

Report

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Saltford WRC FFT

Saltford, Bath and North East Somerset

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Executive Summary

In February 2021 Wessex Water commissioned Sweco UK to undertake a landscape and visual appraisal of the proposed 'Flow to Full Treatment Scheme Increase' at Salford Water Recycling Centre (SWRC), Salford, Bath and North East Somerset. The approximately 5.5 hectare site (the area which is within the planning redline boundary) lies directly south west of the existing SWRC infrastructure. The SWRC is located approximately 1km north east of Salford and approximately 4km north west of Bath (see Figure 1).

This appraisal has been produced in relation to the SWRC development elements for which planning permission is being sought. Namely the proposed five glass reinforced plastic kiosks and landscape bund. Accordingly, the proposed kiosks and bund are the focus of the assessment within this appraisal. However, the appraisal is cognisant of permitted development aspects of the development.

This report provides:

- An appraisal of the landscape and visual effects likely to be associated with the proposed development both immediately after its construction and over the longer term;
- A summary of any landscape and visual mitigation embedded within the site selection, layout and design of the required infrastructure including the design of the proposed bund; and
- A scheme of soft landscape mitigation (planting proposals) to help integrate the proposed development into its landscape setting and provide screening in any identified key views.

The scope of the appraisal, the proposed representative viewpoints, and the options for the bund landform were shared with the local planning authority (LPA) prior to undertaking the appraisal. Following pre-application consultation discussions, the following actions requested by the LPA were undertaken:

- Additional viewpoints 10 to 12 were added to the visual appraisal;
- The Zone of Theoretical Visibility modelling extent was extended to 3km radius to include areas around Prospect Style and Kelson Round Hill (see Figure 4); and
- A 'rounded' bund landform was taken forward for planning permission.

Baseline landscape and visual assessments were undertaken in parallel and were informed by a combination of desk and field-based techniques. The study area for the appraisal comprises a 2km radius around the proposed development with a greater focus on areas within 1km. Two representative viewpoints in particularly elevated locations just outside of the 2km study area have been included in the visual appraisal on the request of the LPA (viewpoints 11 and 12).

In March 2021, a site visit and photography survey were undertaken. An additional photography survey was undertaken in September 2021 to capture the additional photography requested by the LPA.

In accordance with GLVIA3, the assessments have used experienced professional judgement to assess the sensitivity of the baseline landscape and visual environment and to consider the magnitude of potential change that the proposed development would cause. These are combined to consider the level of effect.

Policy context

The site and its immediate surroundings are located within 1 km of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and within the green belt (see Figure 2). The wider study area includes several Conservation Areas and the B&NES NE2A 'Landscape Setting of Settlements' policy area north of Saltford (see Figure 2). The focus of national and local planning policy as it relates to this appraisal is therefore on ensuring that the development (including its siting, layout and appearance) responds to and is appropriate within its specific landscape character context and the character of these protected areas.

Landscape Context

The site is located within a rural, agricultural landscape set within the context of the elevated slopes of the Cotswolds AONB and the gently undulating Avon river valley. The general condition of the landscape is good. Small woodland parcels, such as those within the vicinity of the existing SWRC, are characteristic of the area. Generally, the existing WRC infrastructure sits discretely within the surrounding landscape and there are limited viewing opportunities from publicly accessible areas to the north, south and west of the WRC. The existing WRC infrastructure is visible from the elevated landscape east of the site, but it is viewed within the context of the wider landscape due to the relative distance of these viewing opportunities. A key issue for this appraisal has been the potential effect that the introduction of the proposed bund and kiosks could have on local landscape character within the vicinity of the AONB.

Visual Context

The proposed development zone of visual influence varies due to topographical variation and surface features. Figure 4 provides a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) based on landform, vegetation and built form. The visual context rarely includes the existing WRC infrastructure due to a high degree of enclosure provided by vegetation surrounding the works. Visibility of SWRC increases as the ground rises to the east. However, the WRC infrastructure is viewed within the context of the wider landscape including the settlements of Saltford and Keynsham. Areas of woodland afford a degree of containment within the surrounding area. The elevated landscape within the AONB is relatively open with a degree of localised screening provided by hedgerows. This results in varying levels of visibility depending on the viewer's position within the AONB.

Potential landscape and visual effects

The components of the proposed development with the potential to give rise to landscape and visual effects include the landscape bund landform and five kiosks.

Mitigation

Embedded mitigation includes siting the proposed develop adjacent to existing infrastructure, siting to minimise visibility from locations within the AONB, tree retention and the rounded, graded design of the landscape bund. Soft landscape

proposals provide additional mitigation and include woodland planting over the bund, infill planting within the existing WRC site, hedgerow planting and species rich neutral grassland.

Landscape effects

The development will result in the creation of a new topographical form, additional kiosks and WRC infrastructure. The bund has been designed to minimise the degree to which the topographical change would be noticeable. The proposed planting will help to integrate the bund and kiosks into the landscape and the development is an extension to existing infrastructure already sited within the local landscape context. As proposed planting matures, the development will further integrate into the landscape context west of the AONB. Over the longer term, the magnitude of change associated with the proposed development would be Negligible and the level of effect on the AONB would be Negligible

Visual effects

Most receptors are set back from the proposed development and the mass and scale of the proposed landscape bund and five kiosks will be proportionate in relation to the existing infrastructure. Where the proposals are visible, they will be seen in the context of existing WRC infrastructure. Planting and the rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. Users of PRow BA27/41, where the footpath runs adjacent to the proposed development, would initially experience a Moderate Adverse level of visual effect. For all other identified receptors, the level of visual effect at this point in time would be no more than Minor Adverse. Over the longer term, at year 15, visual effects of the proposed development on surrounding views and receptors would be Negligible.

The appraisal has concluded that the level of longer term residual landscape and visual effects of the proposed development would be Negligible.

1 Introduction

1.1 The proposed development

In February 2021 Wessex Water commissioned Sweco UK to undertake a landscape and visual appraisal of the proposed 'Flow to Full Treatment Scheme Increase' at Salford Water Recycling Centre (SWRC), Salford, Bath and North East Somerset. The focus of the appraisal was to be on elements of the scheme which required planning permission.

The settlement tanks, pumping stations, ferric dosing plant and other wastewater treatment infrastructure (for further detail of all proposed plant see Planning and Environmental Supporting Statement submitted to support this planning application) will be constructed within the existing operational SWRC and installed under Wessex Water's permitted development rights as a statutory undertaker. The kiosks containing control equipment installed within the existing operational SWRC and a proposed bund, outside of the existing SWRC, do not fall under Permitted Development rights and are therefore subject to a planning application.

This appraisal has been produced in relation to the SWRC development elements for which planning permission is being sought. Namely the proposed five glass reinforced plastic kiosks and landscape bund. Accordingly, the proposed kiosks and bund are the focus of the assessment within this appraisal. However, the appraisal is cognisant of the permitted development aspects of the development and these are also shown on the visualisations provided.

The red line planning application boundary for the proposed development (comprising five kiosks and bund) includes the means of access from the A431 Bath Road. This access road and a required bridge over the River Avon are the subject of a separate planning application and separate landscape and visual appraisal. This appraisal has nevertheless been cognisant of the potential for cumulative effects on viewpoints within the nearby Cotswold AONB.

1.2 The site

The approximately 5.5 hectare site (the area which is within the planning redline boundary) lies directly south west of the existing SWRC infrastructure. The SWRC is located approximately 1km north east of Salford and approximately 4km north west of Bath (see Figure 1).

1.3 Purpose of the report

Pre-application consultations with the local planning authority determined that the proposed development was screened as not requiring Environmental Impact Assessment. This standalone report therefore comprises a non-EIA appraisal of the potential landscape and visual effects of the development.

It provides:

- An appraisal of the landscape and visual effects likely to be associated with the proposed development both immediately after its construction and over the longer term;

- A summary of any landscape and visual mitigation embedded within the site selection, layout and design of the required infrastructure including the design of the proposed bund;
- Presentation of photomontages from agreed viewpoints; and
- A scheme of soft landscape mitigation (planting proposals) to help integrate the proposed development into its landscape setting and provide in the longer term screening in any identified key views.

2 Policy context

2.1 National planning policy

National landscape policy relevant to the development and this report is found within the following document:

- The Department of Communities and Local Government (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

The **NPPF** sets out the Government’s planning objectives to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by “*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*” (Para.174 (a) Page 50). It also states that in planning decisions, “*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty*” (Para. 176, Page 50).

2.2 Local planning policy

The site is located within the boundary of Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES/the LPA). Current adopted planning policy for the authority is contained with the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan 2011-2029 (see Figure 2).

Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan 2011-2029

The Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan 2011-2029 comprises:

- Core Strategy (Adopted July 2014); and
- Placemaking Plan (Adopted 2017).

The council has combined the Core Strategy and the Placemaking Plan into a single set of documents.

Volume 1 – District Wide Strategy and Policies

Volume 1 contains the following relevant policies.

Policy DW1: District-wide Spatial Strategy. B&NES will promote sustainable development. Part of this is to protect, conserve and enhance nationally and locally important cultural and heritage assets.

Policy CP6: Environmental Quality. This policy states the following with regards to Landscape, “*the distinctive character and quality of Bath and North East Somerset’s landscape is conserved or enhanced*”.

Policy D2: Local Character and Distinctiveness. Policy D2 sets out the criteria against which B&NES will assess development proposals when considering whether development proposals meet the requirement of contributing positively to, and not harming, local character and distinctiveness.

The following criteria excerpts are relevant to the site and the proposals:

Criteria a – *“The development has positively responded to the site context, in particular the local character”*

Criteria d – *“The design enhances and responds to natural features, including landscape, green infrastructure, skylines, topography and landform and views”*

Criteria g – *“The development reflects materials, colours, textures, landscape and boundary treatments that are appropriate to the area.”*

Policy NE2: Conserving and Enhancing Landscape and Landscape Character.

The conservation or enhancement of “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” falls under Policy NE2. Supporting policy text states, *“New development will be expected to reinforce the local landscape character and make a positive contribution to views...”* and includes a list of “Key Factors which contribute to the District’s distinctive character”.

Policy NE2 policy text states, *“Development should seek to avoid or adequately mitigate any adverse impact on landscape”* and makes clear that proposals with the potential to impact on the landscape character of an area or on views should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment undertaken by a qualified practitioner to inform the design and location of any new development.

Policy NE2A Landscape Setting of Settlements. The purpose of Policy NE2A is *“to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements...”* through the identification of landscapes which are *“significant to settlements and their setting”* (see Figure 2).

