

# ***Bidford-on-Avon Parish Landscape Character Assessment***



FINAL REPORT 12<sup>th</sup> October 2016



Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd / The **terra firma** Consultancy Ltd

## CONTENTS

<b>I.INTRODUCTION</b>	1
<b>2.LANDSCAPE SETTING</b>	2
2.1. Location	2
2.2. Landscape Character Context (see Parish-wide Figure 2)	2
2.3. Topography and Hydrology (see Parish-wide Figures 3 and 5)	2
2.4. Vegetation and Ecology	3
2.5. Historic landscape	3
2.6. Perceptual/Experiential Landscape	3
2.7. Settlement Pattern	4
2.8. Settlement Gaps	4
2.9. Important visual landmarks and features	4
<b>3.BIDFORD-ON-AVON PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS</b>	6
<b>4.Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A – Marriage Hill Terrace Farmlands and Arrow River Meadows</b>	9
4.1. Landscape Character Area Description	10
4.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the River Meadowlands:	10
4.3. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Terrace Farmlands:	11
4.4. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A	11
4.5. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A	12
4.6. Relationship to Settlement	13
4.7. Summary (including extent to which PLCA:A is representative of the wider LCA)	13
4.8. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines	13
4.9. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A	14
4.10. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A	14
4.11. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A	15
<b>5.Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B – Bidford-on-Avon Northern Terrace Farmland</b>	17
5.1. Landscape Character Area Description	18
5.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Terrace Farmlands:	18
5.3. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B	19
5.4. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B	20
5.5. Relationship to Settlement	20

5.6. Summary (including extent to which PLCA: B is representative of the wider landscape)	20
5.7. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines	21
5.8. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B	21
5.9. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B	21
5.10. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C	22
<b>6. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C – Bidford-on-Avon Eastern Vale</b>	<b>24</b>
6.1. Landscape Character Area Description	25
6.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Vale Orchard Belt	25
6.3. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C	26
6.4. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C	27
6.5. Relationship to Settlement	27
6.6. Summary (including extent to which PLCA:C is representative of the wider LCA)	28
6.7. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines	28
6.8. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C	28
6.9. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C	29
6.10. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C	29
<b>7. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D – Staple Hill</b>	<b>31</b>
7.1. Landscape Character Area Description	32
7.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Vale Orchard Belt	32
7.3. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D	33
7.4. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D	34
7.5. Relationship to Settlement	34
7.6. Summary (including extent to which PLCA:D is representative of the wider LCA)	34
7.7. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines	34
7.8. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D	35
7.9. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D	35
7.10. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D	35
<b>8. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E – Marlcliff Hill</b>	<b>38</b>
8.1. Landscape Character Area Description	39
8.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Vale Orchard Belt	39
8.3. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E	40

8.4. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E	41
8.5. Relationship to Settlement	41
8.6. Summary (including extent to which PLCA:E is representative of the wider LCA)	41
8.7. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines	42
8.8. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E	42
8.9. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E	42
8.10. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E	43
<b>9. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F – Avon River Meadows and Terrace Farmland</b>	<b>45</b>
9.1. Landscape Character Area Description	46
9.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the River Meadowlands:	47
9.3. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Terrace Farmlands:	47
9.4. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F	48
9.5. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A	49
9.6. Relationship to Settlement	49
9.7. Summary (including extent to which PLCA. F is representative of the wider landscape)	50
9.8. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines	50
9.9. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F	50
9.10. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F	51
9.11. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F	51

## **PARISH-WIDE FIGURES**

1. Parish Landscape Character Areas
2. Parish boundary, settlement boundary, Warwickshire Landscape Project landscape types and Bidford-on-Avon Area of Restraint
3. Topography
4. Visual analysis plan of the Parish
5. Key landscape features of the Parish

## I. INTRODUCTION

### General

Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Group appointed Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd and the terra firma Consultancy Ltd in January 2016 to produce a *Bidford-on-Avon Parish Landscape Character Assessment* to inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and in particular emerging policy **ENV.7:**

### Protection of landscape, skylines and important views.

*In order to maintain the distinctive character of the Neighbourhood Area, all new development must have regard to the landscape character and historic landscape features and retention of important landmarks, skylines and views. Proposals which have an adverse impact on the landscape, skylines or important views will not be supported.*

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) definition of “landscape” is:

*“ ..... an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors.”*

The Parish of Bidford-on-Avon falls wholly in Stratford District. It is not included within either a national landscape designation or one of Stratford District’s Special Landscape Areas. An Area of Restraint<sup>i</sup> lies to the south of the town and the River Avon as shown in Figure 2.

The aim of this study is to assist Bidford-on-Avon Parish in the preparation and adoption of the Bidford-on-Avon Neighbourhood Plan (BoANP). The study will form part of the BoANP’s evidence base and will assist in the housing site selection process and development control. The study will provide a robust landscape evidence base that will be weighed with all the other evidence used in plan making and planning decisions.

---

<sup>i</sup> Interim Adopted Core Strategy June 2015 policy CS.13: *Land designated as an Area of Restraint makes an important contribution to the character of the settlement.*

The Study builds on published landscape character studies most notably the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines 1993 and takes into account the findings of the Stratford District Landscape Sensitivity Study for Larger Villages 2011 which provides some more detailed level of character assessment. A full list of documents included in Section 4.

### Objectives of the Study

Overall the Study aims to provide a transparent, consistent, objective and robust approach to the *Bidford-on-Avon Parish Landscape Assessment*, and to provide the Parish and Local Planning Authority officers with evidence to understand where the potential landscape and visual impacts would be greatest.

The *Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Assessment* identifies and describes variation in the character of the landscape across Bidford-on-Avon Parish. It identifies six Bidford-on-Avon Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCAs) which exhibit unique combinations of elements and features (characteristics) that make the landscape areas distinctive and makes land management and development recommendations for each PLCA.

The boundaries of these PLCAs are based on the wider landscape character types identified in the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines and detailed desk-base and fieldwork assessment. The Study also considers the visual characteristics of the Parish; key views and vistas, landmark features, important skylines and particular sensitive visual receptors.

The study takes into account the locations of ecological, heritage and recreational assets in the Parish but does not include detailed studies of these topics. However historical data from Warwickshire County Council has been used to further understand landscape surviving patterns derived from the historic landscape.

## 2. LANDSCAPE SETTING

### 2.1. Location

The village of Bidford-on-Avon is situated on the River Avon approximately 8km from the main town at Stratford-upon-Avon to the east. The village of Welford-on-Avon lies 4km to the east and the main arterial road, the A46, runs north to south some 100-300m to the west.

The Bidford-on-Avon Parish boundary is shown in Figure 1 and extends either side of the River Avon. In the west the boundary follows the alignment of the river Arrow which flows north to south into the River Avon at the south-west corner of the Parish. The south western boundary follows the river Avon as far as the village of Marlcliff but the remaining boundaries follow field boundaries, road alignments and cross country. The Parish extends to between Broom and Moor Hall in the north; to the high ground in the east of Bidford golf course at Bidford Grange in the east; to the land around Barton Farm in the south-east and just south of Bickmarsh in the south.

The main settlement is the large village of Bidford-on-Avon lying in the centre of the Parish within a rural part of the Avon Valley, on the banks of the River Avon. To the north lies the small village of Broom which is closely related to the River Arrow; to the south-west lies the small village of Marlcliff, closely associated with the River Avon; and to the south-west lies the hamlet of Barton also closely related to the River Avon. Elsewhere settlement is sparse and limited to individual farmsteads and houses or small collection of buildings as at Bickmarsh.

### 2.2. Landscape Character Context (see Parish-wide Figure 2)

Bidford-on-Avon Parish falls within 3 broad landscape character types within the Avon Valley Regional Landscape Character Area identified in the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines 1993 (and shown on Parish-wide Figure 2) which are the:

- River Meadowlands
- Terrace Farmlands
- Vale Orchard Belt.

The key characteristics, sensitivities and management considerations of these types – as identified in the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines - are used as a basis for the more detailed Bidford-on-Avon character assessments to follow in Section 3 below.

### 2.3. Topography and Hydrology (see Parish-wide Figures 3 and 5)

The topography and hydrology are key characteristics of the village's setting as well as giving rise to a diversity of habitats and key influences to the historic and present day land use and settlement pattern.

The Avon floodplain Zone 2 is extensive, covering the whole of the River Meadows landscape type and a small part of the edge of the Terrace Farmlands around the allotments off Salford Road and on lower Honeybourne Road. The River Arrow and its floodplain is much narrower and flows southwards into the River Avon in the south-west corner of the Parish. The Parish also has a number of streams, the principal one of which is Small Brook which flows from its source north of George's Elm Lane in the north-east along the northern edge of Bidford to its confluence with the River Avon west of Marlcliff. Elsewhere minor streams define the boundary of the Parish as at Bidford Grange and south of Barton's Farm. Natural ditches are not common but are a local feature at Marlcliff.

