.0	Southrop	22		
12.0	Fyfield	23		
SECTION C: OVERALL LANDSCAPE POLICY ISSUES				
13.0	Overall Landscape Policy Issues	25		
APPENDIX 1				
Bibliography				

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Commission

1.1 Cotswold District Council is undertaking a review of its first District-wide Local Plan, adopted in August 1999. As part of that review, White Consultants were appointed in July 2000 to carry out a review of the existing Special Landscape Areas. This review builds upon a previous study completed by the consultancy in June 2000, which assessed the landscape of the following three major undesignated areas in the District outside the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty [AONB]:

- Cirencester/Upper Thames Valley
- Moreton-in-Marsh Surrounds
- Vale of Evesham

1.2 A further concurrent study was carried out, which assessed the landscapes around nineteen key settlements selected by the Council. That study identified where development would be suitable or unsuitable in terms of impact on the landscape.

1.3 The Cotswolds benefits from a high quality landscape- 77% of the district is covered by the Cotswolds AONB designation. This was reviewed in 1990 by a Countryside Commission Study [*The Cotswold Landscape' CCP 294*].

These studies form the primary landscape context documents for the District.

The Study Brief

1.4 Cotswold District has two types of local countryside designation identified in the current Local Plan- Special Landscape Areas [SLA's] and protective open space policy areas. This report assesses all of the current SLA's.

1.5 The purpose of the study is to:

- Assess the qualities of the countryside within the SLA's.
- Assess whether the designations are justified in landscape quality terms, in relation to Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Review Policies NHE.1 and NHE.5 and Cotswold District Local Plan Policy 20.
- Consider the appropriateness of the policy wording in relation to the landscape qualities within the respective designations
- Assess whether the boundaries of the designations are appropriate, and recommend amendments as necessary

The location of the each area is shown in Figures 1-9 which relate to the relevant appraisals.

The Methodology

1.6 Two qualified and experienced landscape architects, both Members of the Landscape Institute, undertook the study. Both were authors of the two previous White Consultant reports ['Assessment of Landscapes outside Cotswolds AONB' and 'Study of Land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District', both dated June 2000]. The criteria for designating SLA's were agreed, based on current best practice and guidance, and reviewing the relevant development plan documents. Both assessors then visited each area together, examining the suitability of each designation and defining potential boundaries. The report was then prepared, refining boundaries after further discussion.

1.7 As was concluded in the previous landscape reports, information, particularly on the history of landscapes outside the AONB, is scarce. A further study could further enhance knowledge and the perception of value of these landscapes within Cotswold District.

Structure of the Report

1.8 The report is divided into three sections. In Section A, Chapter 1.0 addresses the commission, the brief and the methodology, Chapter 2.0 sets out the planning context at national, county and local level and Chapter 3.0 puts forward the rationale and evaluation criteria. In Section B, Chapters 4.0-12.0 appraise each SLA in turn. In Section C, overall landscape policy issues are briefly considered in Chapter 13.0.

2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 The planning context in relation to landscape matters is discussed below. These include the main policies which relate to Special Landscape Areas [SLA's] and also landscape planning guidance. In the consideration of landscape, current guidance suggests that nature conservation, historical and cultural values should also be taken into account.

Planning Policy Guidance: General Policy and Principles [PPG1 February 1997]

2.2 The following extracts are particularly relevant:

'A sustainable planning framework should:

- *conserve both the cultural heritage and natural resources [including wildlife, landscape, water, soil and air quality].....' [para 5]*

'.....it is fundamental to the Government's policies for environmental stewardship that there should be effective protection for our historic environment. Those aspects of our past that have been identified as being of historic importance are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside.' [para 32]

Planning Policy Guidance: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development [PPG7 February 1997]

2.3 This PPG addresses local countryside designations, specifically:

'Over the years, local authorities have introduced a multiplicity of local countryside designations, such as Areas of Great Landscape Value. These designations carry less weight than national designations, and development plans should not apply the same policies to them. They may unduly restrict acceptable development and economic activity without identifying the particular features of the local countryside which need to be respected and enhanced. Local planning authorities should only maintain or extend local countryside designations where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection. They should state in

their plans what it is that requires extra protection and why. When they review their development plans, they should rigorously consider the function and justification of existing local countryside designations. They should ensure that they are soundly based on a formal assessment of the qualities of the countryside, or the contribution of sites such as 'strategic gaps' or 'green wedges' to urban form and urban areas.' [para 4.16]

Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty [AONB]

2.4 The AONB was designated by the National Parks Commission in 1966. It is the largest AONB in England and Wales. The AONB was reviewed in 1990 and an assessment of landscape character quality carried out. Boundary changes occurred as a result of this assessment. In 'The Cotswold Landscape' [Countryside Commission CCP294], the consultant's criteria for natural beauty put an emphasis on visual quality, but geology, topography, flora and fauna, historical and cultural aspects were also considered relevant. The area defined was considered distinctive, outstanding and of national interest. The approach used was based on Countryside Commission report 'Landscape Assessment: A Countryside Commission Approach' CCD18 [1987].

2.5 The report [CCP294] concluded that the outstanding qualities of the area were the following:

- **Visual unity** created by the underlying rock, oolitic limestone, which blends topography, vegetation and settlement in harmony. Recurrent visual themes include stone walls, wolds, beech woods, Roman roads, woollen towns, manor houses and parks and water meadows.
- **Unique vernacular architecture** based on the common use of limestone, creating settlements which are the epitome of English vernacular architecture. The standard of workmanship in even the most humble dwellings combine with a simple and consistent classic style which has been copied throughout the area over the centuries.
- **The rural idyll** of the Cotswolds is deeply rooted in modern psyche. This is perhaps based on the Cotswolds' long history of habitation and the perception in the 20th century that time has stood still in the area.
- **Scenic diversity** of the limestone belt, including scarp, high wold and dip slope valleys. The grandeur of views from ridges and plateaux to the valleys is unmatched.

Gloucestershire County Council Policies

2.6 Some of the SLA's, or parts of them, were originally designated within an Area of Great Landscape Value [AGLV] in the County Development Plan [1955]. The AGLV formed the basis of what became the Cotswold AONB. However, when the AONB effectively subsumed the AGLV, certain parts of the latter were omitted.

2.7 The first Gloucestershire Structure Plan [1982] introduced the concept of SLA's. Areas that were formerly in the AGLV but omitted from the AONB were shown as SLA's on the Structure Plan's Key Diagram. The explanatory text stated there was a particular need to examine those areas, and their relationship with the AONB boundaries, in order that the SLA's could be defined in more detail. A project report setting out the framework for the preparation of the 'Landscape Designations Local Plan for Gloucestershire' was prepared by the County Council in November 1985, but the study was not subsequently undertaken.

2.8 Structure Plan Policy L5 read as follows:

'Priority will be given to the protection of landscape in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Special attention to the protection of landscape will also be given in SLA's and areas sensitive to development pressures....'

2.9 The 1990 review of the Cotswold AONB provided an opportunity for both County and District authorities to reconsider landscape designations around the periphery of the AONB. This resulted in the following:

- Confirmation that Barrington Downs [Figure 4] and Fyfold [Figure 9] - both deleted from the AONB were suitable for redesignation as SLA's.
- Reaffirmation that the following areas formerly designated as AGLV, were suitable for designation as SLA's:
 - i. Long Newnton/Fosse Way [Figure 7]
 - ii. Coln Valley north of Fairford [Figure 3]
 - iii. Southrop [Figure 8]
 - iv. Moreton-in-Marsh surrounds [Figure 5]
- The following areas, previously undesignated, were considered suitable for designation as SLA's:
 - i. Kemble/Ewen [Figure 1]
 - ii. North Cirencester [Figure 2]
 - iii. Norton Hall [Figure 6]
- The following areas, previously designated as AGLV, should not be designated as SLA's:
 - i. Kemble Airfield [part]

- ii. Land between Willersey and Weston-sub-Edge at the foot of the Cotswold escarpment

2.10 The Gloucestershire Structure Plan First Alteration [1992] maintained the 1982 policy unchanged. However, the explanatory text changed slightly to put the onus on District-wide Local Plans to examine SLA's and define their precise boundaries. Hence, the definition of SLA's in the Cotswold District Local Plan.