Policy NE2A states, *“Any development should seek to conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements and their landscape character, views and features. Development that would result in adverse impact to the landscape setting of settlements that cannot be adequately mitigated will not be permitted.”*

Policy NE6: Trees and Woodland Conservation. Policy NE6 makes clear development will only be permitted where it seeks to avoid any adverse impact on trees and woodlands, wildlife and landscape or amenity value and the proposals include appropriate retention and new planting of trees and woodlands.

Policy CP8: Green Belt and Policy GB1: Visual Amenities of the Green Belt.

Openness of the Green Belt (see Figure 2) is to be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy. Development is only permitted where *“Very special circumstances”* exist and where impacts have been appropriately mitigated.

Policy GB1 states that development *“should not prejudice but seek to enhance the visual amenities of the Green Belt...”*

During pre-application consultation with the LPA, the bund landform design was developed to find a form that would mitigate the wider landscape and visual impact of the proposed development without compromising the openness of the Green Belt or detract from the visual amenity of the Green Belt.

2.3 Key issues

The site and its immediate surroundings are located within 1 km of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and within the green belt (see Figure 2). The wider study area includes several Conservation Areas and the B&NES NE2A 'Landscape Setting of Settlements' policy area north of Saltford (see Figure 2). The focus of national and local planning policy as it relates to this appraisal is therefore on ensuring that the development (including its siting, layout and appearance) responds to and is appropriate within its specific landscape character context and the character of these protected areas. An understanding of the specific landscape character context is established by reference to the national and local landscape character assessment.

3 Appraisal methodology

3.1 Guidance

The method of appraisal is based on the principles established in the following best practice guidance:

- The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition* (GLVIA3);
- Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency (2002) *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*; and
- The Landscape Institute (2019) *Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals*.

GLVIA3 states that any assessment of effects should be tailored to the specific nature and likely potential effects of the development proposed.

3.2 Scope and study area

This appraisal considers the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. An appraisal of townscape effects is not required due to the rural context of the site. The appraisal focuses on landscape character (the effect on the landscape resource) and visual amenity (the visual effect on people in specific locations). It excludes any assessment of any effect on the visual setting of cultural heritage assets. The potential for cumulative effects has been considered by the appraisal including the potential for perceived intensification of water treatment infrastructure in the locality due to existing infrastructure already present in the baseline conditions and including the potential in-combination visual effects in any views from within the AONB that might also feature the proposed bridge over the River Avon (the subject of a separate planning application).

The appraisal focuses on the operational phase effects of the proposed development with only brief consideration of effects during construction. It considers effects immediately after completion of construction in general terms but focuses principally on the longer-term residual level of effect likely to persist once new planting would have begun to mature and take effect.

The study area for the landscape appraisal comprises a 2km radius around the proposed development with a greater focus on areas within 1km. This is considered adequate to assess landscape character effects given the topographical context (a relatively low-level river valley overlooked by higher ground to the east) (see Figure 1); the screening effects of woodland blocks within the local area; the height of the proposed bund (to approximately 31 m AOD) and kiosks (a maximum of 25.54 m AOD) which are subject to planning permission; and the presence of existing water treatment infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the site. The 2km study area captures most areas that fall within the ZTV of the proposed development (see Figure 4). However, two representative viewpoints in particularly elevated locations just outside of the 2km study area have been included in the visual appraisal on the request of the LPA (viewpoints 11 and 12 to the east).

3.3 Consultation

The scope, proposed representative viewpoints, and options for the bund landform were shared with the local planning authority prior to undertaking the appraisal. Following pre-application consultation discussions, the following actions requested by the LPA were undertaken:

- Three additional viewpoints, Viewpoints 10 to 12, were added to the visual appraisal;
- The Zone of Theoretical Visibility modelling extent was extended to 3km radius to include areas around Prospect Style and Kelson Round Hill (see Figure 4); and
- Following discussion of options a 'rounded' bund landform to a maximum elevation of 31 m AOD was taken forward for planning permission.

3.4 Determining the baseline

Baseline landscape and visual assessments were undertaken in parallel and were informed by a combination of desk and field-based techniques.

Desktop assessment

Preliminary identification, description and evaluation of the existing landscape and visual context of the study area involved a desk-based review and interrogation of the following information sources:

- Ordnance Survey mapping and aerial photography relating to existing landform, vegetation, settlement patterns, promoted viewpoints and drainage regimes;
- Plans containing information relating to landscape designations and landscape related policies at the local and national level;
- Engineering data and plans relating to the proposed infrastructure;

- National landscape character area (NCAs) as defined by Natural England; and
- Local landscape character assessment.

Field assessment

In March 2021, a site visit and photography survey were undertaken. An additional photography survey was undertaken in September 2021 to capture the additional photography requested by the LPA. The field and photography surveys were undertaken during periods of clement weather from public highways and publicly accessible areas and involved:

- A corroboration of the findings of the desktop review;
- Collection of additional information on landscape elements, character, views and localised screening; and
- Photography from representative viewpoints.

3.5 Appraisal criteria

In accordance with GLVIA3, the assessments have used experienced professional judgement to assess the sensitivity of the baseline landscape and visual environment and to consider the magnitude of potential change that the proposed development would cause. These are combined to consider the level of effect.

Landscape

The sensitivity of the landscape (whether a landscape character area or designated landscape resource) has been assessed by combining the susceptibility of its key characteristics to the type of landscape changes likely to be associated with the proposed development with the value or importance understood to be attached to the landscape. Key characteristics of the landscape can include matters such as scale; enclosure; openness, landform; landcover; landscape pattern; and manmade influences. The sensitivity of the landscape has been assessed as High, Medium or Low using professional judgement.

Assessment of the magnitude of landscape change may take account of all the following factors and professional judgement is used to determine the relevance and appropriate weighting to be attributed to each:

- The degree of change that takes place;
- The geographical extent of the landscape area that will be changed;
- The likely duration of the change to the landscape; and
- Whether the change to the landscape would be reversible if the development were decommissioned.

The magnitude of likely landscape change has been assessed as High, Medium, Low or Negligible. A judgement of a High change is typically defined as the development forming a prominent landscape element or will result in a substantial alteration to key landscape characteristics. A judgement of a Negligible magnitude of change is typically defined as the development will be a barely perceptible landscape element or will not change the key landscape characteristics.

A final judgement on the overall level of effect on the landscape has then been made by combining the sensitivity of the receiving environment with the magnitude of change to it. The level of effect has been described using a four-point scale of Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible and the nature of effect is judged as Adverse or Beneficial. Reasoned professional judgement has been used to combine considerations and assess the overall level of landscape effect.

Visual

The sensitivity of visual receptors has been assessed by combining consideration of their visual susceptibility with the value, or importance, that they are likely to attribute to their available views. The sensitivity of the receptors has been assessed as High, Medium or Low using professional judgement. Typically, high sensitivity receptors are people with a particular interest in their available view or with prolonged viewing opportunities such as residential locations; tourist destinations providing a specific important and highly valued view; recreational hilltops; ornamental parks/ designed landscapes; and national trails. Typically, low sensitivity receptors are people with a passing interest in their surroundings such as places of employment; major highways; commercial buildings; and commuters.

Assessment of the magnitude of visual change may take account of all the following elements and professional judgement is used to determine the relevance and appropriate weighting to be attributed to each:

- The degree of visual change that takes place;
- The geographical extent of the area from which the change will be visible;
- The likely duration of the visual change; and
- Whether the visual change is likely to be reversible if the infrastructure were decommissioned.

The magnitude of likely visual change is assessed as High, Medium, Low or Negligible. A judgement of a High magnitude of change is typically defined as the visual changes associated with the development will form a prominent element within the view, resulting in a prominent change to the quality and character of the view. A judgement of a Negligible magnitude of change is typically defined as the visual changes associated with the development will result in a barely perceptible change in the view or will cause no change to the existing view.

A final judgement has been made on the overall level of effect on the visual receptors by combining their sensitivity with the magnitude of visual change that they would likely experience. Overall effects have been described using a four-point scale of Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible and the nature of effect is judged as Adverse or Beneficial. Reasoned professional judgement has been used to combine considerations and assess the overall level of visual effect.

4 Baseline conditions

4.1 Site description

The approximately 5.5 hectare site lies directly south west of the existing SWRC infrastructure, approximately 700 m north east of the village of Saltford, 1 km south of Bitton and 4 km north west of the City of Bath (see Figure 1). The site is located with

the B&NES green belt (see Figure 2) and approximately 500 m west of the western boundary of the Cotswolds AONB, formed closest to the site by the course of the River Avon (see Figure 2).

The site slopes gently downwards to the east with elevations ranging from approximately 28 m AOD (above ordnance datum) in the west down to approximately 20m AOD in the east. The existing WRC to the east lies on land at approximately 17 m AOD. Local high points within 2 km fall within the Cotswolds AONB and include 228 m AOD near North Stoke, 188 m AOD near Kelston and 148 m AOD near Upton Cheyney. The proposed bund and kiosk are positioned within a localised dip in topography which continues downwards towards the River Avon 450 m east of the site (see Figure 1).

The field within which the bund is proposed currently comprises arable land enclosed by mature hedgerows with trees. The kiosks and permitted development elements are proposed within an area currently comprising a tree belt, approximately 60 m wide at its widest point to the south, and an existing bund within the bounds of Saltford WRC.

The River Avon and associated long-distance recreational walking route, the River Avon Trail, are located east of the site. Important views from the river are likely to be focused east and south east towards the elevated land within the Cotswolds AONB, away from the site, towards skyline features such as a well-known landmark tree copse atop Kelston Hill.

4.2 Landscape character context

The following published landscape character documents are relevant to this appraisal:

- Natural England (2015) National Character Area Profiles 107 and 118; and
- Bath and North East Somerset (2003) *Rural Landscape of Bath and North East Somerset, A Landscape Character Assessment*.

Figure 3 illustrates the location of the site in relation to published landscape character assessment areas.

National Character Areas

The site is located within national character area 107: *Cotswolds*. National character area 118: *Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges* is located immediately north of the site. The boundary between the two character area runs north east to south west through the study area with each NCA covering approximately half of the 2km study area.

107: Cotswolds

Key characteristics of relevance to this assessment:

- A dramatic limestone scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combes;
- Arable farming dominates the high wold and dip slope while permanent pasture prevails on the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys; and
- Prominent natural and built features in the landscape include Kelston Round Hill.