The local topography is a defining feature of the Parish with the broad Avon Valley encircled by low ridgelines largely within the Vale Orchard Belt (see Figure 3) but also at Marriage Hill in the Terrace Farmlands. These low ridges form a series of skylines, best appreciated from the valley floor and the lower terraces.

Beyond these lie a series of higher hillsides which can be seen through the gaps in the ridgelines from the valley floor or from higher ground within the Parish, forming the distant skyline. Marlcliff Hill is a particularly prominent landmark, especially visible from the B439 in both the western and eastern approaches to Bidford.

#### **2.4. Vegetation and Ecology**

The Parish is largely under either arable or horticultural cultivation. Large areas of natural vegetation are uncommon throughout but the Parish has a distinctive pattern of mature scrub, hedge and tree lines along the watercourses and in hedgerows which create layers of vegetation which give the appearance of a more wooded landscape than is the case. Woodland is generally linear and found on the steep narrow slopes along the river bluffs (for example at Marlcliff and The Rookery) or at the break of slope on the ridgelines, (as for example at Summer Hill Farm). These tend to be prominent features in the landscape. Tree and shrub lines define the disused railway routes, of which south of King's Lane, Broom is the only SSSI in the Parish. [information on the local wildlife sites has not been made available].

Small areas of pasture are a key feature of the landscape setting of Broom, Marlcliff and Barton and some remnants are to be found along the rivers Arrow and Avon.

#### **2.5. Historic landscape**

In addition to the above the Parish has been a long standing location for extensive orchards which were to be found within all of the landscape character areas at one time, not just the Vale Orchard Belt. Most of these have been either built on or returned to agriculture but there are remnants scattered through the Parish, the best example being at Bickmarsh.

Ridge and furrow pasture was also once more common across the Parish and some examples, most notably at Marlcliff, do survive but many others appear to have been ploughed out.

The Parish has no Registered Parks and Gardens but Warwickshire County Council have identified a number of potential local parks or gardens of merit. These include Broom Court, the Avon House gardens and Woodpeckers at Marlcliff and possibly Broom Hall (now the pub).

The Conservation Areas at Bidford, Broom and Barton all have a close relationship with their surrounding landscape setting. Of these Broom is particularly defined by open space within the confines of the village. Listed buildings are concentrated in the main settlements but three listed farmhouses at Broom Court, Farmington Farm and Barton Farm all contribute to the character of the area in which they lie.

#### **2.6. Perceptual/Experiential Landscape**

Generally the Parish has an overriding rural character of good scenic value although some of the development in the Parish is large in scale and visually intrusive.

The relationship between the historic town at Bidford and the Avon Valley is of particular value which is recognized in the designation of the later as an Area of Restraint by Stratford District Council. A large part of this area is Big Meadow, a much valued area of public open space. Smaller additional areas of locally valued open space have been identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. To the south-east the Heart of England Forest project extends into the Parish and has led to the creation of a community woodland at Dorothy's Wood.

The Parish benefits from two regional promoted long distance paths, the Shakespeare's Avon Way which follows the open countryside along the course of

the river Avon, and the Heart of England Way which crosses the Parish from north to south, linking with Shakespeare's Avon Way at Barton and Bidford Bridge. Both of these are well used by locals and visitors alike. Elsewhere local footpaths cross Marriage Hill; run from Bidford to Bidford Grange and from Bidford to Marlcliff; with a few other short links across open countryside. Marlcliff and Broom both have a number of footpaths around the village.

## 2.7. Settlement Pattern

Historically the settlement pattern developed from easy access to the rivers whilst locating buildings on the slightly higher ground of the river terraces.

Bidford has a strong well defined historic core which mainly lies between the B439 and the river Avon. Development west and east of the core south of the B439 has been limited; with an estate in the east at Icknield Close and mostly ribbon development in the west. The town has expanded considerably to the north, and continues to do so, as this part of the Parish has been considered the least sensitive to change. In places this has resulted in an exposed edge to the village and prominent built form.

The smaller villages have retained their rural character and largely absorbed small scale development in keeping with the character of these villages.

Detailed information is available from the Conservation Area Appraisals and the work undertaken by Warwickshire County Council.

## 2.8. Settlement Gaps

Bidford-on-Avon has expanded during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mostly to the north where development pressure remains the greatest. The village is separated from the small village of Broom to the north by a very narrow gap roughly 400m wide along the Bidford Road. This gap contains a number of horticultural buildings,

typical of the rural Avon Valley landscape but introducing substantial agricultural built form into this vulnerable gap. The village of Barton to the south-east is separated from the village by a wider and more open gap of 600m which includes the river Avon and its meadows. Some of this land falls within the Area of Restraint. The village of Marlcliff to the south-west is also separated by a wider gap of approximately 975m which also includes the river Avon, its meadows and medium sized arable or horticultural fields.

The village residents consider that retaining these gaps is crucial to safeguarding the individual character and identity of the settlements particularly where the land at the edge of settlement forms part of its historic/landscape setting and/or includes areas which have cultural importance.

## 2.9. Important visual landmarks and features

A number of key landscape features and built form within the Parish and in the surrounding area provide visual landmarks. Most historically important and prominent amongst these are the Parish Church of St Lawrence, Bidford and Bidford bridge. There are a number of other historical and natural local landmarks which are identified in Figure 4.

The ridgelines around the Parish have created a distinctive pattern of locally prominent skylines which are also defined by a line of trees or mature but gappy hedgerows along the ridge, as at Staple Hill and Bidford Grange and the golf course. Marlcliff Hill and to a lesser degree Summer Hill create a distinctive wooded skyline, whilst Marriage Hill presents a very open smooth skyline in the west. The important skylines are shown in Figure 4.

There are important views throughout the Parish as identified for each PLCA on Figure 4 and in Section 3. These vary from intimate enclosed views to long distance and 360° views, both of which enrich the enjoyment of the Parish. To date these have been of a rural landscape with the town largely contained on the

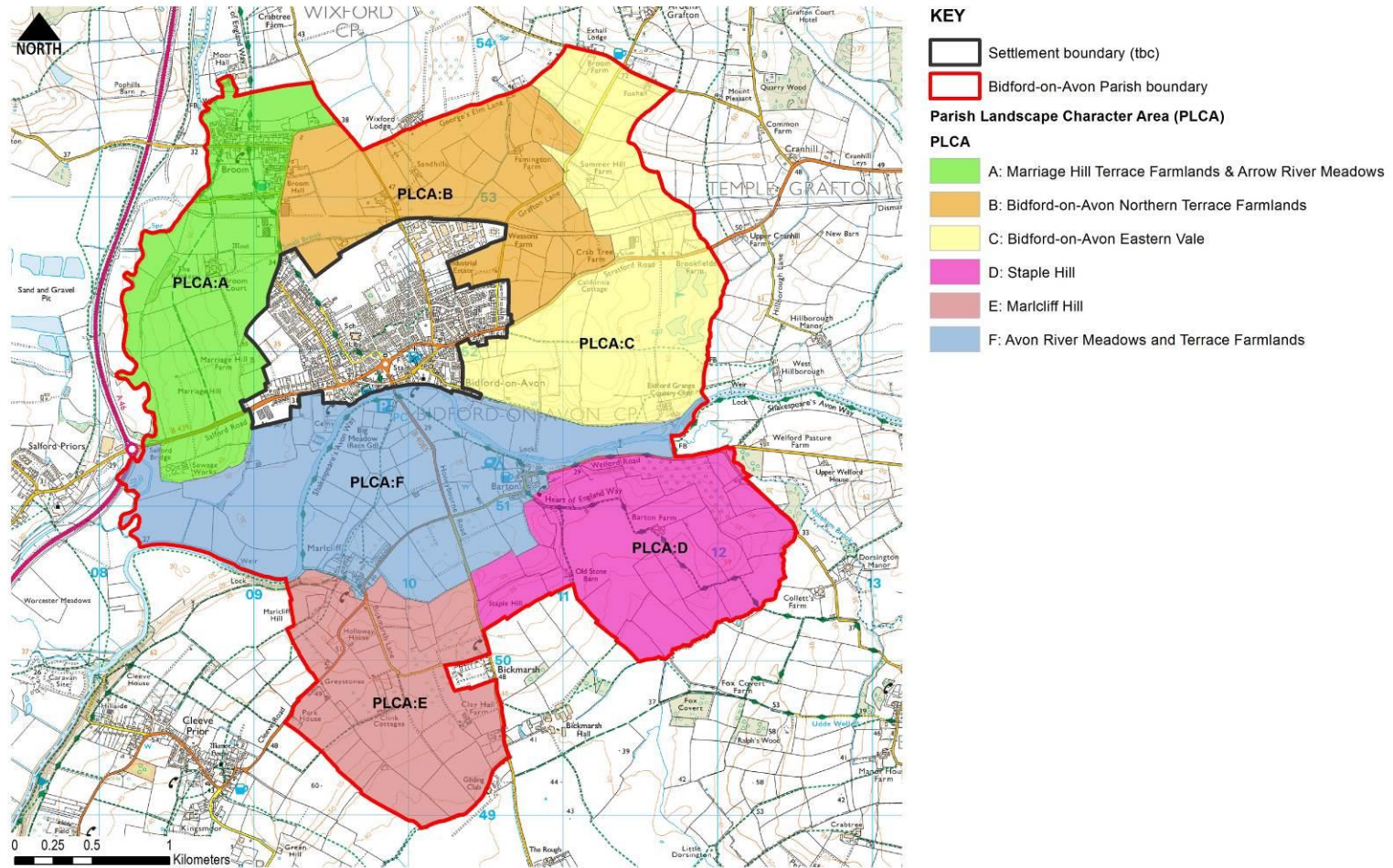


lower terraces with a good cover of trees and garden space, with some exceptions where development has crept onto the higher ground in the east. Only in views from the north does the town have a more urban appearance.