2.11 The policy in relation to SLA's was revised in the Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Review [1999]. This states, in Policy NHE.5:

'Provision should not be made for development that would detract from the particular landscape qualities and character of Special Landscape Areas. The broad locations of Special Landscape Areas are as follows:

- a) *the north eastern and north western fringes of the Cotswolds*
- b) *on the southern fringes of the Cotswolds near Cirencester, Tetbury and Fairford*
- c) *areas in the south eastern Cotswolds which were formerly part of the Cotswold AONB*

.....

The precise boundaries of, and additions to, the Special Landscape Areas will be identified in local plans..'

2.12 The explanatory text states that:

'SLA's are areas that are not designated as AONB but are of comparable high quality and require special attention in the implementation of planning policy. Identifiable physical features should define their boundaries such as

- i) *breaks in slope and any important foreground setting to a change in slope and/or*
- ii) *change in landscape character'*

2.13 The overall policy on the countryside in the Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Review [1999], NHE.1, is relevant to consideration of the landscape as a whole. This states:

'The countryside's character, appearance and non-renewable natural resources will be protected from harmful development unless the social and economic needs of the area or the wider environmental objectives outweigh such harm.'

2.14 Policy NHE.6 provides the following guidance with respect to the historic elements of the landscape:

'The distinctive historic environment of the County will be conserved and enhanced. Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and their settings will be preserved.'

'Historic settlements and landscape, historic parks and gardens, sites of archaeological importance will be protected from the adverse effects of development'

2.15 Nature conservation Policy NHE.2 says that Local Plans should identify:

'sites of nature conservation importance including unfragmented and linear features such as small woods, traditional field boundaries, ponds and disused railways which act as wildlife corridors or stepping stones...'

Cotswold District Local Plan [1999]

2.16 The adopted District-wide policy [20] for SLA's reads:

'Special attention will be given to the protection or enhancement of the landscape character of the SLA's, as shown on the Proposals Map and Insets. Development will be permitted only if it respects the particular character or appearance of the SLA. Account will be taken of the economic and social needs of local communities.'

2.17 Explanatory text indicates that the existing SLA's merit protection adjacent to the AONB and goes on to state:

'Although not of the same importance by national standards, they are attractive in their own right and of particular local and County-wide importance. In several instances they provide the important foreground setting for adjacent AONB areas.'

2.18 Regarding broader countryside protection issues, the Plan states that;

'the river valleys of the Cotswolds are one of its greatest assets, of particular value to wildlife, and merit specific protection.'
[4.19]

2.19 All areas discussed in Chapters 4.0 to 12.0 were included as SLA's under Policy 20.

3.0 RATIONALE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

3.1 The rationale behind our judgement on SLA's are set out below:

Purpose of SLA Designation

3.2 The purpose of SLA designation is to provide a second tier of landscape protection below the national designations of AONB's [and National Parks]. Whereas the Cotswolds AONB is well defined, the Special Landscape Areas in the District have not been rigorously assessed against the appropriate criteria.

3.3 It is important to emphasise that the SLA designation identifies those landscapes which are of particularly high intrinsic value and which may require special protection for their own sake as part of the District's landscape resource. The designation should be based on a formal assessment of the qualities of the area. It is not intended to be a multi-purpose designation to protect landscapes for other reasons, such as to prevent urban sprawl and the coalescence of settlements, to protect the setting of settlements or to maintain corridors of green space within urban areas for the purposes of recreation or general amenity. Other designations [such as Protected Open Space policies] are more appropriate to serve these functions.

Definition of SLA's

3.4 It is anticipated that the proposed SLA's will be included in the reviewed Local Plan and they will be a material consideration both in the determination of planning applications and in assisting the Council's strategic planning functions. The final selection of areas for designation and boundary definition will be the responsibility of the Council, taking into account the advice contained in this report and the response to the consultation process as part of the Local Plan Review.

Designation Criteria

3.5 The criteria used to evaluate areas for SLA designation recognise that the landscape is not simply a scenic or visual resource but that factors such as ecology, history and culture have a bearing upon the way landscape is experienced and valued. Separate designations for areas of nature conservation and historic value already exist. Within the context of landscape evaluation they add value and inform the case for designation.

3.6 The criteria used are as follows:

Landscape as a resource: Landscape valued because it is rare or particularly representative or typical of a landscape type.

Landscape Quality: The extent to which the character of a landscape type is demonstrated by the presence of key characteristics, the absence of atypical or incongruous features, its intactness and integrity and good state of repair.

Scenic Quality: Perceived combination of pattern of elements, aesthetic quality, sense of place and other more intangible qualities.

Consensus: Consensus of opinion on the importance of the landscape formed by the public, informed professionals, interest groups, artists, writers and other media.

Conservation Interests: The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical interest which add value to the landscape.

Other Values: For example, value pertaining to wilderness qualities, cultural associations or tranquillity.

3.7 These are based on criteria for valued landscapes in 'Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance' [The Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage 1999].

3.8 In the context of SLA's within Cotswold District, the following characteristics are evident within and adjacent to the AONB:

Landscape as a Resource & Landscape Quality
3.9 Both these criteria relate to the landscape character types. They suggest that valued landscapes can be good or rare examples of the landscape types represented within Cotswold District. Covering, or close to, the areas being considered in this report there are examples of the following landscape types as identified in the recent report 'Assessment of Landscape outside the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty':

- Lower Dipslope
- Lower Dipslope Valleys
- Dipslope/Thames Valley Transition
- Thames Valley
- Cotswold Fringe Clay Vales
- Clay Vale of Evesham

3.10 The other area under consideration, Barrington Downs forms part of the dipslope as described in 'The Cotswold Landscape' report on the AONB.

3.11 Atypical features are taken as those which do not relate to the general rural character of the areas under consideration. On the whole, these incongruous features and qualities are not of sufficient proportion to intrude on the wider landscape. Therefore they are considered as insufficient reason, in themselves, for the removal of SLA designations. These features include power lines, new roads and large buildings.

Scenic Quality:

3.12 The following characteristics are evident:

- Broad scale rolling flow of vales and gentle plateau.
- Distinct edges to valley sides giving clear contrasts between plateau, valley side and valley floor.
- Simple large-scale patterns, regular fields and woodlands superimposed on rolling landforms.
- Intricate combinations of hedges, variety of trees, woodlands and water in valleys.
- The intrinsic scenic values of large-scale open upland landscapes and intimate valley landscapes are enhanced by their juxtaposition. The transition between the two is of value as this is the only area where one can see the other character area.
- Long rural panoramic views over lower land to distant higher ground.
- Views to typical Cotswold settlements, often focussing on church spires or towers, helping to give a sense of place, of orientation and arrival.
- Strong relationship of buildings and settlements to the landscape. Settlements are often dominated by a wool church and manor house which are set amongst trees and viewed across fields which penetrate into the built area.
- The continuity of use for centuries of local stone for all construction including roofs and boundary walls.
- The siting of villages and towns on valleys sides and adjacent to water so that there is always a backdrop of countryside and close physical links between the settlement and its surrounding landscape.

Consensus

3.13 Consensus has been achieved to an extent through the adopted Local Plan which included the current SLA designations and which went through the full statutory process. The suggested changes will need to be tested as part of the Local Plan review.

3.14 It can also be stated that the Cotswolds as a whole are generally considered as quintessential English landscape and are a popular tourist destination. Therefore those areas and features that are specifically visited or promoted can be considered as representing some degree of overall consensus of opinion of their special value. In the

context of the study areas, these include much-visited towns and villages such as Cirencester and Moreton-in-Marsh, and popular walks such as the Thames Path National Trail.

Conservation Interest

3.15 Many areas in the Cotswolds exhibit the characteristics of long habitation by man with distinctive marks on the landscape. These, in turn, have resulted in a variety of wildlife habitats.

3.16 Instances of these are seen where:

- Roman and other ancient routes still cross the landscape
- Earthworks remain of mediaeval villages and their surrounding ridge and furrow cultivations
- Streams and small rivers have been utilised over the centuries for mills, controlled flooding of water meadows, sheep washes and numerous other uses
- Woodland and trees have been managed to provide a variety of products and give long-established habitats

Other Values

Tranquillity:

3.17 In the past hundred years or so, the Cotswolds have become renowned as a rural idyll, where change has happened slowly and industry and development do not intrude. Though this has been eroded to an extent by tourism and modern development, a sense of tranquillity is apparent in many areas.