118: Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges

Key characteristics of relevance to this assessment:

- Valleys and steeper slopes in the south-east tend to have irregular fields and overgrown, species-rich hedges;
- Settlements dating from the medieval period, clustered around springheads of the Cotswold scarp; and
- Older village buildings, gentry houses and mansions of local ashlar, which includes pale yellow Jurassic Oolitic limestones and grey Carboniferous and Lias limestones.

Bath and North East Somerset (2003) Rural Landscape of Bath and North East Somerset, A Landscape Character Assessment.

The site is located within the “Area 14: Avon Valley” character area. Key aspects of the character area description relevant to this assessment include:

- Meandering tree lined River Avon;
- Generally steeply sloping valley sides often with undulating lower slopes;
- Patchwork of arable and grassland;
- Land use for ‘horsiculture’ and utilities;
- Prominent railway line and A4 Bristol to Bath road;
- Line of disused railway line now the well-used-tree-lines Bristol and Bath Railway Path;
- Generally small to medium sized fields enclosed by fences and hedges
- Several small woods;
- Prominent settlements within and adjoining the area
- Traditional building materials including Oolitic and Lias Limestone with clay tile roofs;
- The Kelston Round Hill on the Cotswold ridge to the north east with its group of trees is an important landmark; and
- Occasionally longer views are restricted by adjoining settlements, tall hedges, trees or the railway on embankment.

Additional site observations

Drawing on site observations made as part of the appraisal process, the landscape local to the site can be characterised as follows:

- Two distinct areas of topography west and east of the River Avon. West of the river the landform comprises undulating lowland slopes with an overall eastward fall towards the river. East of the river is initially similar to the west. However, between 500 m and 1 km east of the river the land becomes notably steeper and elevated plateaus atop steeply rising valley sides;
- A high point of approximately 228 m AOD, within the Cotswolds AONB near North Stoke;
- Lowland river valley characterised by a patchwork of small to medium irregular fields interspersed with small areas of woodland planting;
- Grazed slopes with medium to large fields with tree-lined ridges;
- Boundaries are a mixture of fences and hedges. Many of the hedges are overgrown with mature trees;
- Surrounding vegetation screens the WRC infrastructure in lowland views and filters views from elevated locations where SWRC is overlooked;

- The River Avon sits low in the landscape and is frequently screened from view by vegetation. The sinuous form of the river running through the valley is highlighted by the associated riparian vegetation; and
- The noise of passing cars is a notable auditory feature where the A431 runs within close proximity to the River Avon.

Landscape Designations

The location and extent of landscape designations are included within Figure 2.

Cotswolds Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Cotswolds AONB boundary is located 500m east of the site. There is potential for landscape changes brought about by the proposed development to be perceived from locations within the AONB.

Kelston Park Registered Park and Garden

Grade II* Listed Kelston Park Registered Park and Garden is located 1.5 km south east of the site. Landscape changes brought about by the proposed development would not be perceptible from within the grounds of Kelston Park due to the screening influence of intervening vegetation.

Conservation Areas

Five Conservation Areas fall within the 2km study area: Saltford (700 m, south west); Bitton (720m, north); Upton Cheney (1.1 km, north) North Stoke (1.0 km, north east); and Kelston Park (1.2 km, south east). There is potential for landscape changes brought about by the proposed development to be perceived from the settlement edge of the Bitton Conservation Area. Changes would not be perceptible from within the other four Conservation Areas due to the screening effects of intervening vegetation.

Landscape character context summary

The site is located within a rural, agricultural landscape set within the context of the elevated slopes of the Cotswolds AONB and the gently undulating Avon river valley. The general condition of the landscape is good. Small woodland parcels, such as those within the vicinity of the existing SWRC, are characteristic of the area. Generally, the existing WRC infrastructure sits discretely within the surrounding landscape and there are limited viewing opportunities from publicly accessible areas to the north, south and west of the WRC. The existing WRC infrastructure is visible from the elevated landscape east of the site, but it is viewed within the context of the wider landscape due to the relative distance of these viewing opportunities.

A key issue for this appraisal is the potential effect that the introduction of the proposed bund and kiosks could have on local landscape character within the vicinity of the AONB.

4.3 Visual context

General

The proposed development zone of visual influence varies due to topographical variation and surface features. Figure 4 provides a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

based on landform, vegetation and built form. To the west, potential visibility is limited by layers of hedgerow vegetation. Potential visibility to the north-west and north east extends as far as the edges of Bitton and Upton Cheney. To the south east, the land rises up within the AONB the and the extent of potential visibility is relatively greater. To the south and south west, potential visibility is reduced due to the screening effects of wooded areas, mature hedges and a gentle rise in topography.

Areas of woodland afford a degree of containment within the surrounding area. A woodland block located south of the site provides localised screening within proximity of the site. Further afield screening effects are provided by tree belts east of the site, within the AONB, at approximately 100m AOD.

The elevated landscape within the AONB between North Stoke, in the north east, and Kelston, in the south east, is relatively open. However, mature hedgerows provide a degree of localised screening. This results in varying degrees of visibility depending on the viewer's position within the landscape.

The visual context rarely includes the existing WRC infrastructure due to a high degree of enclosure provided by vegetation surrounding the works. Visibility of SWRC increases as the ground rises to the east. However, the WRC infrastructure is viewed within the context of the wider landscape including the settlements of Saltford and Keynsham.

Visual receptors

Residential

Properties identified within the desktop ZTV (see Figure 4) were reviewed during an LVIA site visit. The following properties were considered to be most likely to be visually affected:

- **Avon Farm** to the north west, approximately 300m from the site at approximately 24 m AOD. The group of buildings associated with Avon Farm includes six holiday rentals alongside a residential property;
- **No. 1 and 2 Avon Cottages** to the south west, approximately 340 m from the site at approximately 30m AOD; and
- **Coombe Barn** to the south east, approximately 1.6 km from the site at approximately 111 m AOD. The group of buildings associated with Coombe Barn include three holiday rental properties.

Views of the site from the identified properties are limited by field boundary vegetation within the intervening landscape. Views of the site are entirely screened from the nearby settlement of Saltford (750 m south west) by intervening vegetation.

Public Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) within the study area are illustrated on Figure 4. Users of the following Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) are likely to be visually affected:

- **Footpath BA27/41** runs adject to the western and northern site extents. North of the site, the PRow coincides with the River Avon Trail, along the southern bank of the River Avon. Open views of the site are experienced where the footpath passes through the field within which the bund is proposed;
- **Footpath BA18/5 and Byway Open to All Traffic BA18/5** are located 845 m north east of the site (closest point) within the AONB. Open views towards the site are experienced from an elevated section of BA18/5. East of the open section the path drops into a localised tree-lined hollow and views towards the site are screened;
- **Footpath BA18/3** is located 711 m east of the site (closest point) within the AONB. Open views towards the site are experienced from elevated sections of BA18/3;
- **Footpaths BA14/4 and BA14/9** are located 767 m south east of the site at (closest point) within the AONB. Open views towards the site are experienced from elevated sections of BA14/4 and BA14/9;
- **Bridleway BA18/26** is located 1.4 km east of the site (closest point) within the AONB. Open views towards the site are experienced from sections of BA18/26 where vegetation along the route does not limit west facing views; and
- **Footpaths BA5/54, BA5/47 and BA14/8 at Prospect Stile OS Viewpoint.** The three footpath routes meet at Prospect Stile, located 2.2 km east of the site. The Prospect Stile OS viewing point faces a southerly direction and the site is located within the eastern extent the viewpoint.

Recreational Routes and Features

Users of and visitors to the following recreational routes are likely to be visually affected:

- **The River Avon Trail** follows the River Avon within the study area north and east of the site. The shortest distance between the trail and the site is 225 m. Views towards the site are generally screened by intervening vegetation. However, there are potential filtered views south towards the site where the trail coincides with Footpath BA27/41;
- **Cotswold Way National Trail** is located east of the site. The route runs along the top of the AONB slopes and users are afforded panoramic, long-range views out over the landscape within which the site is located;
- **Kelston Round Hill** permissive routes located west of the iconic Kelston Round Hill tree copse. The elevated viewing positions permits visitors long range, panoramic views out over the landscape west of Kelston Round Hill within which the site is located; and

- **Roads** within the study area include the A4 (west of the site) and the A431 (east of the site). Users' views are limited by intervening vegetation and the site is screened from view. Church Road, located within Bitton Conservation Area, occupies a relatively elevated position and road users are afforded relatively open view out over horse grazing paddocks.

Representative viewpoints

The following 12 representative viewpoints (see Figure 4 for locations) were identified for detailed assessment and agreed with the LPA. Baseline descriptions of each viewpoint are included in Section 6.

Viewpoint 1 – Footpath BA27/41, Avon Lane – a close range view west of the site. Representative of views experienced by users of Footpath BA27/41 travelling within close proximity to the site (Figure 6.1.1).

Viewpoint 2 – Footpath BA27/41, within site field – a close range view west of the site. Representative of open views experienced by users of Footpath 27/41 (Figure 6.2.1).

Viewpoint 3 – Footpath BA27/41, adjacent field – a close range view north of the site. Representative of views experienced by Footpath BA27/41 users travelling south towards the site (Figure 6.3.1).

Viewpoint 4 – Footpath BA27/41, The River Avon Trail – a medium range view north of the site. Representative of views experienced by Footpath users following The River Avon Trail route (Figure 6.4.1).

Viewpoint 5 – Footpath BA18/5 – a long range view located north east of the site, east of Swineford picnic area and within the AONB. Representative of views experienced by users of the PRow network north-east of the site within the AONB (Figure 6.5.1).

Viewpoint 6 – Footpath BA18/3 – a long range view located east of the site, west of North Stoke and within the AONB. Representative of views experienced by users of the PRow network east of the site within the AONB (Figure 6.6.1).

Viewpoint 7 – Footpath BA14/9 – a long range view located south east of site, north of Kelston and within the AONB. Representative of views experienced by users of the PRow network south east of the site within the AONB (Figure 6.7.1).

Viewpoint 8 – Unnamed access road to Coombe Barn – a long range view south east of the site near Coombe Barn, located within the AONB. Representative of views experienced by Coombe Barn residential receptors (Figure 6.8.1).

Viewpoint 9 – Church Road, Bitton – a long range view located north of the site within the Bitton Conservation Area. Representative of views experienced by local road users within Bitton Conservation Area (Figure 6.9.1).

Viewpoint 10 – Footpath BA18/26 – a long range view located east of the site, south east of North Stoke. Representative of views experienced by users of the PRoW network east of the site within the AONB (Figure 6.10.1).