### **3. BIDFORD-ON-AVON PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**

In order to provide a more detailed assessment of the Parish's landscape, the area has been sub-divided into smaller LCAs based on the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines landscape types and called Bidford-on-Avon Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCAs) A to F, as indicated on Figure I. Each of these is assessed below, drawing upon relevant key characteristics, sensitivities and management considerations identified in the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines and adding a new level of detail appropriate to the unique setting within Bidford-on-Avon Parish.

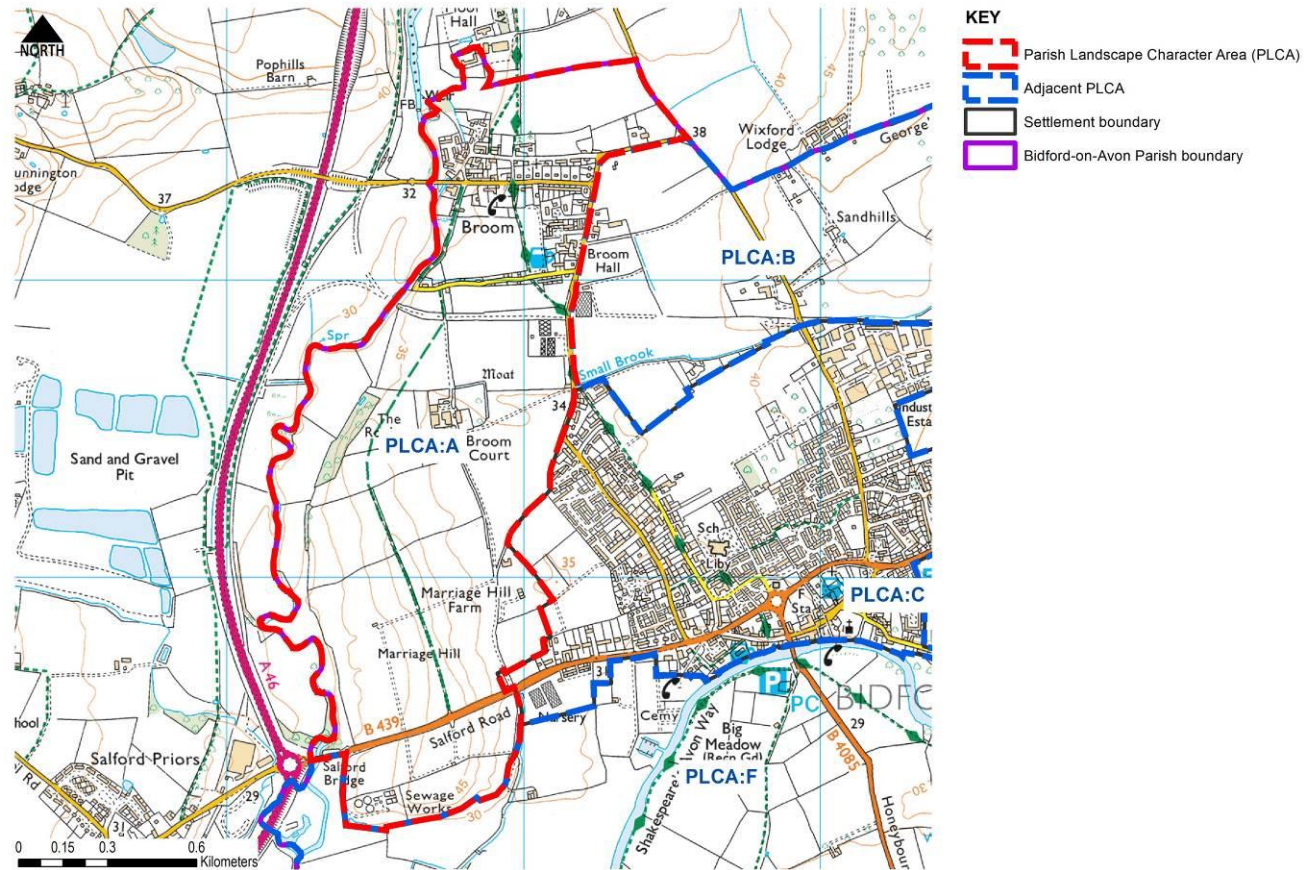
**FIGURE 1**



## **PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS A TO F**

#### 4. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A – Marriage Hill Terrace Farmlands and Arrow River Meadows

Character area map:



#### **4.1. Landscape Character Area Description**

Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A (PLCA.A) includes the River Arrow and its river meadows of the River Meadowlands landscape type; the Terrace Farmlands landscape type at Marriage Hill and the small historic village of Broom which lies mainly within a Conservation Area. The River Meadows are narrow following the line of the River Arrow whilst the Terrace Meadow Farmland extends beyond PLCA.A to the north and east. The western boundary is formed by the river Arrow; the eastern boundary follows the line of Bidford Road, the settlement edge of Bidford and Small Brook; the southern boundary follows the edge of the floodplain and a line of trees and hedgerows at the base of Marriage Hill; and the northern boundary goes up to the Parish boundary south of Moor Hall.

This character area comprises mainly medium sized arable fields with a long unbroken linear field between the river Arrow and the curvilinear hedge line which defines the edge of the floodplain. Woodland is sparse and hedgerows often poor and gappy but the area has many linear tree belts along the watercourses, around farmsteads and some transport links.

The key features of the PLCA.A are the rural character of the village of Broom, the open undeveloped Marriage Hill and the riparian river corridor of the River Arrow. The key landscape features include the wide tree and shrub belt within the cutting of the derelict railway line, and its surviving bridges; the meandering River Arrow and its tree and scrub vegetation; The Rookery woodland; the surviving pattern of small fields and pasture around Broom and Small Brook and its tree cover. Secondary but distinctive features include the tree and hedgerow setting to the farmsteads; the surviving curvilinear hedgerows; and the rural approach down the B439.

The historic village of Broom lies in the north of the Parish within PLCA.A and the village of Bidford lies to the immediate east. The character area does not abut the historic core of Bidford and the settlement edge is characterised by housing estates west of Victoria Road and by linear ribbon development north of Salford Road, but the latter is changing with estate development permitted to the rear of 18 Salford Road. However in the north the open landscape wraps around the historic core of Broom and makes a significant contribution to the character of the village.

Orchards were once a feature of PLCA. A and several were to be found around the village of Broom. The gardens at Broom Court has been identified as a local historic asset recommended for local listing with remains of the moat, formal gardens and an orchard dating from Post Medieval period. There is documented evidence of ridge and furrow west of Broom Court and south of King's Lane next to the River Arrow which may survive.

#### **4.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the River Meadowlands:**

- The small River Arrow tributary of the River Avon
- A narrow meandering river corridor with flat alluvial floodplains
- Prominent steeply sloping wooded bluffs
- Steep banks and marginal vegetation
- Fringe tree and scrub cover with alders and willow
- Curvilinear hedgerows along the boundary of the floodplain

- Poorly defined field pattern
- Lack of built form

#### **4.3. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Terrace Farmlands:**

- Market gardening
- Open landscape
- Occasional low rolling hills
- Broad flat gravel terraces
- Large scale geometric field pattern
- Some smaller arable plots growing vegetable crops
- Well wooded steams
- Glass houses and other horticultural buildings
- Small nucleated villages
- Lack of hedgerows or poorer low and gappy hedgerows
- Sparse woodland but with wooded streamlines and isolated mature tree lines

#### **4.4. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A**

##### Natural

- Well defined meandering River Arrow with tree and scrub cover along its banks
- Alignment of Small Brook with tree cover
- Bluff woodland including The Rockery overlooking the river
- Open farmland between Bidford and Broom
- Open arable farmland along the river and over Marriage Hill; and between Broom and Moor Hall
- Scrub and grassland between the river and the village of Broom
- Wide linear tree and scrub belt (SSSI) in cutting along line of old railway line defines southern immediate setting of the village of Broom
- Small pastoral fields north of Mill Lane, Mill Close and Miller's Bank
- Open landscape containing the tree covered river bank, the recreation ground and informal pasture and scrub open space between High Street and King's Lane
- Curvilinear tree belt leading from Small Brook to Broom Court

##### Cultural

- Small nucleated village of Broom in the north has a distinct historic rural character, separate from that of Bidford-on-Avon

- South-eastern boundary defined by often exposed urban edge of Bidford but with more softer edges against much older development (such as north of Salford Road) or included in new approved development;
- Linear mixed age ribbon settlement along King's Lane flanked by pasture to the south and scrub and grassland to the north
- Isolated farmsteads at Broom Court, Marriage Hill Farm, and Moor Hall (most southerly part lies in the Parish) which are part contained by lines of trees and mature hedgerows
- Prominent glass houses and other horticultural buildings south of Broom
- Limited development north of Mill Lane broken up by small fields, open grassland and hedgerows except for new housing cluster at Mill Close and Miller's Bank in the west
- Flood defenses (brick walls and grassed bunds) west of housing on Miller's Bank contrast with the flat river floodplain
- Line of former railway line with cutting and bridges still evident
- Open recreational areas between High Street and King's Lane.