Visibility:

3.18 Some of the landscapes under consideration are additionally valuable because they are seen and appreciated by many people. This is the case -

- where there are strong visual links between town and country
- where the landscapes form an integral part of the approaches to, and therefore perception of, a settlement
- where well-used routes pass close by and the adjacent landscape influences the overall perception of the Cotswolds from the route

Relationship with AONB:

3.19 In some places, there is no clear distinction in landscape character and qualities between the AONB and adjacent non-AONB areas. Where, therefore, some of the key Cotswold characteristics extend outside the AONB, these marginal areas are considered to form integral parts of the AONB landscape character areas and are often of comparable value to the AONB.

Boundary Criteria

3.20 The criteria for defining boundaries are as follows:

- The inclusion of areas of similar character or topography
- Adoption of boundaries which follow clearly defined features on the ground
- The inclusion of features of ecological or historical value
- The inclusion of boundary settlements where they add to the quality of the area but not otherwise
- Exclusion of large scale
 - visually intrusive industry
 - mineral extraction
 - other inharmonious development

3.21 In many cases, the definition of exact boundaries is difficult as the change in character and value changes gradually without an obvious cut-off point. The land either side of a proposed boundary may therefore not show clear differences.

Calibration of Value

3.22 The assessment of landscapes outside the Cotswolds AONB [White Consultants, 2000] has described character without making final judgements on value. In order to define the validity of the current SLA's, the following calibration of value has been taken into account:

Outstanding: generally equating to areas or elements of international or national importance [eg National Park, AONB]

High: equating to areas of County or District importance [SLA]

Moderate: equating to areas of local importance

Low: equating to areas of low importance within the local context.

SECTION B

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

4.0 KEMBLE/EWEN

Origin of Designation:

4.1 The area was identified as an SLA following the 1990 review of the Cotswolds AONB, the precise boundaries being defined in the Cotswold District Local Plan. The 'pan handle' west of Jackaments Bottom previously formed part of the AGLV.

Recommendation:

4.2 We recommend that much of the original area remains an SLA, but that the boundaries are redefined to exclude the southern plateau and northern parts close to Cirencester, and to extend the boundary to the south-east of Ewen to include the Thames corridor.

Description of Area:

4.3 The Kemble/Ewen SLA lies to the east of the A433 main Tetbury/Cirencester road. This is where the Cotswold lower dipslope merges with the lowlands of the Thames valley. The arable land of the low undulating plateau is interspersed with the lush pastoral lands of the small valleys that carry the headwaters of the Thames. These valleys form the basis of this SLA and are more pronounced in the western part of the area, opening out downstream to become shallower and less distinct as they gather to form the young Thames. From the main roads, these valleys with small woodlands add an intimacy to the landscape. Away from the main roads, the area is generally quiet and views are possible across several fields at a time. The spire of Kemble church is seen from much of the area projecting above the hedgetops. The small village of Ewen, adjacent to the Thames, has many traditional buildings and retains its essentially rural character. Other settlements consist only of a few scattered farms. Crossing the area is a dismantled railway which now appears as a linear woodland, adding interest and enclosure. This woodland also helps to screen the adjacent airfield in the south, the fringes of Cirencester in the north and defines the north-western edge of Kemble. Along with the remaining tree-lined sections of the disused Thames and Severn Canal there are features of some historic and nature conservation interest. The Thames Path National Trail crosses the area, following this important river from its source at Thames Head, which is just within the AONB.

Summary of Key Landscape Qualities:

- 4.4 The key qualities of the area are as follows:
- Gently undulating low plateau with medium and large arable fields bounded by good hedges;
 - Small pastoral valleys with woodlands;
 - Clear open streams providing good habitats and visual interest;

- Linear woodlands forming enclosure and screening;
- Small unspoilt village of Ewen

Justification for Recommendation:

- 4.5 Our recommendation to maintain an SLA in this area is made on the grounds that:
- This is an area that clearly illustrates the smaller-scale valley/plateau characteristics of the lower dipslope and its transition to the Thames valley.
 - Scenically, the gentle landform with small valleys and streams, the wooded areas associated with former railways and canal, and the attractive village of Ewen combine to form a pleasing landscape.
 - There are a variety of sites with nature conservation interest and some historic interest relating to the former railway and canal and the wetlands of the Thames corridor.
 - Although close to main routes and towns, this area retains a quiet atmosphere.
 - These are the headwaters of the most culturally significant river in Britain.

Explanation of Boundary:

- 4.6 It is recommended that the boundaries of the SLA are as follows:
- The western finger of the SLA remains the same and is bounded by the AONB to its north and the edge of Kemble airfield to the south.
 - The remainder of the north-western boundary remains the same and is contiguous with the AONB boundary along the A433 Fosse Way.
 - The northern boundary is drawn back from the original alignment and follows field and woodland edges between the A433 and the minor road from Siddington to Ewen.
 - The eastern boundary, partly redefined, follows minor roads and paths, skirting east of Ewen and the Thames.
 - The redefined south-eastern boundary follows field boundaries crossing the Thames and is contiguous with the Cotswold Water Park boundary.
 - The redefined southern boundary follows minor roads to Kemble and closely skirts around the settlement to the north. It continues along the A429 Kemble/Malmesbury road to the edge of Kemble airfield.

Justification of Boundary Changes:

4.7 Area 2A is included to take in the stretch of the young Thames in its unspoilt shallow valley setting as it flows towards the more disturbed landscape associated with sand and gravel workings. Included in this area is the eastern part of the attractive village of Ewen whereas the original SLA boundary passed through the centre of the village.

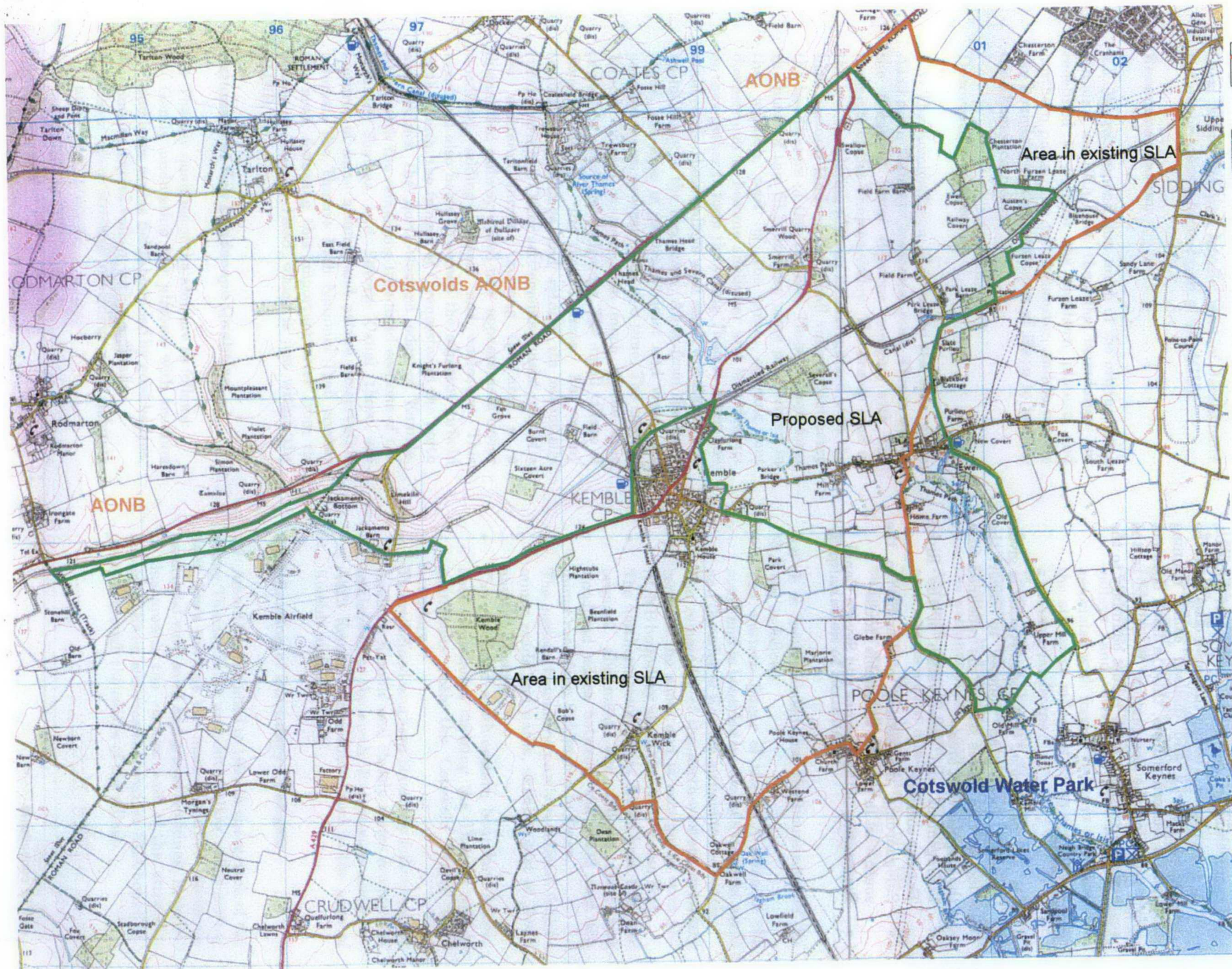
4.8 Area 2B is excluded as this covers an extensive area to the south of Kemble of intensively farmed plateau with no special features or qualities.