Viewpoint 11 - Prospect Stile OS Viewpoint – a long range view located east of the site, at the Prospect Stile OS viewpoint. Representative of views experienced by users of the PRoW network east of the site, coincident with the Cotswolds Way National Trail at the Prospect Stile OS viewpoint (within the AONB) (Figure 6.11.1).

Viewpoint 12 – Kelston Round Hill – a long range view located south east of the site, west of Kelston Round Hill copse. Representative of views experienced by visitors to Kelston Round Hill (within the AONB) (Figure 6.12.1).

5 Mitigation

5.1 Potential landscape and visual effects

The components of the proposed development with the potential to give rise to landscape and visual effects included within this assessment are:

- The bund landform – approximately 78,000 m³ of material with a high point of approximately 31 m AOD.
- 5 Kiosks with the following dimensions and AOD highpoints
 - FST MCC Kiosk at 24.46 m AOD
 - ASP Blower Kiosk at 24.80 m AOD
 - ASP MCC Kiosk at 25.30 m AOD
 - Inlet Works MCC Kiosk at 25.54 m AOD
 - Washwater Kiosk at 22.49 m AOD
- The loss of existing vegetation

Photomontage images of the proposed development have been produced at year 1 and year 15 for the following representative viewpoints:

- Viewpoint 1 (Figures 6.1.2 to Figure 6.1.3);
- Viewpoint 2 (Figures 6.2.2 to Figure 6.2.3);
- Viewpoint 4 (Figures 6.4.2 to Figure 6.4.3);
- Viewpoint 6 (Figures 6.6.2 to Figure 6.6.3);
- Viewpoint 10 (Figures 6.10.2 to Figure 6.10.3);
- Viewpoint 11 (Figures 6.11.2 to Figure 6.11.3); and
- Viewpoint 12 (Figures 6.12.2 to Figure 6.12.3).

5.2 Embedded mitigation

Existing infrastructure, siting in relation to the AONB and tree retention

A number of locational options were considered as part of the design process to site the kiosks and bund. Other areas of land on the water recycling centre were considered and discounted as they were either within the flood zone or more open and elevated, allowing views into site from the AONB across the River Avon. Trees impacted as a consequence of the chosen siting are of generally low arboricultural and ecological value. The chosen location was considered to balance technical and operational aspects whilst also being able to be visually screened from elevated viewpoints to the east.

Water recycling infrastructure is an established characteristic of the local landscape, albeit one filtered from view by surrounding mature vegetation. The presence of the existing SWRC infrastructure means the immediate landscape context is better able to accommodate the proposed development. Although water recycling infrastructure is an established characteristic, minimising visibility of the development from within the AONB was a consideration when deciding where to site the proposals. The location progressed was influenced by this consideration. The land to the west of the partially retained tree belt running from north to south on the western side of the existing treatment works is less visually prominent from elevated positions within the AONB than other areas to the east. Due to operational requirements, tree removal will be required at this location. However, remaining, retained trees will provide some initial screening that will be enhanced by additional proposed mitigation planting (see section 5.3).

The extent of required tree removal is set out within the Tree Constraints Plan contained within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted in support of this planning application. This plan also shows the proposed location of tree protection fencing. Affected areas of tree cover include tightly spaced groups including the linear belt of trees running north to south on the western side of the existing treatment works. All efforts will be made during construction to retain as many trees as possible within this belt to maintain its continuity from north to south and, wherever possible, to maintain its function as a continuous visual barrier (in both winter and summer). This appraisal, and the photomontage images it provides, is nevertheless based on a 'likely worst case' outcome where tree removal may open up glimpses through the remaining tree belt towards the proposed bund and kiosks. It is therefore the case that the photomontage images may show more tree removal, and therefore greater visibility of the proposed kiosks from elevated views within the AONB to the east, than will in due course be necessary.

Bund form design

The landscape bund is a mitigating feature designed to minimise the visual impact of the proposed wastewater treatment stream. The bund form has been designed to minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. Pre-application advice was sought regarding potential bund forms. Following the responses received, a 'rounded', gently graded to the west landform design was progressed.

The 'rounded' form comprises initially steep eastern slopes which soften out into a gentler, rounded landform with a high point of 31 m AOD within the southern extent of the bund. The west facing slope has been designed to grade gently downwards towards the western site extent where the site meets the existing field boundary. The incorporation of a consistently shallower westward grade aids in integrating the bund into the existing landscape. Planting is proposed on the eastern facing slope to soften the appearance of the eastern slopes as viewed from the elevated land east of the site. Greater detail regarding planting mitigation is provided in the following "Planting proposals" section.

5.3 Planting proposals

Planting proposals have been developed to integrate the proposed development into the existing landscape setting, to screen views of the proposed development and to enhance biodiversity. The planting design has been developed to meet biodiversity net gain requirements whilst ensuring appropriate levels of tree and shrub planting are included to soften the appearance of the bund. Figure 5¹ illustrates a proposed landscape scheme. Descriptions of the proposed soft landscape elements are set out below.

Woodland Planting

Location: Eastern bund slope

20m wide strip of woodland planting. The bund edge is to be planted with a mix of native woodland species to compensate for tree loss, provide screening of the proposed development and assist in the integration of the proposed bund into the surrounding landscape. The woodland planting style is to be naturalistic with a transitional woodland edge species arrangement, non-rectilinear planting layout, and naturalistic grouping of species in approximately groups of 5 to 7 plants.

Infill Planting

Location: within the main WRC site

Additional “in site” infill planting with a mix of native woodland species to mitigate tree losses due to the construction of the proposed development and reinstate filtering of views of the WRC infrastructure to a level comparable to baseline conditions.

Hedgerow with trees

Location: Over the bund

A hedge with trees is proposed along a north-south alignment to set a boundary between the reinstated area of improved grassland and the new area of neutral grassland and soften the appearance of the bund as viewed from the adjacent public footpath.

Species Rich Neutral grassland

Location: Between the proposed hedgerow and proposed woodland

An area of species rich neutral grassland is proposed to meet Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

6 Residual effects of the proposed development

This section of the appraisal assesses the level of landscape and visual effect that the proposed development would cause, taking account of the mitigation set out above. This appraisal focuses on those aspects of the overall development that are subject to planning permission – namely the proposed bund and the proposed kiosks. The stated sensitivity of the landscape and the level of effect identified therefore relates specifically to these elements.

¹ Planning Application Proposed Landscape Plan (ref: D9863-SWE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-7200_P02)

6.1 Construction phase effects

Construction phase effects would be associated with views of construction activity over short to long distances within the visual context of the existing SWRC. The temporary duration of construction would ensure that the level of landscape and visual effects would be no more than **Minor Adverse**.

6.2 Landscape character effect

The development will introduce new topographical and built form into the study area. The bund has been designed to minimise the degree to which the local landform is altered. The alterations will be locally notable but the wider landscape characteristics associated with the character area will be preserved. Proposed new planting and reinstatement planting will integrate the bund, kiosks and permitted development elements into the landscape.

Local Landscape Character

The proposed development and immediate landscape context are located wholly within the Avon Valley character area (Area 14). Area 14 is described as undulating lower slopes with generally steeply sloping valley sides. Area characteristics include a meandering, tree-lined River Avon, a patchwork of small to medium arable and grassland fields enclosed by fences and hedges interspersed with small areas of woodland. Notable character area features include a rail line, the A4 Bristol to Bath road, a walking-cycling route along a disused rail line, horsiculture and utilities. Kelston Round Hill and tree group on the Cotswold ridge is an important landmark. Longer views within the character area are occasionally restricted by adjoining settlements, tall hedges and trees.

The site context broadly reflects the identified characteristics associated with Area 14. Given the relatively enclosed nature of the site and existing SWRC infrastructure, the character of Area 14 is considered to be of **low sensitivity** to the proposed development (namely the proposed bund and proposed kiosks).

The development will result in the creation of a new topographical form, additional kiosks and WRC infrastructure. The bund has been designed to minimise the degree to which the topographical change would be noticeable. The proposed planting will help to integrate the bund and kiosks into the landscape and the development is an extension to existing infrastructure already sited within the local landscape context. The **magnitude** of landscape character change associated with the proposed development in the years immediately after its construction would be **Medium to Low**. The level of effect on landscape character during this period time would be **Minor adverse**.

Over time, as the vegetation matures, the development will further integrate into the landscape context. The **magnitude** of landscape character change associated with the proposed development in the longer term would therefore be **Negligible**. At year 15, the level of effect on landscape character would be **Negligible**.

Cotswolds AONB

The site is located 500m west of the AONB boundary and there is the potential for change brought about by the proposed development to be perceived from locations

within the AONB. As a nationally designated landscape, the **sensitivity** of the AONB is considered to be **High**.

The bund form has been designed to minimise the degree to which the topographical alteration would be notable from locations within the AONB. The proposed planting will help to integrate the bund and kiosk into the landscape. Overall, the **magnitude** of change associated with the proposed development as perceived from locations within the AONB in the initial years immediately after its construction would be **Low to Negligible**. The level of effect on the AONB during this initial period of time would be no greater than **Minor adverse**.

Over time, as the vegetation matures, the development will further integrate into the landscape context west of the AONB. The magnitude of change associated with the proposed development as perceived from locations within the AONB in the longer term would therefore be **Negligible**. At year 15, the level of effect on the AONB would be **Negligible**.

6.3 Visual effects

Representative viewpoints

The following tables identify the residual visual effects of the proposed development from the twelve identified representative viewpoints. The visual assessment of each considers the degree to which the proposed new planting (see Figure 5²) will establish within a nominal timeframe of approximately 15 years. Viewpoint locations are identified on Figure 4. Baseline views from each representative viewpoint are provided by Figures 6.1.1 to 6.12.1.

The baseline images are supplemented with photomontages for seven selected viewpoints:

- Viewpoint 1, Figures 6.1.1 to 6.1.3;
- Viewpoint 2, Figures 6.2.1 to 6.2.3;
- Viewpoint 4, Figures 6.4.1 to 6.4.3;
- Viewpoint 6, Figures 6.6.1 to 6.6.3;
- Viewpoint 10, Figures 6.10.1 to 6.10.3;
- Viewpoint 11, Figures 6.11.1 to 6.10.3; and
- Viewpoint 12, Figures 6.12.1 to 6.10.3.