#### Perceptual

- Contrast between the open exposed higher ground on Marriage Hill and the enclosed landscapes around Broom
- Limited access on foot to most of area but several footpaths around the village of Broom including a stretch of the Heart of England Way
- More exposed built edge to Broom in the western approach from Dunnington at the river Arrow
- Fragmentation of the open farmland gap along Bidford Road between Bidford and Broom as a result of horticultural built development
- Open landscape separating Broom from Bidford

#### **4.5. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A**

##### Key views into the area are afforded from:

- Marriage Hill is highly visible from all of the Parish, from the valley floor including Shakespeare's Avon Way and more elevated sections
- Open landscape of the area between Bidford and Broom visible from Bidford Road
- Rare view of open rural River Arrow at bridge crossing west of Broom
- The rural approach from Dunnington in the west
- The Heart of England Way in its approach to the village from the north past Moor Hall

##### Key views out of the area to:

- Views from Marriage Hill to Bidford mainly set on lower ground
- Long views from Marriage Hill to surrounding hills in all four directions including Marlcliff Hill, Oversley Castle, Staple Hill and out with of the Parish and to River Avon meadows in PLCA.F
- From B439 Salford Road over adjacent River Avon meadows in PLCA.F in descent down Marriage Hill



Key views within the area:

- Up to Marriage Hill
- Along the small pasture fields south of King's Lane
- From Marriage Hill over farmland west of Bidford
- From the Heart of England Way into the village of Broom and its immediate landscape setting

#### **4.6. Relationship to Settlement**

- The open landscape between the river Arrow and the Bidford boundary of PLCA.A (including but not limited to Marriage Hill) forms the rural setting to Bidford
- Small Brook and its tree cover forms an edge to the settlement which will be enhanced to some extent by new planting as part of the development of 18 Salford Road
- The open landscape between Broom Court and Broom is important in maintaining the separate identity of the small village
- The small scale landscape pattern embraces the village of Broom making a major contribution to its character and appearance
- The B439 Salford Road is an important gateway approach into Bidford

#### **4.7. Summary (including extent to which PLCA:A is representative of the wider LCA)**

PLCA.A as a whole is rather untypical of either the River Meadows or the Terrace Farmlands which characterize the wider landscape setting of Bidford-on-Avon. The river Arrow and its flood plain is especially narrow and more of a local landscape feature than a broad area (such as found along the river Avon). Marriage Hill is not typical of the terrace landform but forms a locally distinctive ridgeline, more commonly found within the Vale Orchard Belt. It has a special landscape and visual relationship with the river valley landscapes of both the Arrow and Avon rivers. In this respect Marriage Hill forms part of the series of low but distinctive ridgelines that encircle the Parish containing the settlement and Avon valley floor. Like Bidford, Marlcliff and Barton, Broom is a river settlement, historically placed on the adjacent higher ground.

#### **4.8. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines**

- The siting and design of new development should complement the historic character of the Avon towns
- Reinforce the identity and unity of the historic settlement pattern
- Conserve and enhance local vernacular character and tree cover within and around rural settlements
- Conserve the character and continuity of river landscapes
- Retain grassland along alluvial floodplains
- Identify opportunities for re-creating riverside wetland habitats
- Retain and enhance river channel meandering form, diversity and marginal vegetation
- Conserve and enhance curvilinear hedgerows defining river floodplains
- Enhance continuity of the river channel through appropriate tree and shrub planting

- Avoid development along the alluvial floodplain to retain the continuity of the open floodplain
- Enhance the structure and unity of the Terrace Farmlands through strengthening primary features including planting of hedgerow oaks
- Conserve and restore hedgerows as landscape features in the Terrace Farmlands
- Enhance woodland character of the streams
- Soften hard edges to new development through tree planting
- Encourage wide field margins along streamlines and woodland edges

#### **4.9. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A**

- Seek opportunities to add native tree and scrub planting along the River Arrow to soften the edge of the built form either side of the bridge
- Seek opportunities to conserve and enhance the riparian river corridor with reinstatement of pasture, appropriate tree and scrub planting and marginal habitats
- Seek opportunities to create wide non arable margins around woodland and along streams and the river
- Seek opportunities to reinstate continuity of curvilinear hedgerows along edge of the river Arrow floodplain
- Conserve small scale pastoral field pattern around the village of Broom
- Conserve existing tree and mature hedgerow cover on the edge of the settlements – identifying opportunities for Tree Preservation Orders where necessary
- Seek opportunities to replant new orchards around Broom and between Broom and Bidford
- Conserve and enhance the historic landscape features associated with Broom Court including ridge and furrow, the moat, and surviving formal gardens
- Seek opportunities to identify surviving local historic gardens and landscape features for example at Broom Hall

#### **4.10. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A**

- Development to be resisted between the villages of Broom and Bidford in order to retain the separate identity of these two historic settlements
- Any redevelopment of the existing horticultural buildings should reflect the rural character of the open landscape, should be no greater in height mass or scale than the existing built form and be commensurate with retaining the open character of the landscape between the two villages
- Any development proposals east of Small Brook should retain a significant open margin so as to retain the stream and its tree cover as a distinctive feature of the landscape
- The landscape west of Small Brook should retain its rural character
- Linear ribbon development along Salford Road to be limited to as far as Small Brook in the west in order to protect the rural approach to Bidford down Marriage Hill
- The rural undeveloped character of the river corridor along River Arrow to be conserved and any new built form resisted
- Generous linear tree lines and woodland cover should be included on the outer edge of any development
- Break up the built form with tree planting
- Open space provision as part of any new development to link physically and visually with the open countryside beyond

#### 4.11. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area A

- Conserve the open undeveloped skyline of Marriage Hill
- Retain sense of landscape and visual enclosure within the landscape around the village of Broom
- Avoid any visually intrusive development within the visual envelope of the key views from PLCA.A

#### PLCA:A Photographs



Photo 1. View from Marriage Hill footpath looking south-east with the ridgeline at Bidford Grange on the skyline, the river floodplain and Marriage Hill nurseries in the middle ground



Photo 2. View from footpath from Broom to Marriage Hill looking south to Marriage Hill and The Rookery woodland with Broom Court in the mid distance



Photo 3. View from footpath from Broom to Marriage Hill looking east to the horticultural glasshouses and open landscape of the gap between Broom and Bidford with the tree and shrub cover (SSSI) along the disused railway line to the left of picture



Photo 4. Views from footpath south of Broom to pasture fields south of King's Lane bordered by the tree and shrub cover (SSSI) along the disused railway line right of picture