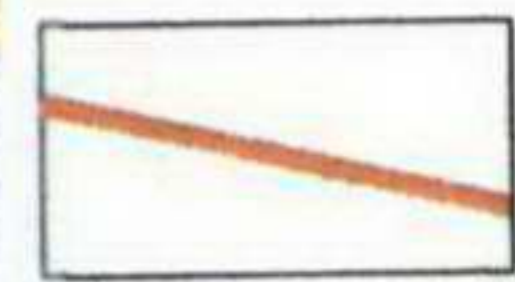
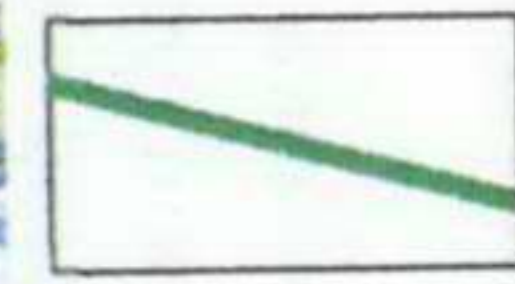
4.9 Area 2C in the north-east is excluded as it is a relatively open, flat, intensively farmed area affected by extensive views to the undistinguished and encroaching fringes of the Cirencester suburbs, and by power lines. Though this area does have the dismantled railway and disused canal running through its eastern fringes, this, in itself does not merit retaining the designation. Woodland to the south west provides a more robust boundary to the SLA.

Other Issues:

4.10 It is recommended that consideration is given to providing local plan policies to cover the following specific issues within the redefined SLA and the original SLA area -

- Management and conservation of the River Thames corridor;
- Safeguarding the setting of Kemble to the south-east in relation to Kemble House
- Restoration of the Thames and Severn Canal.



-  Existing Boundary recommended for modification
-  Proposed Boundary

0 1.5 km
 Scale
 North to top of page

Figure 1
**KEMBLE/EWEN
 Special Landscape
 Area**

5.0 NORTH CIRENCESTER

Origin of Designation:

5.1 The area was identified as an SLA following the 1990 review of the Cotswolds AONB. The Gloucestershire Structure Plan First Alteration [1992] indicated the North Cirencester SLA on the Key Diagram and the Cotswold District Local Plan [1999] defined the detailed boundaries.

Recommendation:

5.2 We recommend that this area, in its entirety, continues to be designated as a SLA as we have identified it as being of high landscape value.

Description of Area:

5.3 The Area lies immediately to the north of Cirencester and is bounded by the AONB to the north, east and west [see Figure 2]. Two distinct landscape character types are represented, namely the Cotswold lower dipslope in the east and one of the lower dipslope valleys in the west.

5.4 In common with other parts of the lower dipslope, the land to the east of The Whiteway generally dips southwards giving wide or panoramic views. This is especially true of the northern, more elevated, parts of the area. The fine tower of the Church of St John the Baptist is seen rising above trees at intervals from several places, including the historically important approach to the town along The Whiteway, which borders the rugby ground on its southernmost stretch. The regular layout of fields and strong woodland structure lends an ordered, uncluttered, appearance to the landscape which has more enclosed parkland qualities on the southern slopes. This landscape penetrates between blocks of 20th century housing close to the historic core of Cirencester and abuts the Abbey Grounds. Together, these landscapes act as a green wedge which penetrates into the centre of the town. Recreational uses, such as the rugby club, cricket ground [near Cirencester] and recreation ground [at Stratton] are included in the SLA as they form an integral part of the landscape close to the settlements.

5.5 In contrast, the Churn valley, typically a distinct, flat-bottomed valley, is much more intimate and finely grained. Although overlooked by housing to some extent on either side, most of it retains its pastoral character. There are small fields, paddocks and allotments, and a variety of trees and small woods on the valley sides, with willows along the small water courses. Stratton and the Bowling Green estate intrude visually to an extent, but their well-tree'd appearance softens their impact. On the other hand, the small village of Baunton, built primarily of natural Cotswold stone

and nestling on the lower valley side, adds to the attractive character of the valley.

5.6 Many parts of the area are conspicuous from busy routes into and around Cirencester. However, the 1997 bypass [A417T] which cuts through the area, partly in cutting, is not seen or heard at a distance due to a combination of topography and vegetation cover.

5.7 Aspects of the important ancient roots of Cirencester are evident in the area. These include the prehistoric Tar Barrow, the Roman roads and ancient Whiteway, and the historic landscape associated with Cirencester Abbey and the Chester-Master estate.

Summary of Key Landscape Qualities:

5.8 The key landscape qualities are:

- Large-scale regular grain of elevated plateau landscape;
- Clearly defined valley sides and floor;
- Strong woodland belts on the dipslope, giving shelter and enclosure;
- Well-tree'd valley sides;
- River corridor vegetation.
- Visual links with the old core of Cirencester, in particular views to the Church of St John the Baptist;
- Historic landscapes of the Chester-Master Abbey estate;
- Traditional Cotswold character of Baunton.

Justification for Recommendation:

5.9 Our recommendation is based on the grounds that:

- The proximity of this typical lower dipslope valley and plateau landscape to the historic core of Cirencester reflects an important characteristic of the Cotswolds landscape's relationship with its settlements, with key views from higher ground and along the valley to the Parish church.
- The area penetrates into the built area close to the attractive historic core of Cirencester.
- This landscape retains its integrity and exhibits many of the key characteristics of the bordering AONB landscape types to the north and west. Elements such as the recent bypass, pylons and housing on the edges of the town are detractors, but are not sufficiently intrusive to exclude parts of the area from the SLA.
- The scenic qualities of the small-scale enclosed landscape of the Churn valley contrasting with the large-scale regular patterns of the plateau are aesthetically pleasing.
- Within the SLA there are a variety of features of historic landscape interest worthy of conservation, e.g. The Whiteway, Abbey Estate, and areas of wildlife interest e.g. Churn Valley

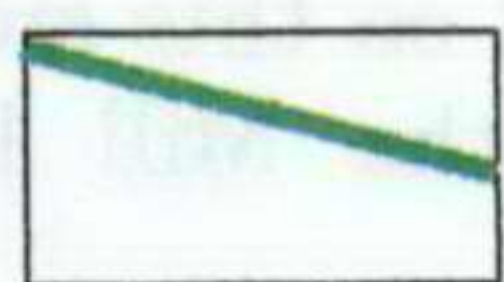
Explanation of Boundary

5.10 It is recommended that the boundaries remain the same as the current SLA. The boundaries are drawn close around the built-up areas on the northern side of Cirencester and Stratton so that the SLA forms a strong link between the AONB and the town. Clear boundaries, such as roads or watercourses, have been defined wherever possible. The boundaries are described as follows:

- The northern and eastern boundaries are contiguous with the AONB designation and reflect the fact that the landscape is similar on either side of the boundary. The boundary runs between the edge of Stratton, passing through the village of Baunton, and then following the A429 Stow Road from Shooters Hill south to Burford Road.
- The south eastern boundary follows the well defined line of Burford Road to its junction with Grove Lane to include the Chester-Master estate land. Views over the eastern areas of Cirencester lie to the south.
- The south eastern boundary skirts the edge of the town, following the edge of Grove Lane, contiguous with the Conservation Area boundary and the Abbey Grounds. The Bowling Green housing estate forms a northern extension of Cirencester, around which the SLA skirts. The Whiteway forms a well defined edge before the boundary turns west and then south around the estate down to a track close to the valley floor and skirting allotments.
- The southern boundary is formed by the River Churn/Mill Pound, as this forms a logical edge to Cirencester.
- The boundary then turns northwards, where it meets with the AONB and follows this contiguously up the Daglingworth stream. At the Gloucester Road it carries on northwards, hugging the eastern built-up edge of Stratton, including open space, until it reaches Baunton Lane, which forms the northern boundary.