The photomontage images illustrate the appearance of the proposed development at year one, after construction has been completed, and at year 15 when planting proposed as part of the development (see Figure 5¹) will have begun to take effect. Both the appraisal and the photomontages have been based on the 'likely worst case' regarding trees that would need to be removed from the north to south tree belt located to the west of the existing treatment works. This worst case level of tree removal would result in some visual permeability of the tree belt, particularly in the

² Contained within Planning Application Proposed Landscape Plan (ref: D9863-SWE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-7200_P01)

early years immediately following development, and this has been illustrated by the photomontages. However, every effort will be taken during construction to minimise tree removal from this tree belt and the actual level of visual permeability in the first year following construction is likely to be less than has been appraised and less than has been illustrated by the photomontages.

| Viewpoint 1 – Footpath BA27/41, Avon Lane | |
|--|---|
| Approximate distance | 0 m to the west |
| Receptors | Users of Footpath 27/41 travelling within close proximity to the site |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.1.1 View across an open field towards SWRC. Existing WRC infrastructure is screened from view by vegetation and an existing bund. The elevated slopes within the AONB form a backcloth within the view. The local Kelston Round Hill tree group landmark is visible within the southern extent of the view. |
| Sensitivity | High – Residents and PRoW users take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | Figures 6.1.2 to 6.1.3 Open views of the bund from the footpath. Kiosks will be screened from view by the bund. A gantry (permitted development) will be visible where the bund drops away to the north. Views of the bund and permitted development from Avon Farm would be filtered by intervening boundary walls and field boundary hedges. |
| Proposed mitigation | The bund will screen views of the kiosks and the majority of the permitted development elements. The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of permitted development elements. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Medium - the permanent bund feature will result in a notable alteration to the landform within the field over a relatively low but large area. The extent of change will be limited to the lower half of the view and the proposed development will not prevent eastern views of the AONB, including Kelston Hill. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – As the proposed hedge and woodland planting areas develop, the bund landform will integrate into the surrounding landscape. The woodland planting will screen views of SWRC infrastructure from the PRoW. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Moderate Adverse . Over the longer term this would change to |

Negligible as proposed planting matures and integrated the bund into the surrounding landscape.

Viewpoint 2 – Footpath BA27/41 within site field

| | |
|---|--|
| Approximate distance | 0 m to the west |
| Receptors | Users of Footpath 27/41 travelling within close proximity to the site. |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.2.1 View across an open field towards SWRC. Existing WRC infrastructure is screened from view by vegetation and an existing bund. The elevated slopes within the AONB form a backcloth within the view. |
| Sensitivity | High – Residents and users of PROWs take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | Figures 6.2.2 to 6.2.3 The bund would be highly visible from the footpath but would screen the kiosks and the majority of the permitted development elements from view. The view of the bund from the residential properties would be filtered by intervening boundary walls and field boundary hedges. |
| Proposed mitigation | The bund will screen views of the kiosks and the majority of the permitted development. The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of permitted development elements. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Medium - the permanent bund feature will result in a notable alteration to the landform within the field over a relatively low but large area. The extent of change will be limited to the lower half of the view and the proposed development will not prevent eastern views of the AONB. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – As the proposed hedge and woodland planting areas develop, the bund landform will integrate into the surrounding landscape. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Moderate Adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as proposed planting matures and integrates the bund into the surrounding landscape. |

Viewpoint 3 – Footpath BA27/41, adjacent field

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| Approximate distance | 70 m to the north |
| Receptors | Footpath users travelling towards the site. |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.3.1. |

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|---|--|
| | View across open fields either side of a wooden post and rail fence. SWRC infrastructure is screened from view by vegetation and the existing bund. Land within the field where the bund is proposed can be glimpsed through gaps in the intervening hedgerow and trees. The hedgerows and trees filter longer range views out onwards the elevated land within the AONB. |
| Sensitivity | High – users of PRowS take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | The bund would be partially visible from the footpath with a degree of screening provided by the hedgerow positioned on the northern boundary of the field within which the bund is proposed. A gantry (permitted development) will be partially visible through intervening vegetation. The kiosks and the majority of the permitted development elements will be screened from view by intervening vegetation. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Low - the permanent bund feature will result in a perceptible alteration to the landform within the adjacent field. The alteration will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view and the majority of the development will be screened by existing intervening vegetation. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – Gaps within the intervening vegetation would close up as the proposed woodland planting area develops and the proposed development elements would be screened from view. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible adverse as the proposed planting matured. |

Viewpoint 4 – Footpath BA27/41, The River Avon Trail

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|----------------------|--|
| Approximate distance | 308 m to the north |
| Receptors | Footpath users following the route of The River Avon Trail. |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.4.1 View across an open field that gently sweeps upward from the river. The rooftop of a SWRC building is visible where there is a reduction in the height of intervening vegetation. SWRC infrastructure and the locations of the proposed development areas are screened from view by vegetation. Longer range views are available where the mid-ground landform drops down towards the river and the landform within the background |

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| Sensitivity | sweeps upwards towards the elevated AONB plateau. The edge of Kelston village is visible in the background of the view. High – users of PRowWs take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | Figures 6.4.2 to 6.4.3 The bund would be partially visible from the footpath with a degree of screening provided by the hedgerow positioned on the northern boundary of the field within which the bund is proposed. The kiosks will be screened from view by existing vegetation. A gantry (permitted development) will be partially visible where there is a localised drop in vegetation cover. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Low - the permanent bund feature will result in a perceptible alteration to the landform. The alteration will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view and the majority of the development will be screened by existing intervening vegetation. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – Gaps within the intervening vegetation would close up as the proposed woodland planting area develops and the proposed development elements would be screened from view. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as the proposed planting matures. |

Viewpoint 5 – Footpath BA18/5

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Approximate distance | 842 m to the north east |
| Receptors | Users of the PRow network north-east of the site within the AONB. |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.5.1 View towards the River Avon across an open, gently downward sweeping field. The rural landscape within the view includes pastoral agricultural fields, pockets of woodland, tree-lined hedgerows, small settlement clusters and individual properties. The small settlement of Swineford, east of the river, is visible within the mid-ground and Saltford can be seen in the background. Vegetation in and around SWRC screens WRC infrastructure from view. The open field immediately west of SWRC, where the bund is proposed, is partially visible through the intervening vegetation. |

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| Sensitivity | High – users of PRowS take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | The removal of vegetation to accommodate the proposed development will partially open up views of the site and the proposed development will be visible within the view. The bund and kiosks will be visible from the footpath with a degree of screening provided by the retained vegetation within the WRC and existing vegetation within the intervening landscape. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Low - the permanent bund feature and loss of vegetation will result in perceptible alterations to the landform and vegetation cover within the site. The alterations will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view and the majority of the development will be screened by existing intervening vegetation. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Low – Gaps within the intervening vegetation would close up as the proposed woodland planting area and reinstatement infill planting areas develop. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as the proposed woodland and infill planting matures. |

Viewpoint 6 – Footpath BA18/3

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| Approximate distance | 864 m to the north east |
| Receptors | Users of the PRowS network east of the site and within the AONB. |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.6.1 View towards the River Avon across a series of steeply then gently downward sweeping fields. The rural landscape within the view includes pastoral agricultural fields, pockets of woodland, tree-lined hedgerows, small settlement clusters and individual properties. As the land rises upwards west of the river, field boundaries layer on top of each other. This layering creates the impression of an area with more tree cover than is actually present. The long distance view afforded from this elevated position includes Saltford to the south west, Keynsham to the west, Dundry Hill south of Bristol and 10 km west of the viewpoint and Stantonbury Hill 6 km south of the viewpoint. |

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| Sensitivity | High – users of PRowWs take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | Figure 6.6.2 to 6.6.3 The removal of vegetation to accommodate the proposed development will partially open up views of the site and the proposed development will be visible within the view. The bund and kiosks will be visible from the footpath with a degree of screening provided by the retained vegetation within the WRC and existing vegetation within the intervening landscape. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed woodland planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform. The proposed infill planting will reinstate screening of WRC infrastructure. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Low – the permanent bund feature and loss of vegetation will result in perceptible alterations to the landform and vegetation cover within the site. The alterations will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view, will sit within the context of the existing infrastructure and views of the development will continue to be screened by existing intervening vegetation. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – The proposed woodland planting area will tie the bund landform into the surrounding vegetation network. The infill planting will reinstate vegetation lost during construction. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as the proposed planting matures. |

Viewpoint 7 – Footpath BA14/9

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Approximate distance | 1.07 km to the south east |
| Receptors | Users of the PRowW network south east of the site and within the AONB |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.7.1 View towards the River Avon across gently downward sweeping fields. The rural landscape within the view includes pastoral agricultural fields, pockets of woodland, tree-lined hedgerows, small settlement clusters and individual properties. As the land rises up west of the river before falling away towards the disused railway line cycle track. The long distance view afforded from this position includes the cluster of properties along Mead Lane, the settlement of Saltford, St Mary’s Bitton Church, eastern edges of Bristol and Keynsham and, in the distance, Dundry Hill. |
| Sensitivity | High - users of PRowWs take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. |

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| Visibility of the proposed development | The removal of vegetation to accommodate the proposed development will partially open up views of the site and the proposed development will be visible within the view. The bund and kiosks will be visible from the footpath with a degree of screening provided by the retained vegetation within SWRC and existing vegetation within the intervening landscape. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed woodland planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform. The proposed infill planting will reinstate screening of WRC infrastructure. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Low – the permanent bund feature and loss of vegetation will result in perceptible alterations to the landform and vegetation cover within the site. The alterations will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – The proposed woodland planting area will tie the bund landform into the surrounding vegetation. The infill planting will reinstate vegetation lost during construction. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as the proposed planting matures. |

Viewpoint 8 – Unnamed access road to Coombe Barn

| | |
|--|--|
| Approximate distance | 1.39 km to the south east |
| Receptors | Combe Barn Residents |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.8.1 View across sheep grazed fields which steeply fall away in the midground. The grazing fields and steeply undulating slopes of the Cotswolds AONB contrast with the gently undulating patchwork landscape within the river valley below. The tree lined crests of the AONB slopes add definition to the series of promontory like landforms reaching out into the gently undulating lowland patchwork of fields, woodlands and settlements. SWRC is visible along with the settlements of Salford, Keynsham, and the eastern edge of Bristol. |
| Sensitivity | High – Residents take particular interest in views of the landscape around them and experience prolonged viewing opportunities. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | The removal of vegetation to accommodate the proposed development will partially open up views of the site and the proposed development will be visible within the view. The bund |

| | |
|---|---|
| Proposed mitigation | and kiosks will be visible from the footpath with a degree of screening provided by the retained vegetation within SWRC. The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed woodland planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform. The proposed infill planting will reinstate screening of WRC infrastructure. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Low – the permanent bund feature and loss of vegetation will result in perceptible alterations to the landform and vegetation cover within the site. The alterations will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view, will sit within the context of the existing infrastructure. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – The proposed woodland planting area will tie the bund landform into the surrounding vegetation network. The infill planting will reinstate vegetation screening lost during construction. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as the proposed planting matures. |