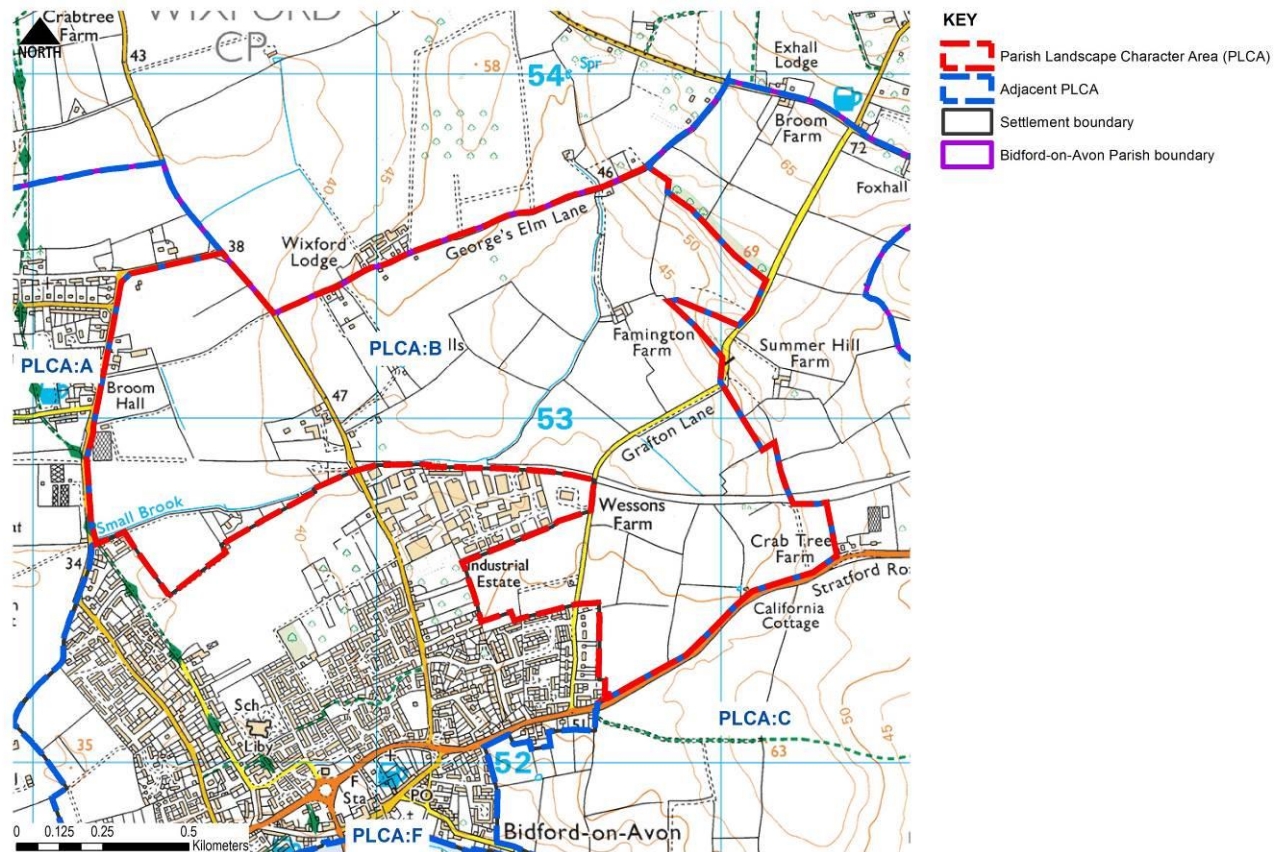
Photo 5. View from bridge on road to Dunnington looking north up the River Arrow and tree cover on the Parish boundary and to flood defences and new houses in Miller's Bank, Broom



Photo 6. View from Heart of England Way south over open fields to the northern edge of Broom Conservation Area and its mix of housing and open pasture

## 5. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B – Bidford-on-Avon Northern Terrace Farmland

Character area map:



### 5.1. Landscape Character Area Description

The Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B (PLCA.B) includes the open higher terraces of the Terrace Farmland landscape type lying below the rising ground at Summer Hill to the west (in PLCA.C). At its highest point the terrace is 60m AOD on the hillside dropping to 35m to 50m AOD across most of PLCA.C. The village of Broom lies to the immediate west and Bidford to the south. The western boundary is defined by Bidford Road and the northern boundary follows the Parish boundary along Mill Lane, Waterloo Road and George's Elm Lane as far as the brow of the hill and tree belt. The eastern boundary follows the tree belt to Grafton Lane and then continues to follow hedgelines and the woodland edge along the break of slope down to the disused railway line and Crab Tree Farm. The southern boundary is the settlement boundary to Bidford and out along Stratford Road as far as Crab Tree Farm.

This character area comprises mainly medium sized arable fields with sparse or low hedgerows with some tree cover around individual around the settlement edges.

The key features of the PLCA.B include the following. The linear disused railway line with its tree cover defines the northern limit of the town east of Waterloo Road and forms a strong visual break between the landscape north of the town and that east of the town. Small Brook is a key feature but is less well defined but contains development at Jackson's Meadow, and the new development at Avon Meadows and west of Waterloo Road, south of the stream. The slope edge vegetation and break of slope either side of Grafton Lane are locally distinctive containing the immediate rural setting of the town. Isolated farmsteads, and the commercial horticultural glasshouses and other buildings, are the only built form in this open sparsely occupied landscape. Farmington Farm is the only listed building in PLCA.B. Its landscape setting includes the Small Brook and some tree cover but the modern buildings are prominent in the landscape.

The character area does not abut the historic core of Bidford and the settlement edge is characterised by housing and commercial estates. The scale of the industrial units makes them conspicuous in the landscape and the housing often has an exposed edge as at Grafton Lane. The scale of recent development and that proposed through approvals and strategic sites is considerable on this northern edge of Bidford.

Orchards were a strong feature of PLCA. B north of the disused railway line during the early to mid 1900s in addition to the numerous orchards that used to lie either side of Waterloo Road, now developed and within the settlement. A remnant of this landscape feature can be seen south of George's Elm Lane. There is also evidence of several fields under ridge and furrow off Grafton Lane but these may have been completely ploughed out.

### 5.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Terrace Farmlands:

- Market gardening
- Flat intensively farmed open landscape
- Occasional low rolling hills
- Large scale geometric field pattern
- Some smaller arable plots growing vegetable crops

- Glass houses and other horticultural buildings
- Lack of hedgerows or poorer low and gappy hedgerows
- Sparse woodland but with wooded streamlines and isolated mature tree lines.

### **5.3. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B**

#### Natural

- Alignment of Small Brook
- Linear tree cover along the disused railway line, Small Brook and on the break of slope to Summer Hill
- Open arable farmland in medium sized fields
- Small remnant of orchard south of George's Elm Lane
- Tree cover around farmsteads

#### Cultural

- Southern boundary defined by often exposed urban edge of Bidford
- Sparse settlement
- Little surviving historic interest
- Several isolated farmsteads including Farmington Farm
- Prominent glass houses and other horticultural buildings south of Broom
- No development north of Small Brook and disused railway line
- Ribbon low density development east of Grafton Lane
- Heart of England Way follows the western boundary with views over open countryside to the hills beyond

#### Perceptual

- Strong contrast between the open exposed farmland and the settlement
- In views from higher ground, Bidford generally sits on the lower terraces (below 40m AOD) except for in the east where the development is prominent (above 50m AOD)
- With modern expansion, Small Brook and the disused railway line provide a clear visual break between the open countryside and the land influenced by settlement between Bidford Road and Grafton Road
- Open landscape contributes to the southern and eastern setting of Broom
- Very limited access on foot to the area with just the Heart of England Way
- Important part of the open gap between Broom and Bidford
- Fragmentation of the open farmland gap along Bidford Road between Bidford and Broom as a result of horticultural built development

- Skyline formed by low hills on the horizon largely unbroken by built form

#### **5.4. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B**

Key views into the area are afforded from:

- Stratford Road approach to the town with rather exposed housing off Grafton Lane
- Open landscape of the area between Bidford and Broom visible from Bidford Road
- The rural lanes of George's Elm Lane and Grafton Lane on and below the break of slope
- Wickford Lodge

Key views out of the area to:

- Views to Bidford mainly set on lower ground except in the east
- Long views to Oversley Castle in the north and Marlcliff Hill from Stratford Road
- From Grafton Lane to rolling folds of the landscape of PLCA.C.

Key views within the area:

- To the tree lined break of slope at Summer Hill
- Across the open landscape to Farmington Farm from Grafton Lane with a fringe of low hills forming the skyline

#### **5.5. Relationship to Settlement**

- The open landscape between Bidford and Broom is important in maintaining the separate identity of the small village
- The urban edge of Bidford is becoming increasingly exposed especially on higher ground
- The southern boundary along the B439 Stratford Road is an important gateway approach into Bidford
- Grafton lane provides an attractive rural approach to Bidford

#### **5.6. Summary (including extent to which PLCA: B is representative of the wider landscape)**

The area demonstrates many key natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics of the wider terrace farmland landscape which extends northwards over the lower undulating ground. However due to its proximity to Bidford it is heavily influenced by the expanding town and due to its open exposed character, it is particularly vulnerable to further visual erosion and potentially further loss of rural integrity. Containment of the town through high quality and appropriate green infrastructure is therefore essential for the future.