Scale approx. 1:25,000
North to top of page



Existing and Proposed
Boundary

NORTH CIRENCESTER Special Landscape Area

Figure 2

6.0 COLN VALLEY NORTH OF FAIRFORD

Origin of Designation:

6.1 Most of this area was originally designated as part of the Cotswold Area of Great Landscape Value in the County Development Plan but was omitted from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty when it was designated in 1966. A small additional area, to the north-east, near Leafield Farm, was included in the SLA when the precise boundaries were defined in the Cotswold District Local Plan.

Recommendation:

6.2 We recommend that this area continues to be designated as a Special Landscape Area with minor boundary alterations reducing the area in the north-east and extending the margins in the south-west.

Description of Area:

6.3 Lying immediately to the north of Fairford, this area consists primarily of the landscape character type defined as lower dipslope valley with the margins being the edges of the lower dipslope plateau. The secluded, very attractive Coln valley has the typically Cotswold stone village of Quenington nestling on its slopes just above the flood plain in the north. In the south it extends through to the heart of Fairford. Here, the beautiful tower of the church, set amongst trees and gardens, and overlooking the meadows, provides good views from the main road.

6.4 From within the valley, views are limited and woodland on the slopes adds to the sense of enclosure. The patterns of wooded slopes, small fields bounded by good hedges or stone walls, the meandering river, ponds and mill races with waterside willows combine to give pleasing aspects and a distinct sense of place. This small-scale intimate landscape provides a delightful contrast to the adjacent, more open, large-scale dipslope. Here, on the eastern side of the valley, the patterns of large regular fields are enhanced by the parkland layout of Fairford Park. Much of the area is owned and managed by the Ernest Cook Trust. Integrated into this parkland are two schools and their grounds. Within the area are several valley side woodlands and grasslands of high nature conservation value as well as the river corridor itself. The many features relating to the management and use of the river are also of historic interest.

Summary of Key Landscape Qualities:

6.5 The key qualities of the area are as follows:

- Large-scale regular grain of parkland plateau landscape;
- Clearly-defined valley sides and floor;
- Visual links with Fairford;
- Unspoilt character of Quenington;
- Use of Cotswold stone for all buildings, walls and other built features;
- Woodland of valley sides and individual trees relating to river corridor;
- Variety of water features from various periods

Justification for Recommendation:

- 6.6 Our recommendation is based on the following:
- As a landscape resource, this area is typical of the lower dipslope valleys and surrounds before they merge with the Thames valley.
 - In terms of landscape quality, this area is a fine example of the landscape character types, having most of the key characteristics and no incongruous features and being in a good state of repair.
 - Scenically, it has many attractive features where vegetation, stone and water are integrated within a clearly-defined valley.
 - Around Fairford this area is well-used for informal recreation by local people as an interesting and accessible area of countryside.
 - Conservation interests are well represented here, in particular the ancient woodlands of the valley sides, the historic interest of the parkland and the river.
 - The relationship of the valley to the historic heart of Fairford helps to make this landscape special.

Explanation of Revised Boundary:

6.7 It is recommended that the boundaries of the SLA are as follows:

- The northern boundary, contiguous with the AONB boundary, follows the minor road to the north of Quenington as it crosses the valley. This is from the crossroads with the Coln St. Aldwyns road in the west to Netherton in the east;
- It is recommended that the eastern boundary is changed to exclude the part of the dipslope between the aforementioned minor road and Leafield Farm. Therefore it is proposed that the boundary follows the footpath from Netherton southwards and then continues along the minor road along the top of the valley from Quenington to Fairford;
- The southern boundary is defined by the edge of Fairford and, rather than following Mill Lane as it crosses the valley, it is proposed that the boundary is extended to the A417, to include the remaining fields and water meadows of the valley;
- It is proposed that the western boundary is re-aligned to follow the minor road on this side of the valley all the way from the Mill Lane

junction at West End Gardens to the crossroads at Quenington. The current boundary follows the edge of the woodland along the top of the valley

Justification of Boundary Changes:

6.8 Area 4A, between Mill Lane and the A417, is included because it is an integral part of the valley landscape and an important part of the setting of Fairford and the view from the main road.

6.9 Area 4B is included because it is part of the setting of the valley, giving a buffer zone around the lip of the valley and a logical boundary along the road.

6.10 Area 4C is excluded because it is not an integral part of the valley or its immediate surrounds. It does not appear to have particular features or qualities that set it apart from the adjacent lower dip slope landscape.

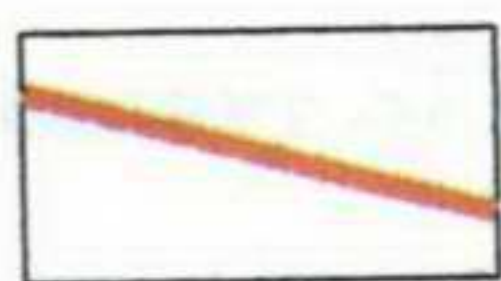
Other Issues:

6.11 It is also recommended that consideration is given to providing local plan policies to cover the following specific issues:

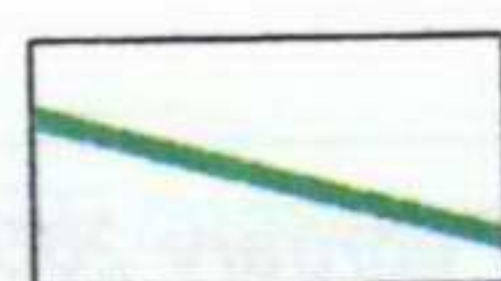
- Conservation of built features of local historic interest within the landscape;
- Habitats relating to River Coln corridor, ancient woodlands and grassland.



Scale approx. 1:25,000
 North to top of page



Existing Boundary recommended for modification



Proposed Boundary

Figure 3

**COLN VALLEY
 NORTH OF FAIRFORD
 Special Landscape Area**

7.0 BARRINGTON DOWNS

Origin of Designation:

7.1 This area was part of the Cotswolds AONB until it was deleted in 1990.

Recommendation:

7.2 We recommend that all of this area continues to be designated as a SLA.

Adjacent Local Designations:

7.3 The adjacent land within West Oxfordshire carries Area of High Landscape Value designation which has been carried through from pre-AONB times.

Description of Area:

7.4 This is an area of rolling wolds lying to the south of the Windrush valley with the A40 to the north and the B4425 Aldsworth to Burford road to the south. Elevated in comparison with the Windrush valley and dipping generally southward, it is a spacious landscape with wide views to parts of the AONB to the south and west. To the east views extend to the distant Ridgeway, and from the northern edge, alongside the busy A40, there are panoramic views. It is typical of the distinct enclosure landscape of the wolds, having regular fields bounded by stone walls in varying states of repair, and blocks of plantation woodland and shelterbelts. This is a landscape of mainly arable farming with scattered farmsteads and barns. The former airfield buildings with grain silos alongside are the only minor unattractive features, close to the AONB boundary. The large proportion of the area to the east is unaffected by these structures.

Summary of Key Landscape Qualities:

7.5 The key qualities of the area are as follows:

- Large-scale regular grain of typical wolds landscape;
- Stone walls for many field boundaries;
- Few and inconspicuous buildings;
- Regular woodland blocks and shelterbelts.
- Elevated area widely visible to the south and with long views

Justification for Recommendation:

7.6 Our recommendation is made on the grounds that:

- This area is very typical of the rolling wolds landscape of the adjacent AONB and an integral part of the broader Cotswold landscape.
- Scenically, it is similar to adjacent parts of the AONB, with its simple pattern of stone walls superimposed on the rolling landform. There

are wide views and no major atypical features, the former airfield not being particularly obtrusive.

- The area is viewed from parts of the AONB and its relationship with the A40 and the Windrush valley is important.