Viewpoint 9 – Church Road, Bitton

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|--|---|
| Approximate distance | 1.06 km to the north west |
| Receptors | Local road users within Bitton Conservation Area |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.9.1 Open horse paddocks and farm buildings interwoven with established tree-lined hedgerows Hedges in the mid-ground filter views of the fields beyond, resulting in a change from initial openness to mid-ground enclosure. The elevated slopes of the AONB, including Kelston Hill tree copse, are visible through extended gaps in intervening vegetation. |
| Sensitivity | Low – road users take a passing interest in the view. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | Glimpsed views through intervening vegetation of the proposed gantry (permitted development). The bund and kiosks will be screened from view by vegetation within the intervening landscape. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed woodland planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform. The proposed infill planting will reinstate screening of WRC infrastructure. |

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| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Negligible – the loss of vegetation will be barely perceptible. The alterations will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view and views of the development will continue to be screened by existing intervening vegetation. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – The proposed woodland planting area will add to the existing vegetation cover. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Negligible . and would remain Negligible as the proposed planting matures. |

Viewpoint 10 – Footpath BA18/26

| | |
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| Approximate distance | 1.37 km to the east |
| Receptors | Users of the PRow network east of the site and within the AONB |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.10.1 View over steep AONB slopes towards the river valley floor below. The rural landscape within the view includes the pastoral slopes of the AONB leading to a patchwork of agricultural fields, pockets of woodland, tree-lined hedgerows, settlement clusters and individual properties. The River Avon is located within the midground of the view. The majority of the SWRC infrastructure is screened from view by surrounding vegetation. The long distance view afforded from this position includes the settlements of Saltford and Keynsham and, in the distance, Dundry Hill. |
| Sensitivity | High - users of PRow take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | Figures 6.10.2 to 6.10.3 The removal of vegetation to accommodate the proposed development will partially open up views of some parts of the site and parts of the proposed development may be glimpsed within a small part of the view. The bund and southern-most kiosks may be just visible from the footpath with a degree of filtered screening in summer provided by the retained vegetation within the WRC and existing vegetation within the intervening landscape. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed woodland planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform. The proposed infill planting will reinstate screening of WRC infrastructure. |

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| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | Low – the permanent bund feature and loss of vegetation will result in perceptible alterations to the landform and vegetation cover within the site. The alterations will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view, will sit within the context of the existing infrastructure and views of the development will continue to be screened by existing intervening vegetation. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – The proposed woodland planting area will tie the bund landform into the surrounding vegetation network. The infill planting will reinstatement planting areas lost during construction. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as the proposed planting matures. |

Viewpoint 11 – Prospect Stile OS Viewpoint

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| Approximate distance | 2.14 km to the east |
| Receptors | Users of the PRoW network east of the site, coincident with the Cotswolds Way National Trail at the Prospect Stile OS viewpoint (within the AONB). |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.11.1 View over steep AONB slopes towards the river valley floor below. The rural landscape within the view includes the partially wooded slopes of the AONB leading to a patchwork of agricultural fields, pockets of woodland, tree-lined hedgerows, settlement clusters and individual properties. The River Avon is located within the midground of the view. The majority of the SWRC infrastructure is screened from view by surrounding vegetation. The long distance view afforded from this position includes the settlements of Salford and Keynsham and, in the distance, elevated hills to the west. |
| Sensitivity | High - users of PRoWs take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. The National Trail is a nationally recognised route and Prospect Stile is a valued viewing opportunity within the AONB. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | Figures 6.11.2 to 6.11.3 The removal of vegetation to accommodate the proposed development will partially open up views of the site and the proposed development will be visible within the view. The bund and kiosks will be visible from the footpath with a degree of screening provided by the retained vegetation within the WRC and existing vegetation within the intervening landscape. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed woodland planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and |

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| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | provide further screening of the bund landform. The proposed infill planting will reinstate screening of WRC infrastructure. Low – The permanent bund feature and loss of vegetation will result in perceptible alterations to the landform and vegetation cover within the site. The alterations will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view, will sit within the context of the existing infrastructure. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – The proposed woodland planting area will tie the bund landform into the surrounding vegetation network. The infill planting will reinstate vegetation screening lost during construction. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as the proposed planting matures. |

Viewpoint 12 – Kelston Round Hill

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| Approximate distance | 1.99 km to the south east |
| Receptors | Visitors to Kelston Round Hill (within the AONB) |
| Baseline view | Figure 6.12.1 View down over the steep AONB slopes to the river valley floor below. The rural landscape within the view includes the pastoral slopes of the AONB leading to a patchwork of agricultural fields, pockets of woodland, tree-lined hedgerows, settlement clusters and individual properties. The River Avon is located within the midground of the view. The SWRC infrastructure is visible within the mid ground and partially screened by surrounding vegetation. The long distance view afforded from this position includes the settlements of Saltford, Keynsham and Bristol and, in the distance, elevated hills to the west. |
| Sensitivity | High – users of PRoWs take particular interest in views of the landscape around them. Kelston Hill is a valued viewing opportunity within the AONB. |
| Visibility of the proposed development | Figures 6.12.2 to 6.12.3 The removal of vegetation to accommodate the proposed development will partially open up views of the site and the proposed development will be visible within the view. The bund and kiosks will be visible from the footpath with a degree of screening provided by the retained vegetation within the WRC and existing vegetation within the intervening landscape. |
| Proposed mitigation | The rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape. The proposed woodland planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and |

| | |
|---|---|
| Magnitude of visual change – year 1 | provide further screening of the bund landform. The proposed infill planting will reinstate screening of WRC infrastructure. Low – The permanent bund feature and loss of vegetation will result in perceptible alterations to the landform and vegetation cover within the site. The alterations will be contained to a relatively small extent of the view, will sit within the context of the existing infrastructure. |
| Magnitude of visual change – year 15 | Negligible – The proposed woodland planting area will tie the bund landform into the surrounding vegetation network. The infill planting will reinstate vegetation screening lost during construction. |
| Longer term residual level of visual effect | In the short term the level of visual effect would be Minor adverse . Over the longer term this would change to Negligible as the proposed planting matures. |

Visual effects summary

The assessment of the representative viewpoints has identified that immediately after construction, users of PRow BA27/41, where the footpath runs adjacent to the proposed development, would experience a Moderate Adverse level of visual effect. For all other identified receptors, the level of visual effect at this point in time would be no more than Minor Adverse.

Over the longer term, at year 15, visual effects of the proposed development on surrounding views and receptors would be Negligible. This reflects that:

- Most receptors are set back from the proposed development.
- The mass and scale of the proposed landscape bund and five kiosks will be proportionate in relation to the existing infrastructure and planting and the rounded, graded form of the bund will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape.
- Where the proposals are visible, they will be seen in the context of existing WRC infrastructure.
- The proposed woodland planting would tie the bund into the existing landscape.

In undertaking the assessment of representative viewpoints, consideration has been given to whether there is the potential for a cumulative visual effect with the proposed bridge over the River Avon (the subject of a separate planning application). This has focused on viewpoints 5, 6, 8 and 12 (although elevated, the vicinity of the proposed bridge is not visible from viewpoints 10 and 11 due to the topography of the lower slopes of the Cotswolds AONB to the east of the River Avon). Overall it has been concluded that there is no potential for a cumulative visual effect. This reflects the presence of screening tree cover and the distance between the proposed bridge, kiosks and bund. The access road and vicinity of the bridge would be visible in viewpoint 6, especially during winter months, but this would not materially increase the overall visual effect and prominence of the treatment works within this view. Tree cover along the river would help to integrate the changes. Any additional cumulative

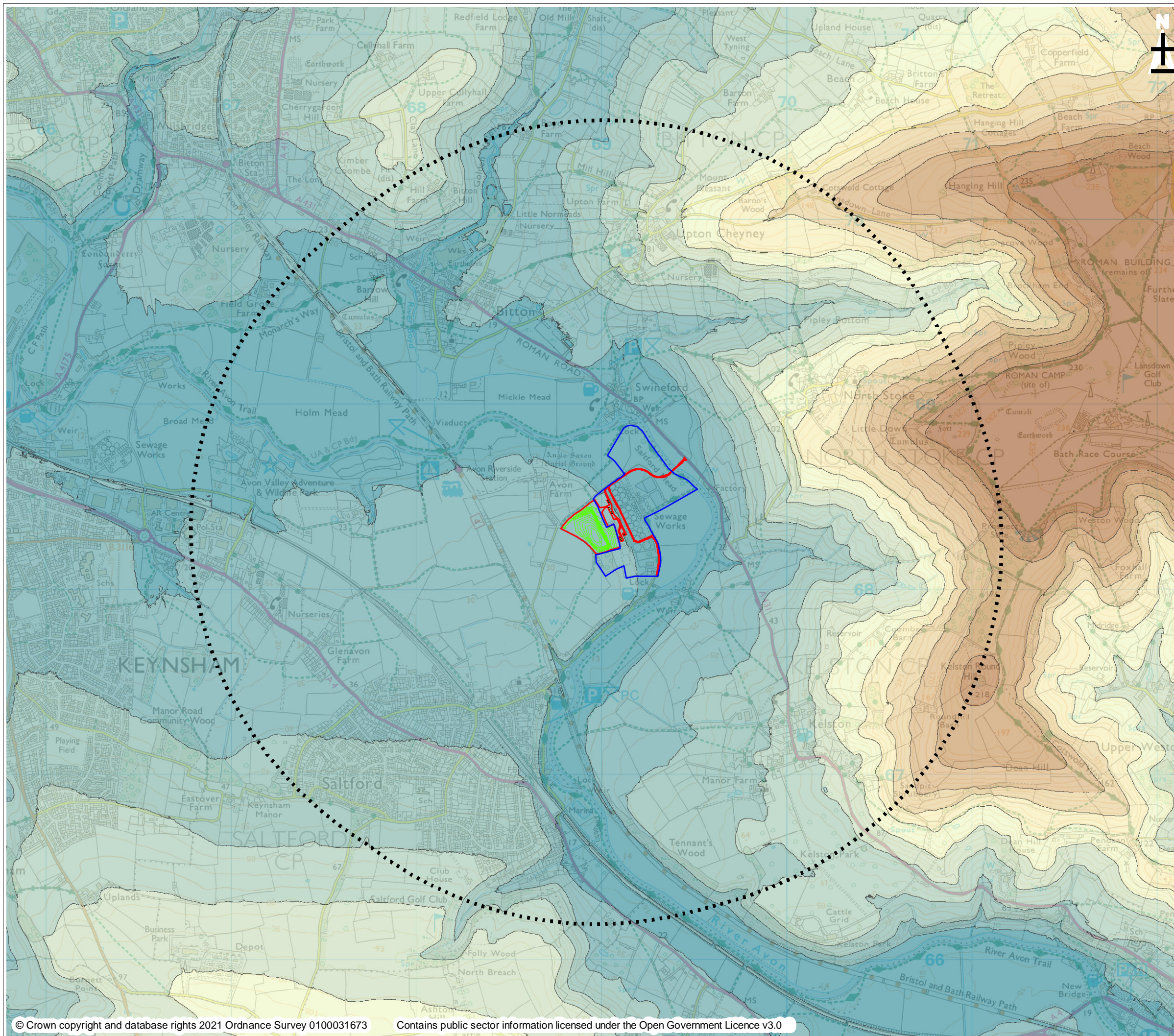
visual effect on views from the AONB associated with the proposed bridge over the River Avon would be negligible.