### **5.7. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines**

- The siting and design of new development should complement the historic character of the Avon towns
- Reinforce the identity and unity of the historic settlement pattern
- Conserve and enhance local tree cover within and around rural settlements
- Enhance the structure and unity of the Terrace Farmlands through strengthening primary features including planting of hedgerow oaks
- Conserve and restore hedgerows as landscape features in the Terrace Farmlands
- Enhance woodland character of the streams
- Soften hard edges to new development through tree planting
- Encourage wide field margins along streamlines and woodland edges

### **5.8. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B**

- Seek opportunities to conserve and enhance the Small Brook corridor with appropriate tree and scrub planting
- Seek opportunities to reinstate hedgerows especially between Bidford Road and Waterloo Road
- Conserve existing tree and mature hedgerow cover on the edge of the settlements – identifying opportunities for Tree Preservation Orders where necessary
- Seek opportunities to replant new orchards between Broom and Bidford
- Conserve and enhance the few surviving historic landscape features and investigate the condition of the former ridge and furrow fields

### **5.9. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B**

- Any settlement edge development should include extensive soft landscape edge treatment to protect views from the rural landscape and integrate the built form into the settlement edge
- Any development should include major green infrastructure to link open spaces and integrate the landscape structure with the existing landscape features including Small Brook and the disused railway line
- Any development should avoid higher ground and be contained on land below 50m AOD to reduce the visual impact on the wider landscape
- Development to be resisted between the villages of Broom and Bidford in order to retain the separate identity of these two settlements
- Any redevelopment of the existing horticultural buildings should reflect the rural character of the open landscape, should be no greater in height mass or scale than the existing built form and be commensurate with retaining the open character of the landscape between the two villages
- Any development proposals south of Small Brook should retain a significant open margin so as to retain the stream and its tree cover as a distinctive feature of the landscape
- Retain and strengthen the undeveloped rural character of the landscape north of Small Brook and the disused railway line, and east of Grafton Lane
- Linear ribbon development along Grafton Lane should not be extended northwards to avoid increasing the visual exposure of the eastern edge of the town

- Break up the built form with extensive tree planting
- Open space provision as part of any new development to link physically and visually with the open countryside beyond
- Seek opportunities to introduce planting to soften the existing urban edge and break up the built form, in particular around large scale commercial buildings within Bidford
- Any increase in the scale and mass of development in the existing settlement or in the isolated developed domestic and agricultural plots to be carefully assessed to ensure that there is no harm to the character and appearance of the area

#### **5.10. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area B**

- Conserve the open undeveloped skyline of Summer Hill
- Retain extensive long views of surrounding hill skyline
- Protect the views to Oversley Castle and hillsides to the south-east from the Heart of England Way and seek opportunities to enhance the landscape and visual setting of the route
- Avoid any visually intrusive development within the visual envelope of the key views from PLCA.B

**LCA:B Photographs**



Photo 1. View west from Stratford Road near California Cottage to the edge of Bidford with Marlcliff Hill prominent on skyline and Marriage Hill forming a middle distance ridgeline just below the horizon



Photo 2. View from George's Elm Lane looking north-east to the skyline at Summer Hill and remnant planting from early 20C orchard. Farm buildings lie on the Small Brook north of Farmington Farm



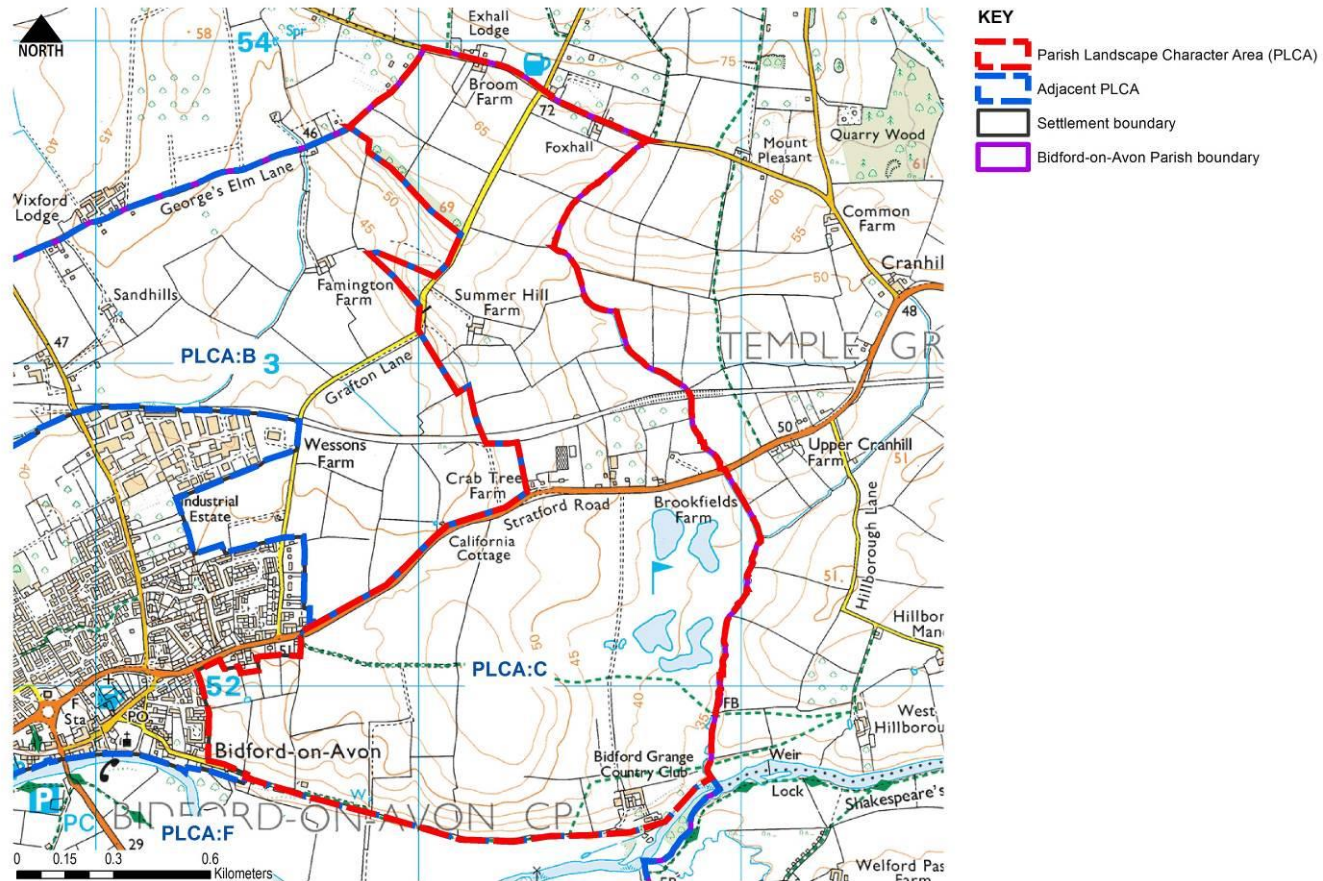
Photo 3. View from Bidford Road in the gap between Broom and Bidford with the horticultural glasshouses and open fields of the open landscape north of Small Brook



Photo 4. View from Heart of England Way looking across open arable land, within development area on land west of Waterloo Road, to Small Brook in the mid distance and Oversley Castle on its hill on the horizon.

## 6. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C – Bidford-on-Avon Eastern Vale

Character area map:



### **6.1. Landscape Character Area Description**

Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C (PLCA.C) falls within the Vale Orchard Belt landscape type. The Vale Orchard Belt landscape comprises large scale rolling topography rising from the Avon Valley floor in the south and continuing beyond PLCA.C to the north and east. The eastern boundary follows the line of a stream flowing south into the River Avon; the western boundary follows the settlement edge of Bidford, the B439 and continues along the lower sloping landform to the Parish boundary; the northern boundary follows the Wixford Road and George's Elm Lane; and the southern boundary follows the edge of the Avon river meadows. Woodland is sparse and hedgerows are gappy and thin in places with some tree belts and trees and hedgerows around farmsteads and some transport links.

This character area comprises mainly medium to large sized irregular arable fields with the larger fields with linear boundaries and curvilinear boundaries including curvilinear line along the stream on the eastern edge. The Bidford Grange Golf course covers a large area of the sloping ground to the south with areas of ponds, scrub and tree planting. Bidford eastern settlement edge lies immediately to the south-west and to the north of the B439 there are a number of isolated farmsteads.

The key features of the PLCA.C is the rolling topography, prominent hills, steep wooded scarp and the pattern of hedgerows. The key landscape features are the steep wooded scarp and tree belts north and west of Summer Hill Farm, the wide tree and shrub belt within the cutting of the derelict railway line, the winding stream and its tree and scrub vegetation on the eastern edge; Secondary but distinctive features include the tree and hedgerow setting to the farmsteads; the surviving curvilinear hedgerows; the rural approach down the B439.

The character area abuts the eastern edge of the Bidford Conservation Area. The settlement edge is characterised by housing of mixed age including a traditional farmstead within the ribbon development of housing along the southern side of the B439. The open undulating fields on the sloping valley sides make an important contribution to the setting of village and Bidford Conservation Area.

Orchards were once a feature of PLCA. C (as the landscape type suggests) and were to be found around the isolated farmsteads including at Crab Tree Farm, Brookfields Farm and Summer Hill Farm.

### **6.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Vale Orchard Belt**

- Rising ground with a large scale rolling topography
- Prominent skyline running along ridgeline in the east of the Parish
- A large scale often poorly defined field pattern
- Steep wooded scarps and associated unimproved grassland
- Varied settlement pattern of small nucleated villages and loose clusters of roadside dwellings
- Local vernacular Blue Lias stone buildings.