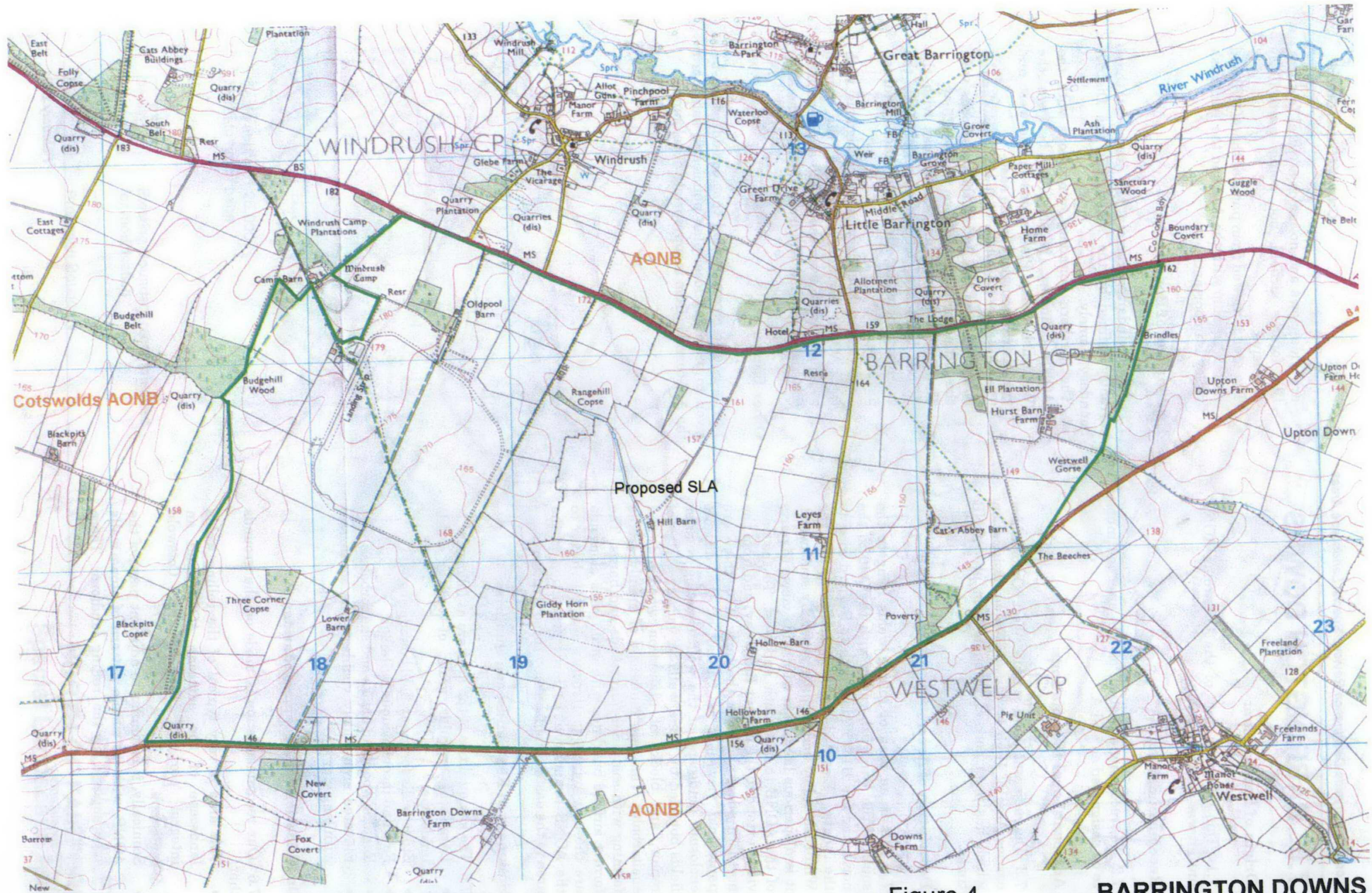
Explanation of Boundary:

7.7 The boundaries remain the same as those currently defined by the AONB and the District boundary, namely:

- The northern boundary, contiguous with the AONB boundary, is the A40 between the Windrush Camp Plantations in the west and the District boundary in the east.
- The eastern boundary follows the District boundary from the A40 to the crossroads with the Little Barrington road on the B4425.
- The southern boundary, contiguous with the AONB boundary, follows the B4225 to the boundary between Aldsworth and Windrush parishes.
- The western boundary, also contiguous with the AONB boundary, follows the parish boundary north from the B4225 and then field boundaries around Windrush Camp to the A40.

Other Issues:

7.8 It is also recommended that consideration be given to providing local plan policies to safeguard the A40 corridor from inappropriate development.



Scale approx. 1:25,000
North to top of page

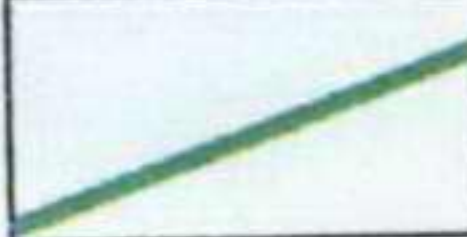
 Existing and Proposed Boundary

Figure 4

**BARRINGTON DOWNS
Special Landscape Area**

8.0 MORETON-IN-MARSH SURROUNDS

Origin of Designation:

8.1 The area was formerly designated within the Area of Great Landscape Value in the County Development Plan. The part to the east of the railway was subsequently included in the AONB, but omitted when that the designation was reviewed in 1990.

Recommendation:

8.2 We recommend that most of this area retains its Special Landscape Area designation with the exclusion of the central section around Moreton-in-Marsh. This effectively splits the area into two separate SLAs - Upper Stour and Upper Evenlode.

Adjacent Local Designations:

8.3 To the north-east of the area, the adjacent parts of Stratford District are designated Special Landscape Area. The part of West Oxfordshire to the east carries the designation of Area of Great Landscape Value.

Description of Area:

8.4 This area lies to the east of the Oxford-Worcester railway line [The Cotswold Line] and the Fosse Way between Moreton and Stow-on-Wold. It consists of the Cotswold fringe clay vales landscape character type with, in the south, the broad vale of the upper Evenlode and, in the north, the rounded hills, ridges and gentle valleys of the headwaters of the River Stour. The wide saucer-shaped Vale of Moreton lies in the centre. Mixed farming, hedges with trees, small meandering streams with willows, and unspoilt villages, built of the local orange stone and brick, are seen within sweeping views to surrounding higher wolds. From roads running down eastward from the wolds there are fine wide views over these vales. The patterns of historic land use and settlement are strong. These features include Fosse Way, the Roman settlement at Dorn, the earthwork remains of several mediaeval villages and areas of ridge and furrow, as well as the more obvious historic villages and patterns of settlement. The young rivers and their associated wetlands are of considerable nature conservation interest and there are several ancient woodlands. This is a quiet, pleasant well-managed rural landscape.

8.5 On the margins lies the market town of Moreton-in-Marsh which is a popular tourist destination with main routes passing through it. Development on its outskirts and the disused airfield, now the Fire Services College, are out of

character and detract from the otherwise rural landscape.

Summary of Key Landscape Qualities:

- 8.6 The key qualities of the area are as follows:
- Wide views to and from higher AONB land;
 - Mixed farming with medium to large fields;
 - Hedges with trees and streamsides;
 - Use of local stone and brick in small villages and scattered farms;
 - Archaeological and historic landscape interest relating to Roman and mediaeval activities;
 - Quiet unspoilt atmosphere.

Justification for Recommendation:

8.7 Our recommendation for the continuance of the SLA is made on the grounds that:

- Within the Cotswold District, these areas are the only example of the clay vales that fringe the Cotswold Hills to the east and therefore important landscape resources for the District
- They illustrate all the key characteristics of the landscape type. Incongruous features are few and are not intrusive within the wider landscape.
- The wide vales with sweeping views to the higher land are aesthetically pleasing and have a tangible sense of place.
- The areas are generally considered to be an essential part of the Cotswolds, adjacent to Moreton-in-Marsh, a popular tourist destination. The landscape qualities are captured in the poem 'Adlestrop' by Edward Thomas (see frontispiece - Adlestrop station was in the extreme south-east of this area).
- There are many features of archaeological and historic interest within the areas.

Explanation of Boundary:

8.8 It is recommended that the boundaries remain the same apart from on the eastern side of Moreton to facilitate the deletion of the Fire Services College. Otherwise, the boundaries remain either contiguous with the AONB or follow the District boundaries. Therefore -

8.9 For Area north of Moreton-in-Marsh [8A]:

- The north and eastern boundaries follow the District/County boundary with Stratford-on-Avon District (Warwickshire).
- The southern boundary skirts the Fire Services College grounds and follows the Moreton to Todenham road.
- The western boundary follows the railway/AONB boundary north of Moreton.
- The north-western boundary is contiguous with the AONB, skirting Paxford and following the B4479.

