



13. Low Limestone Plateau

Character Areas

13A Paulton and Peasedown St John Ridge

13B Hinton Charterhouse Plateau



Key Features

- **Gently undulating open plateau** representing small sections of more extensive plateau and ridge landscape that extend beyond the AONB boundary to the south.
- **Expansive long distance views across the open plateau to distant hills and immediate surrounding valleys** emphasise their relatively exposed and elevated character.
- **Generally equal distribution of arable and pastoral land occupies medium and occasionally large sized geometric fields** indicating enclosure age landscape.
- **Fields generally enclosed by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees** contrasting to areas of Dip-Slope and Dip Slope Lowland where dry stone walls are more prevalent.
- **Sparse woodland cover of small farm woodlands and shelterbelts** limiting the sense of enclosure.
- **Limited areas of species rich grassland on the fringes of the landscape type** extending down steep slopes of the adjacent valleys.
- **Sparsely settled with little settlement beyond isolated farmsteads** gives the landscape a remote rural character.
- **Communication routes principally limited to minor roads connecting small settlements and farmsteads** adds further to the landscape's rural character.
- **Limited number of archaeological remains**, although their presence verifies the long history of settlement and use of the area.



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Summary description

Located immediately to the south of Bath on the southern fringe of the AONB, these small areas of undulating plateau landscape are fragments of a broader area of Low Limestone Plateau that extends south and west towards the Mendips. The plateaux are open in character, with expansive views to distant hills and into the surrounding valleys. Pastoral and arable fields exist in equal measure. Fields are generally medium-sized and mainly enclosed by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. A sparse woodland cover contributes to the overall sense of openness. Small settlements, scattered farmsteads and individual dwellings are connected by a network of minor roads. The dominance of the sky means that elements such as masts and pylons are highly visible. Likewise some large modern farm buildings that look out of place due to their size, materials and design.

Landscape Sensitivity

Despite its agricultural character the wide, elevated, gently undulating plateau landscape retains a strong sense of remoteness contributing to its high sensitivity. Wide panoramic views, a high degree of inter-visibility and limited woodland cover also increase the sensitivity of the landscape, particularly to large scale development or schemes that may introduce tall vertical elements.

The Low Limestone Plateau contains a number of prehistoric monuments including funerary monuments and defensive enclosures dating to the Saxon period. These are an important component of the landscape and highly sensitive to developments that may affect their landscape setting and material remains.