7 Summary and conclusions

Within this appraisal, assessments have been undertaken of the likely landscape and visual effects of the bund and five kiosks proposed as part of new treatment infrastructure on the SWRC. Mitigation strategies have been developed to minimise both the shorter and longer-term residual landscape and visual effects. These include:

- A rounded bund that gently grades out to the west into the existing landform levels which will minimise the introduction of a topographical feature at odds with the existing form of the landscape.
- The proposed woodland planting will assist in integrating the proposed bund into the landscape and provide further screening of the bund landform.
- The proposed infill planting will reinstate screening of WRC infrastructure.

The appraisal has concluded that the level of longer term residual landscape and visual effects of the proposed development would generally be **Negligible**.

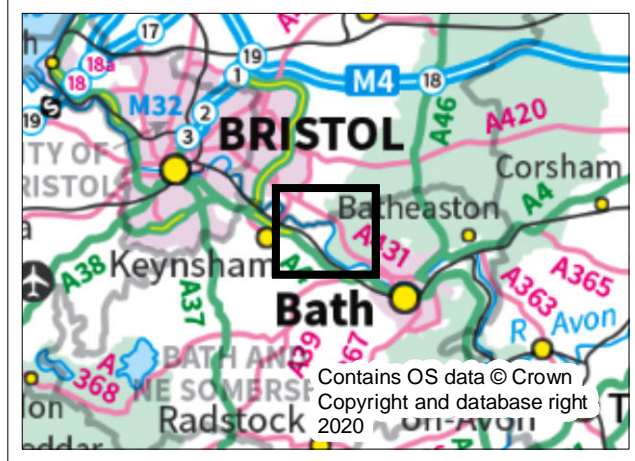
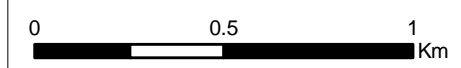


Legend

- Application Boundary
- Wessex Water Land Ownership Boundary
- Proposed Bund
- Proposed Kiosk
- 2km Study Area

Topography (m AOD)

- <= 20
- 20 - 40
- 40 - 60
- 60 - 80
- 80 - 100
- 100 - 120
- 120 - 140
- 140 - 160
- 160 - 180
- 180 - 200
- 200 - 220
- 220 - 240



| | | | | |
|------|------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
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| Rev. | Rev. Date | Drawing Suitability | Drawn | Apprd |

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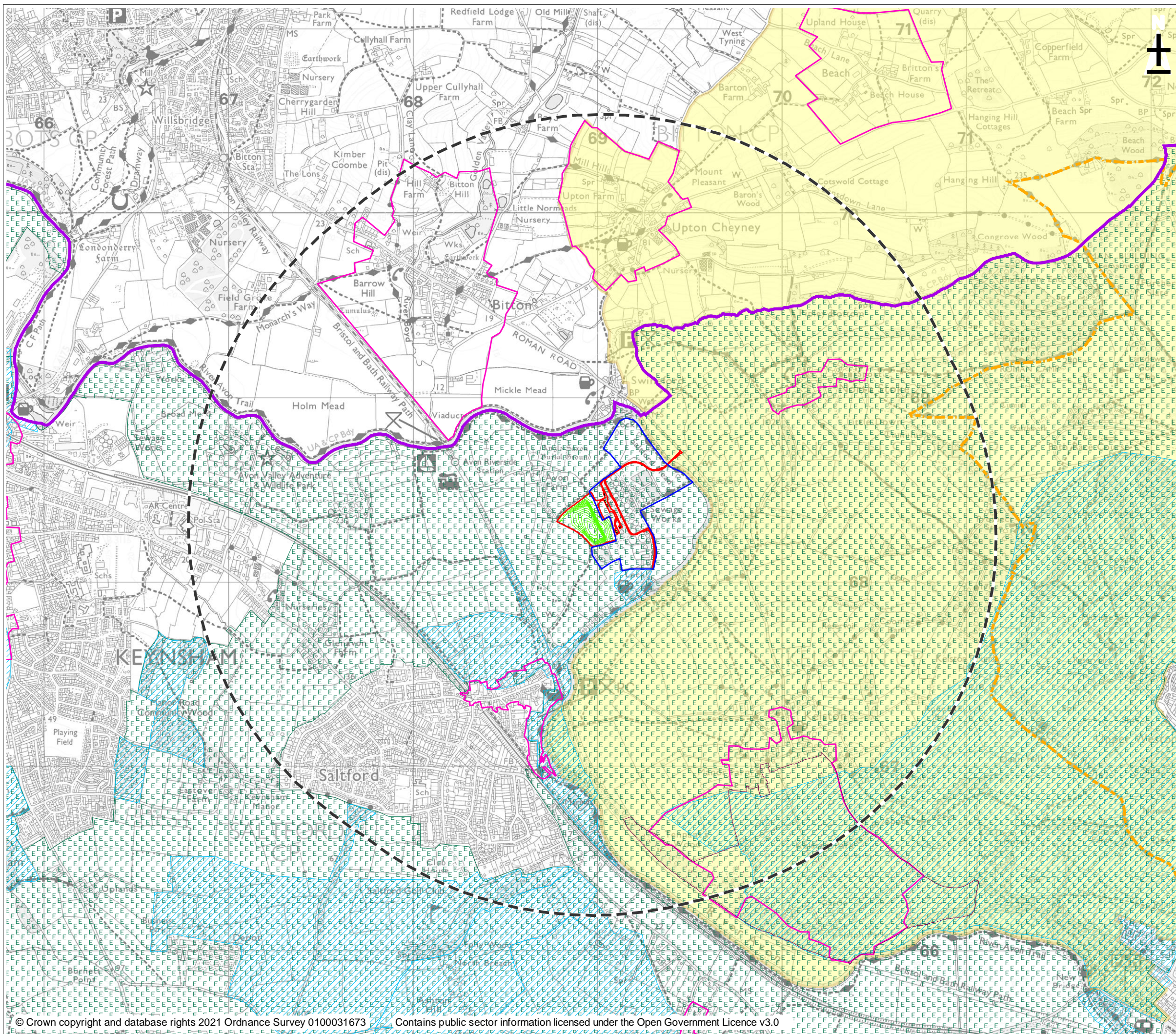
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Project: **SALT FORD WATER RECYCLING CENTRE FFT**

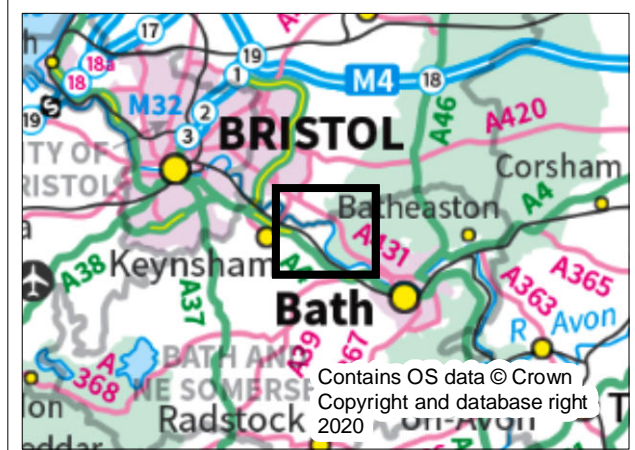
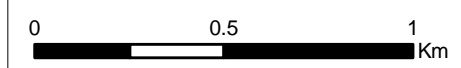
Drawing Title: **FIGURE 1 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

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| Scale @ A3 | 1:20,000 |
| Project No. | 65200622-001 |

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- Legend**
- Application Boundary
 - Wessex Water Land Ownership Boundary
 - 2km Study Area
 - Proposed Bund
 - Proposed Kiosk
 - District Boundary
 - National Trail
 - Conservation Area
 - Registered Park and Garden
 - Landscape Setting of Settlements (NE2A)
 - Green Belt (CP8)
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NE2)