8.10 For Area south of Moreton-in-Marsh Upper Evenlode [8B]:

- The eastern boundary follows the District/County boundary with West Oxfordshire and is contiguous with the AONB boundary around Adlestrop, the A436 and Oddington.
- The western boundary is contiguous with the AONB boundary, skirting Broadwell and following the Fosse Way south of Moreton.
- The northern boundary skirts the built-up edge of Moreton and follows the A44 to the county boundary.

Justification of Boundary Changes:

8.11 Area 8C is excluded because it consists of a sizeable built-up part of Moreton and the Fire Services College grounds neither of which have qualities in keeping with the rural character of the remainder of the area although much of the former airfield is SSSI- rare unimproved Cotswold grassland.

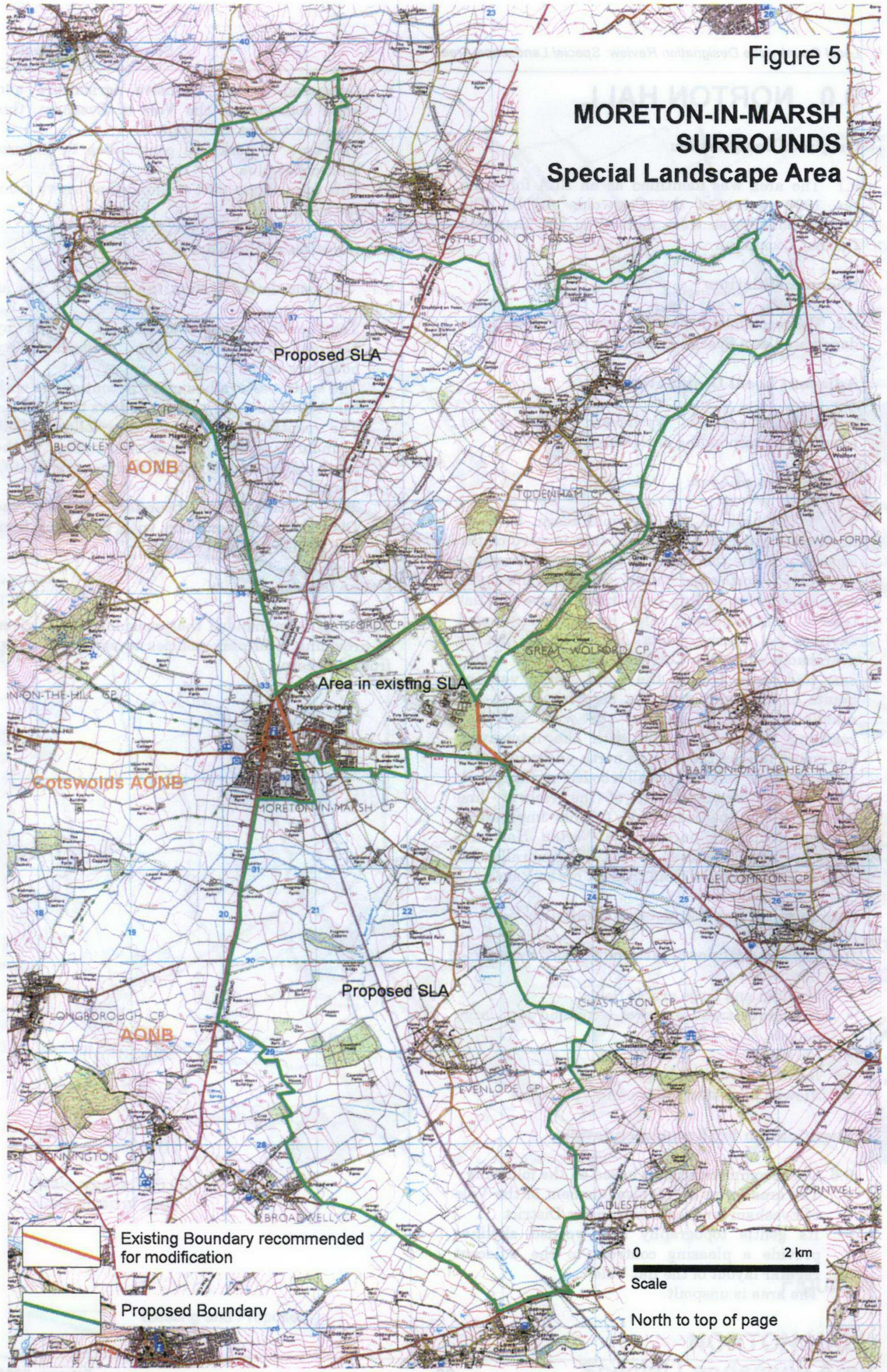
Other Issues:

8.12 It is also recommended that consideration is given to providing local plan policies to cover the following specific issues -

- Design of development around fringes of Moreton and within the Fire Services College grounds;
- Historic landscapes relating to Roman and mediaeval remains;
- Habitats relating to river corridors and woodland.

Figure 5

MORETON-IN-MARSH SURROUNDS Special Landscape Area



9.0 NORTON HALL

Origin of Designation:

9.1 The area was identified as an SLA following the 1990 review of the Cotswolds AONB. The precise boundaries were defined in the Cotswold District Local Plan.

Recommendation:

9.2 We recommend that this area continues to be designated as a Special Landscape Area.

Adjacent Local Designations:

9.3 Adjacent areas of Wychaven District do not have any corresponding designation.

Description of Area:

9.4 At the base of the Cotswold scarp, between Mickleton and Aston Subedge, this is part of the area that forms the edges of the Vale of Evesham extending northward into Worcestershire. It consists of a low rolling ridge rising above the flat land of the adjacent vale. It provides wooded skylines to nearby parts of the Vale but is overshadowed by the Cotswold scarp to the south-east and Meon Hill to the north. From vantage points on the scarp top, the area is seen in the middle distance as part of the wide and far-reaching views. Compared with the intensively cultivated land of the Vale to north and south, this ridge appears relatively well-wooded and natural. The wooded embankments of the railway line passing along the ridge add to this impression. Hidden within its parkland is Norton Hall and there are a few scattered houses, but generally this area is less populated than the rest of the Vale.

Summary of Key Landscape Qualities:

9.5 The key qualities of the area are as follows:

- Low ridge;
- Medium and large arable fields;
- Numerous small areas of woodland and large hedges;
- Parkland;
- Inconspicuous buildings;
- Viewed from scarp above and Vale below

Justification for Recommendation:

9.6 Our recommendation is based on the following:

- The area forms an atypical element of the Vale of Evesham landscape within the District
- Its gentle topography and wooded skylines provide a pleasing contrast to the adjacent regular layout of the flat Vale
- The area is unspoilt.

- Compared to the intensive agriculture and other activities of the Vale of Evesham, this area has a quiet atmosphere.
- The area of parkland contributes to historic landscape value
- This area forms part of important views from the scarp.

Explanation of Boundary:

9.7 The boundaries remain the same and are as follows:

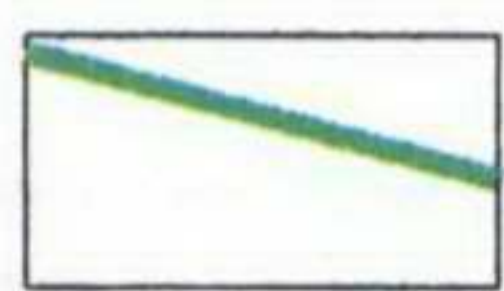
- The north-eastern boundary is formed by Norton Brook from the District/County boundary to the B4632.
- The south-eastern boundary is contiguous with the AONB boundary, which follows the B4632.
- The south-western boundary follows field boundaries along the base of the ridge to the south of Norton Grounds Farm and White's Farm.
- The north-western boundary follows the District/County boundary with Wychavon from Far Polden to Norton Brook.

Other Issues:

9.8 It is recommended that consideration is given to providing local plan policies to safeguard views from the scarp.



Scale approx. 1:25,000
 North to top of page



Existing and Proposed
 Boundary

Figure 6
**NORTON HALL
 Special Landscape Area**

10.0 LONG NEWNTON/ FOSSE WAY

Origin of Designation:

10.1 This area was originally designated as part of the Cotswold Area of Great Landscape Value in the County Development Plan but was omitted from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty when it was designated in 1966.