### 6.3. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C

#### Natural

- Steep wooded scarp and tree belts north and west of Summer Hill Farm
- Wide linear tree and scrub belt in cutting along line of old railway line
- Hedgerows defining large and medium scale agricultural fields
- Linear hedgerow and tree belt enclosing northern end of Grafton Lane
- Open large scale arable farmland to south of Stratford with numerous field boundaries removed by agricultural intensification
- Man-made ponds, tree and hedge planting within Bidford Grange Golf course
- Extensive areas of scrub in eastern area of Bidford Grange Golf course
- Undulating and sloping topography forming part of the northern valley slopes falling south towards River Avon valley floor
- Highest elevation (70m AOD) within the Parish at Wixford Road and notable hill at Bidford Grange Golf Course
- Winding stream with tree and scrub vegetation along much of the length of eastern boundary of character area

#### Cultural

- Far south-western boundary defined by sometimes exposed urban edge of Bidford but with softer edges provided in places by deeper gardens and contained to a degree by undulating topography
- Isolated farmsteads at Summer Hill Farm, Foxhall Farm, Broom Farm, Crab Tree Farm and Brookfields Farm (all to the north of the B439) which are generally part contained by lines of trees and mature hedgerows
- Open undulating fields on the sloping valley sides in the south-west form part of the setting of the Bidford Conservation Area.
- Ribbon development of mixed age housing including a traditional farmstead along southern side of the B439 broken up by small fields and deep gardens separate from main settlement area of Bidford-on-Avon
- Areas of glass houses and other horticultural buildings associated with plant nurseries along north side of the B439
- Bidford Grange Golf Course with prominent club house and associated buildings at Bidford Grange Country Club and Golf Course
- Potential remnant ridge and furrow north of Brookfields Farm

#### Perceptual

- Largely very open and exposed landscape
- Prominent skyline ridges
- Some enclosure provided by woodland, hedgerows and undulating topography more exposed on higher ground to east of Bidford Grange Golf Course
- No public rights of way in the southern area to the north of the B439 with two public rights of way linking Bidford-on-Avon to the Bidford Grange Golf Course and landscape to the east

- The combination of horticultural development and the Bidford Grange Golf Course and associated activities is influencing the open rural character along and to the south the B439
- Large scale Clubhouse at Bidford Grange Golf Course is a prominent building
- More exposed industrial edge of Bidford-on-Avon and housing on higher ground (next to the adjacent PLCA.B) is visible in the eastern approach along the B439

#### **6.4. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C**

##### Key views into the area are afforded from:

- Bidford Grange Golf Course, associated buildings and surrounding elevated land (including land abutting Bidford's eastern settlement edge) is visible from south-east areas of the Parish including Shakespeare's Avon Way
- River valley floor east of Bidford
- Stratford Road
- Open landscape around Summer Hill Farm, Broom Farm and Foxhall is visible from Grafton Lane, Wixford Road and George's Elm Lane
- Elevated hill and wooded scarp adjacent Summer Hill Farm is a prominent in views in the northern area of the Parish and from the B439

##### Key views out of the area to:

- Views to skylines
- Views from the B439 to Bidford including industrial area
- Long reaching views from high ground including to including Marlcliff Hill, Marriage Hill and Staple Hill
- Views out from public rights of way in the south of the area to Avon River and meadows, elevated ridge around Barton Farm and semi-open eastern settlement edge of Bidford

##### Key views within the area:

- Views to skylines
- Up to elevated hill and wooded scarp and of undulating landform adjacent Summer Hill Farm
- The Bidford Grange Golf Course and open landscape to the south-east of Bidford is visible from the B439 and from public rights of way crossing the area.
- Of undulating landform on sloping valley sides east of Bidford, including from edge of the Conservation Area

#### **6.5. Relationship to Settlement**

- The open undulating valley slope landscape abutting the Bidford's eastern settlement edge is important to the village's setting and the setting of the Conservation Area
- The landscape around the B439 is an important gateway approach to Bidford from the east

- Strong contrast with the built up area

#### **6.6. Summary (including extent to which PLCA:C is representative of the wider LCA)**

The area demonstrates some of the key natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics of the wider landscape but no longer retains surviving orchards and is much less wooded on the hills tops. In this respect PLCA. C has more in common with the landscape to the north and within the adjacent Terrace Farmlands. Settlement is sparse and in isolated locations.

#### **6.7. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines**

- New agricultural buildings should be sited, designed and landscaped to blend with the surrounding farmed landscape
- Conserve rural character by limiting standardized treatments during highway improvement schemes
- Protect the character and special features of country roads
- The siting and design of new development should complement the historic character of the Avon towns
- Conserve and restore old orchards as landscape features, especially those around village fringe
- Conserve and enhance tree cover within and around rural settlements
- Enhance the structure and unity of the landscape through large scale woodland planting
- Conserve and restore all primary hedgelines and manage them more positively as landscape features
- Strengthen the wooded character of streamlines and primary hedgelines through replanting or natural regeneration

#### **6.8. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C**

- Seek opportunities to increase public access links from Bidford to the northern part of the character area (in combination with PLCA.B) linking with routes around Ardens Grafton
- Seek opportunities to create wide non arable margins around woodland and along streams
- Conserve and strengthen the existing hedge network, seek opportunities to reinstate historic hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve and extend the steep wooded scarp and tree belts north and west of Summer Hill Farm and encourage active woodland management and successional planting
- Conserve existing tree and hedgerow cover on the edge of the Bidford and around isolated farms – identifying opportunities for Tree Preservation Orders where necessary
- Encourage biodiversity enhancements at the Bidford Grange Golf Course including encouraging the planting of a mix of native tree and understory species, avoiding blocks of mono-species planting to better integrate new planting into the landscape
- Investigate and conserve and enhance potential remnant ridge and furrow north of Brookfields Farm



- Seek opportunities to replant new orchards around farmsteads.

#### **6.9. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C**

- Any redevelopment of the existing horticultural buildings should reflect the rural character of the open landscape, should be no greater in height mass or scale than the existing built form and be commensurate with retaining the open character of the area
- Development should be resisted on undulating landform on the sloping valley sides east of Bidford to conserve setting of village and Conservation Area and the rural character of the adjacent river corridor
- Maintain the open and undeveloped skylines – avoid siting of buildings, telecommunication masts, power lines and wind turbines etc. on the sensitive skylines
- Ensure development associated with the Bidford Grange Golf Course is sympathetically integrated into the landscape and not visually prominent in views from the south side of the river
- Linear ribbon development along the B439 should be resisted in order to protect the rural approach to Bidford from the east
- Generous hedge and tree planting to be included on the outer edge of any development
- Break up the existing and any new built form with tree planting
- Open space provision as part of any new development to link physically and visually with the open countryside beyond.
- Conserve the rural character of Grafton Lane, George's Elm Lane and Wixton Road

#### **6.10. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area C**

- Conserve the open undeveloped skylines
- Consider the impact of new development on views from the high ground

**PLCA:C Photographs**



Photo 1. Steep wooded scarp and tree belts north and west of Summer Hill Farm



Photo 2. Long reaching views from high ground



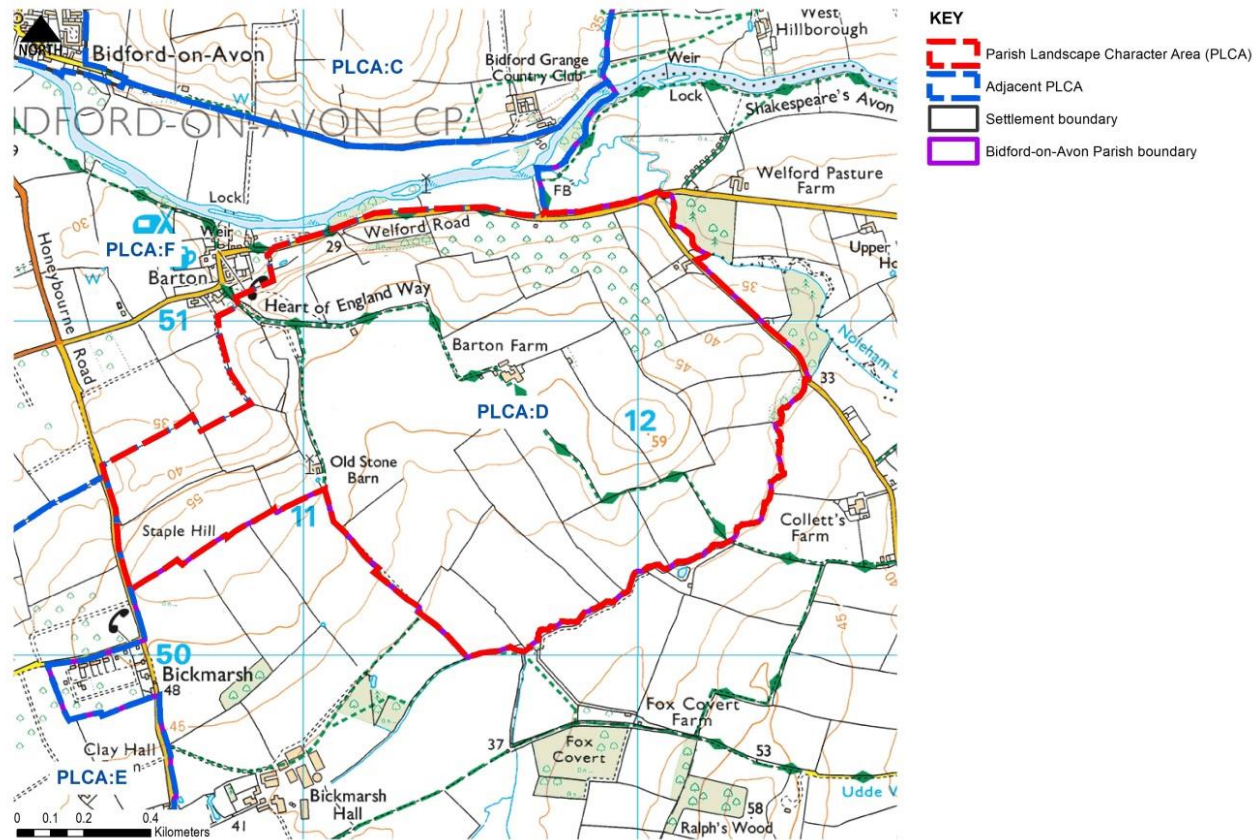
Photo 3. Open undulating fields on the sloping valley sides forming part of the Bidford village setting