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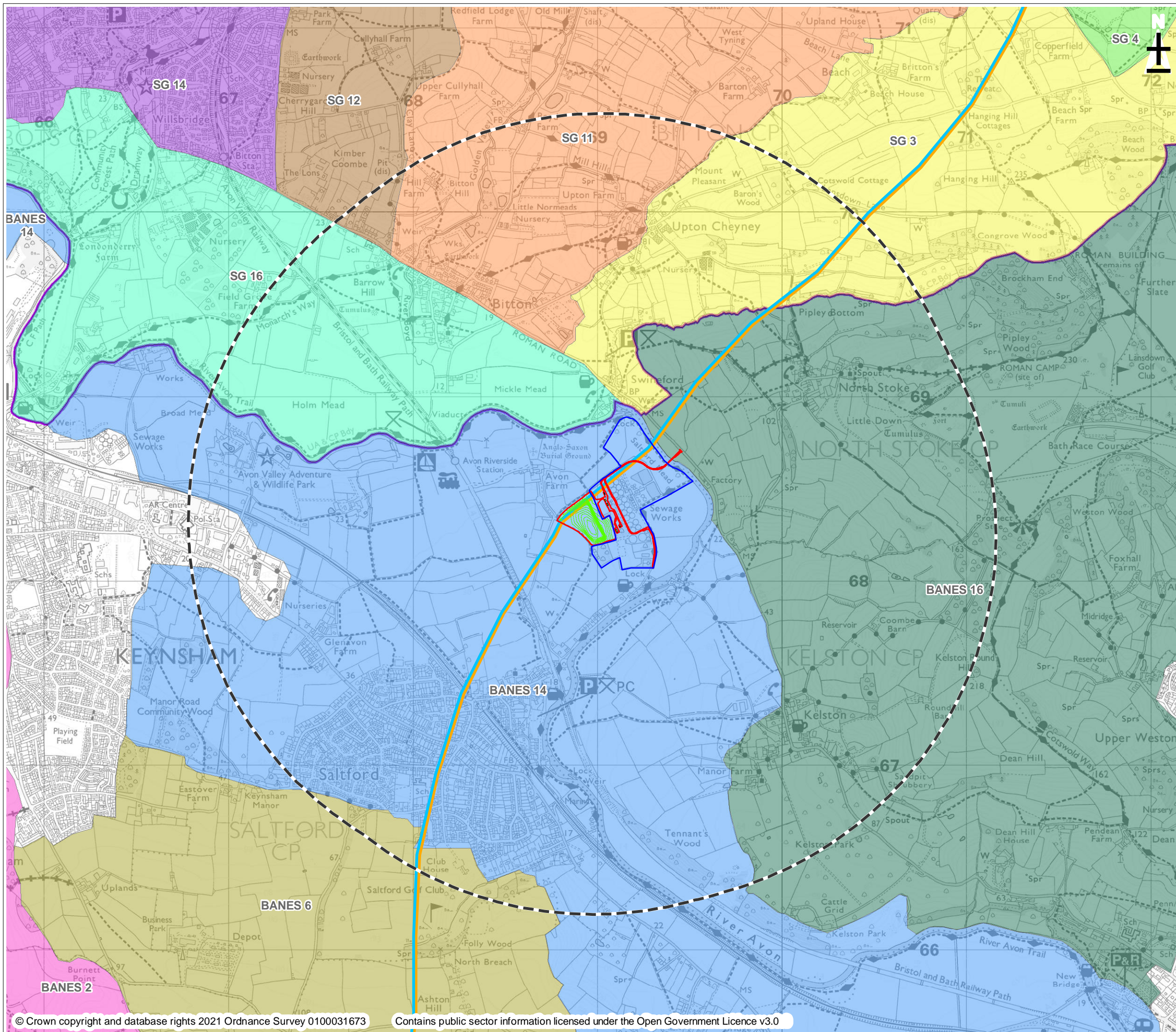
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Project: **SALTFORD WATER RECYCLING CENTRE FFT**

Drawing Title: **FIGURE 2 POLICY CONTEXT**

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Scale @ A3 | 1:20,000 |
| Project No. | 65200622-001 |

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Legend

- Application Boundary
- Wessex Water Land Ownership Boundary
- Proposed Bund
- Proposed Kiosk
- 2km Study Area
- District Boundary

Natural England National Character Areas

- 118 - Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges
- 107 - Cotswolds

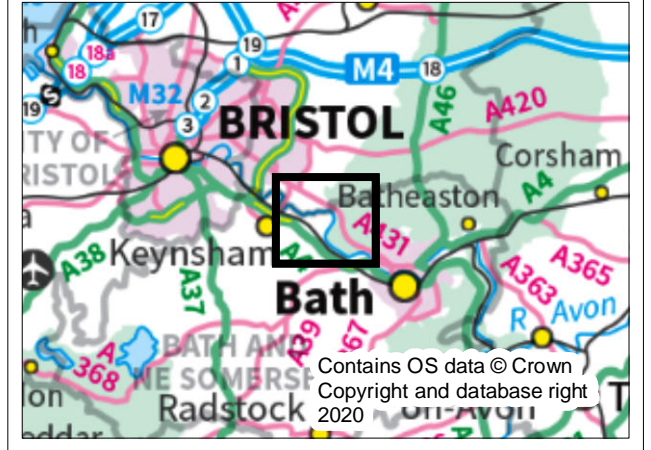
Bath and North East Somerset Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset, A Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance (2004)

- BANES 2 - Chew Valley
- BANES 6 - Hinton Blewett and Newton St Loe Plateau Lands
- BANES 14 - Avon Valley
- BANES 16 - Cotswolds Plateaux and Valleys

South Gloucester Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (2014)

- SG 3 - Ashwicke Ridges
- SG 4 - Cotswolds Scarp
- SG 11 - Golden Valley
- SG 12 - Westerleigh Vale & Oldland Ridge
- SG 14 - Kingswood
- SG 16 - Avon Valley

0 0.5 1 Km



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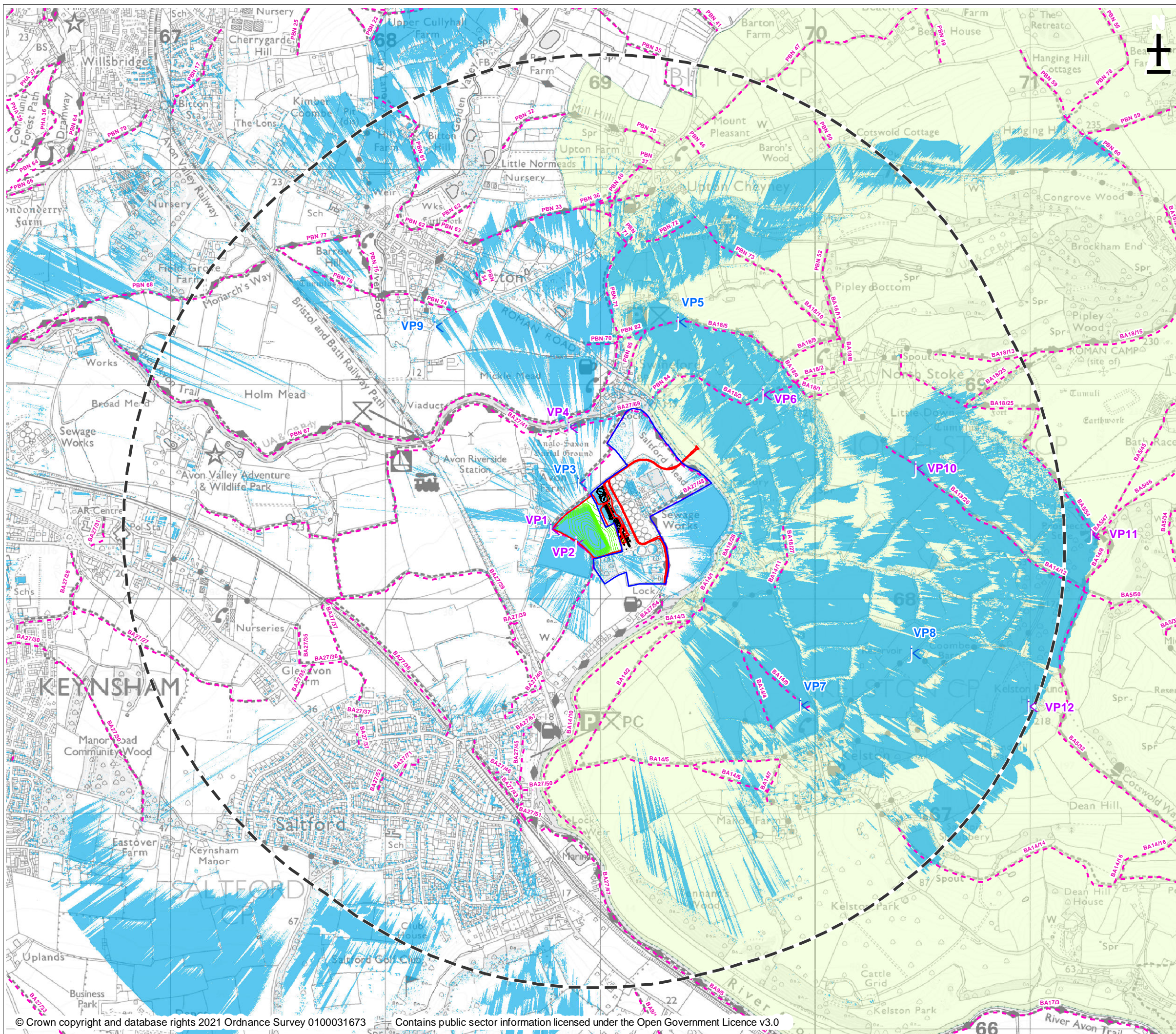
Client **WESSEX WATER**

Project **SALTFORD WATER RECYCLING CENTRE FFT**

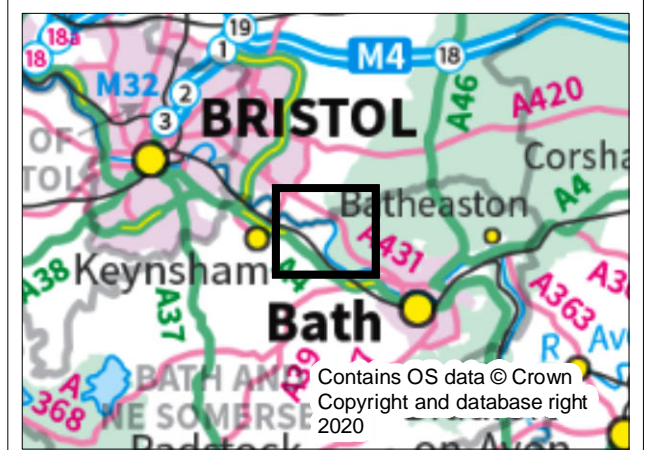
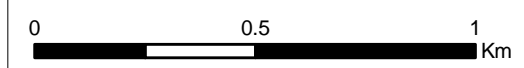
Drawing Title **FIGURE 3 PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS**

| | |
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| Project No. | 65200622-001 |

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- Legend**
- Application Boundary
 - Wessex Water Land Ownership Boundary
 - 2km Study Area
 - < Baseline View
 - < Photomontage View
 - Public Right of Way
 - Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)
 - Proposed Bund
 - Proposed Kiosk
 - Proposed Water Recycling Infrastructure (Permitted Development)



| | | | | |
|------|------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
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Client
WESSEX WATER

Project
SALT FORD WATER RECYCLING CENTRE FFT

Drawing Title
FIGURE 4
VIEWPOINTS & ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY

Scale @ A3: 1:17,148
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