Recommendation:

10.2 We recommend that this area no longer be designated as a Special Landscape Area.

Adjacent Local Designations:

10.3 Adjacent areas along the fringes of the AONB within North Wiltshire District do not have any corresponding designations.

Description of Area:

10.4 Some 3 kilometres east of Tetbury, this is a small area of land located in the gently rolling lower dip slope to the east of the AONB boundary. It is bounded to the west by the Fosse Way and to north and south by minor roads. This is a secluded, little seen area of mixed farmland where medium-sized fields are bounded by hedges. Boldridge Brake and the large hedges alongside Fosse Way form the skyline and prevent views into or out of the area to east and south. Large sheds, formerly part of the disused airfield to the east in North Wiltshire, remain adjacent to the Fosse Way. These are in non-agricultural use. Grey in colour and partly screened by trees and woodland, these are not unduly obtrusive.

Justification for Recommendation:

10.5 Our recommendation is made on the grounds that:

- As a landscape resource and quality, this area forms only a minor part of the extensive lower dip slope fringe of the Cotswolds.
- Although generally pleasant scenically, it is compromised to a minor extent by the former airfield buildings.
- Although the Fosse Way, on the border of the area, is of high archaeological interest and an important part of the historic landscape, its conservation interest may be best served by means other than that of SLA designation. The same applies to any nature conservation interest relating to Boldridge Brake.

Other Issues:

10.6 It is recommended that consideration is given to providing local plan policies to cover the following specific issues -

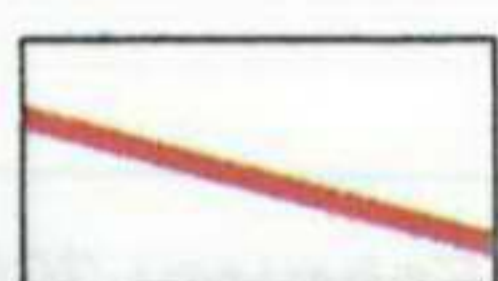
- Development/re-use of airfield buildings in open countryside;
- Historic landscapes related to Fosse Way;
- Habitats/woodland management at Boldridge Brake.



Scale approx. 1:25,000
 North to top of page

Figure 7

**LONG NEWTON/FOSSE WAY
 Existing Special Landscape Area**



Existing Boundary

11.0 SOUTHROP

Origin of Designation:

11.1 This area was formerly designated within the Area of Great Landscape Value in the County Development Plan but, with the exception of a small area near Great Lemhill Farm, was omitted from the AONB when it was designated in 1966. That small area had originally been included in the AONB but was deleted from it in 1990.

Recommendation:

11.2 We recommend that this area is no longer designated as a Special Landscape Area

Description of Area:

11.3 This area lies to the west and south of Southrop and the small finger of AONB that extends south-eastwards along the River Leach. To the south-west it is defined by the ancient Salt Way. It is a rather featureless and mainly flat part of the lower dip slope, consisting primarily of large regular arable fields with low hedges and a few isolated buildings. Although not dissimilar to adjacent parts of the AONB to the north, it lacks the stone walls, and large tree blocks and does not enjoy such extensive views across the Thames valley. A disused airfield is sited in the north-western third of the area which, although not conspicuous, lends an air of neglect to some of that part of the area.

Justification for Recommendation:

11.4 Our recommendation is made on the grounds that:

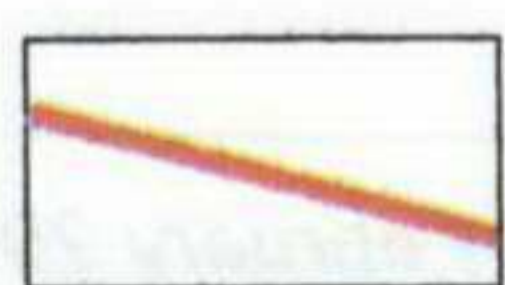
- This area is not particularly representative of the lower dip slope landscape character type and the key characteristics and features that define the dip slope are not particularly well demonstrated here.
- The flatness and lack of vertical elements gives a rather monotonous landscape and the area lacks much sense of place.
- There are no special features of conservation interest or other qualities of particular value in this intensively cultivated landscape.



Scale approx. 1:25,000
North to top of page

Figure 8

SOUTHROP
Existing Special Landscape Area



Existing Boundary

12.0 FYFIELD

Origin of Designation:

12.1 This area was part of the Cotswolds AONB until it was deleted in 1990.

Recommendation:

12.2 We recommend that this area is no longer designated as a Special Landscape Area

Adjacent Local Designations:

12.3 The adjacent land within West Oxfordshire carries an Area of High Landscape Value designation which has been carried through from pre-AONB times.

Description of Area:

12.4 This area, lying to the north-east of Southrop and the AONB along the River Leach corridor, includes all the land between the AONB boundary and the Cotswolds District boundary with West Oxfordshire. It is flat and featureless part of the lower dipslope landscape character type. It consists entirely of large arable fields unrelieved by woodland or buildings except in the immediate vicinity of Fyfield. There are no views of much interest either to or from the area.

Justification for Recommendation:

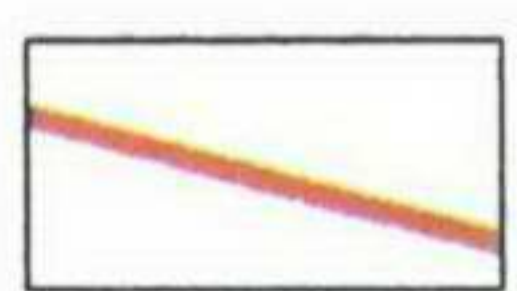
12.5 Our recommendation is made on the grounds that:

- This area is not particularly representative of the lower dipslope landscape character type and the key characteristics and features that define the dipslope are not well demonstrated here.
- The flatness and lack of vertical elements gives a rather monotonous landscape and the area lacks much sense of place.
- There are no special features of conservation interest or other qualities of special value in this intensively cultivated landscape.



Scale approx. 1:25,000
North to top of page

Figure 9



Existing Boundary

FYFIELD
Existing Special Landscape Area

SECTION C

OVERALL LANDSCAPE POLICY ISSUES

13.0 OVERALL LANDSCAPE POLICY ISSUES

The Landscape Resource of the District

13.1 There is a danger, in Cotswold District, to assume that landscapes which lie beyond designated areas, whether they be AONB's, SLA's or Open Space policy areas, are of limited value. This is not the case. Boundaries between landscape character areas are subtle and often represent areas of transition. The vast majority of landscapes are assets to the District, are valued by the local community and are well managed. Each landscape has distinctive character and features with varying sensitivity and a varying capacity to absorb development. With the exception the Barrington Downs and Long Newton/Fosse Way areas, all areas outside the AONB are now described by the report 'Landscape Assessment of Areas outside the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' [for Cotswold District Council by White Consultants, June 2000]. This will form the basis for future landscape policy. Policies should ensure that any new development is assessed in terms of its impact on this character, quality and sensitivity in line with the recommendations of the 'Study of Land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District' [for Cotswold District Council by White Consultants, June 2000, Chapter 2].

Further SLA's

13.2 The findings of the landscape assessment of areas outside the AONB could form the basis for designation of further SLA's outside the existing areas. This could form the basis of a further study.

Suggested Alternative Wording to SLA Policy

13.3 We suggest that the wording of the SLA policy is slightly modified to the following:

'The Council will seek to protect and enhance the landscape character of the Special Landscape Areas, as shown on the Proposals Map and Insets. Development which would cause unacceptable harm to the character and quality of the landscape will not be permitted. Account will be taken of the economic and social needs of local communities.'

This ensures that the landscape quality of an SLA is mentioned.

APPENDIX 1

Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Planning Policy Guidance: General Policy and Principles [PPG1 February 1997]
- Planning Policy Guidance: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development [PPG7 February 1997]
- Gloucestershire County Development Plan 1955 [and subsequent revisions]
- Gloucestershire Structure Plan [1982]
- Gloucestershire Structure Plan First Alteration [1992]
- Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Review [1999]
- 'Landscape Designations Local Plan for Gloucestershire Project Report', Gloucestershire County Council November 1985
- Cotswold District Local Plan [1999]
- 'The Cotswold Landscape' [Countryside Commission CCP294]
- 'Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance' [The Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage 1999]
- 'Assessment of Landscapes outside Cotswolds AONB' for Cotswold District Council, White Consultants, June 2000
- 'Study of Land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District' for Cotswold District Council, White Consultants, June 2000