Photo 4. Bidford Grange Golf course

## 7. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D – Staple Hill

Character area map:



### **7.1. Landscape Character Area Description**

Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D (PLCA.D) falls within the Vale Orchard Belt landscape type. The Vale Orchard Belt landscape comprises large scale rolling topography rising from the Avon Valley floor in the north and continuing beyond PLCA.D to the east and west. The southern boundary follows the line of a stream and tree belts and continuing along the brow of Staple Hill; the eastern boundary follows the edge of an unnamed road; the northern boundary follows the line of Welford Road and the edge of Barton village; and the western boundary follows the line of Honeybourne Road and the lower sloping landform of Staple Hill. The area contains several woodland blocks and part of the Heart of England Forest extensive new native broadleaf woodland planting at Dorothy's Wood. Hedgerows are gappy and thin in places with some tree belts, trees and hedgerows around farmsteads/farm buildings and some roads.

This character area comprises mainly medium to large sized irregular and rectilinear arable fields with linear and curvilinear boundaries including a curvilinear line along the stream on the southern edge. To the west of Barton Farm some very large fields have been formed following the removal of numerous field boundaries for agricultural intensification. Adjacent to the south of Welford Road the Heart of England Forest extensive new area of woodland planting at Dorothy's Wood forms part of a wider area of new woodland with promoted walking routes. Barton village's southern and eastern settlement edge lies immediately to the north-west and there are a number of isolated farmsteads/farm buildings in the northern part of the area.

The key features of the PLCA.D are the rolling topography, the prominent Staple Hill, woodland blocks and the pattern of hedgerows. The key landscape features are the steep wooded scarp south of Welford Road, tree belts along the ridgelines around Old Stone Barn, woodland block to the south east of Barton Farm, the woodland (once developed) at Dorothy Wood and the winding stream and its tree and scrub vegetation on the southern edge; Secondary but distinctive features include the tree and hedgerow setting to the farmsteads/farm buildings; the surviving curvilinear hedgerows; the small pasture/paddock fields on the sloping ground east of Barton.

The character area abuts the southern and eastern edge of the Barton village the majority of which is a Conservation Area. The settlement edge is well vegetated with many houses with deep garden with mature trees. The strong vegetated edge and small pasture/paddock fields on the sloping ground east of Barton make an important contribution to the setting of village and Barton Conservation Area. The Heart of England Way, a promoted regional recreational route, runs from the village through the centre of PLCA.D towards Dorsington

Orchards were a feature of PLCA. D (as the landscape type suggests) and were to be found around the isolated farmsteads and the village of Barton.

### **7.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Vale Orchard Belt**

- Rising ground with a large scale rolling topography
- A large scale often poorly defined field pattern
- Large orchards on hilltops and south facing slopes
- Prominent hilltop woodlands

- Steep wooded scarps and associated unimproved grassland
- Varied settlement pattern of small nucleated villages and loose clusters of roadside dwellings
- Local vernacular Blue Lias stone buildings.

### **7.3. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D**

#### Natural

- Woodland blocks and steep wooded scarp and tree belts south of Welford Road
- Hedgerows defining large and medium scale agricultural fields under horticulture with curvilinear and straight boundaries
- Heart of England Forest extensive new native broadleaf woodland planting at Dorothy's Wood
- Undulating and sloping topography forming part of the southern valley slopes falling north towards River Avon valley floor
- Largely undeveloped ridge lines with distinctive lines of trees are a feature
- Small pasture/paddock fields on the sloping ground east of Barton
- Open large scale post-war fields to west of Barton Farm with numerous field boundaries removed by agricultural intensification
- Winding stream with tree and scrub vegetation along much of the length of southern boundary of character area
- Small ponds in field corners

#### Cultural

- Promoted walking routes at Heart of England Forest accessed from carpark off Welford Road within the Parish
- Former gravel pit east of Barton
- Isolated farmsteads/barns on high ground at Barton Farm and Old Stone Barn partially contained by lines of trees and mature hedgerows
- Far north-western boundary defined by well vegetated edge of Barton
- Small sloping pasture/paddock fields and mature boundary trees contribute to the setting of Barton village

#### Perceptual

- Some enclosure provided by woodland, hedgerows and undulating topography but much more exposed on higher ground and open large scale post-war fields to west of Barton Farm
- A number of public rights of way cross the area including Heart of England Way and Shakespeare's Avon Way runs along a section of Welford Road connecting with numerous public rights of way in the wider area
- Barn north-east of Barton Farm is a prominent building
- wide vistas over the Avon Valley from high ground

#### **7.4. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D**

Key views into the area are afforded from:

- Staple Hill is highly visible from much of the Parish, both from the valley floor and more elevated parts of the surrounding hillsides and including Shakespeare's Way and the Heart of England Way
- North and western area is visible from Honeybourne Lane and Welford Road and the eastern area is visible from the adjacent road to Dorsington in the east.

Key views out of the area to:

- Long views from Staple Hill to Bidford and Barton which appears mainly set down on lower ground
- Parish Church of St Lawrence, Bidford
- Long reaching views from Staple Hill to surrounding hills including Marlcliff Hill, Marriage Hill and Oversley Castle
- Views out from public rights of way in the north of the area to Avon River and meadows and elevated ground around golf course

Key views within the area:

- Up to tree lines, woodland blocks and largely undeveloped skylines of Staple Hill
- Barns set against skylines are prominent in views from roads and public rights of way in area
- Across undulating landform with limited built form visible

#### **7.5. Relationship to Settlement**

- Separated from Bidford by the Avon Valley within PLCA.F
- Sloping small pasture/paddocks fields and mature boundary trees contribute to the setting of Barton village and approach to village

#### **7.6. Summary (including extent to which PLCA:D is representative of the wider LCA)**

The area demonstrates many of the key natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics of the wider landscape which extends to the west and east. The northern lower slopes form part of the setting of the river corridor whilst the upper slopes around Barton Farm are particularly open and exposed in contrast to the Avon valley landscape and that along Noleham Brook east of the parish boundary.

#### **7.7. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines**

- New agricultural buildings should be sited, designed and landscaped to blend with the surrounding farmed landscape
- Conserve rural character by limiting standardized treatments during highway improvement schemes

- Protect the character and special features of country roads
- The siting and design of new development should complement the historic character of the Avon towns
- Conserve and restore old orchards as landscape features, especially those around village fringe
- Conserve and enhance tree cover within and around rural settlements
- Enhance the structure and unity of the landscape through large scale woodland planting
- Conserve and restore all primary hedgelines and manage them more positively as landscape features
- Strengthen the wooded character of streamlines and primary hedgelines through replanting or natural regeneration

#### **7.8. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D**

- Seek opportunities to create wide non arable margins around woodland and along streams
- Conserve and strengthen the existing hedge network, seek opportunities to reinstate historic hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve and extend the steep wooded scarp, tree belts and woodland blocks and encourage active woodland management and successional planting
- Conserve existing tree and hedgerow cover on the edge of the Barton and around isolated farms – identifying opportunities for Tree Preservation Orders where necessary
- Conserve surviving areas of pasture close to the village
- Seek opportunities to replant new orchards around Barton and farmsteads

#### **7.9. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D**

- Seek to better integrate existing agricultural buildings and associated development into the landscape with tree and hedge planting, particularly on ridgelines where built form breaks the skyline
- Any redevelopment of the existing agricultural buildings should reflect the rural character of the open landscape, should be no greater in height mass or scale than the existing built form and be commensurate with retaining the open character of the area
- Maintain the open and undeveloped skylines – avoid siting of buildings, telecommunication masts, power lines and wind turbines etc. on the sensitive skylines
- Linear ribbon development along roads should be resisted
- Generous hedge and tree planting to be included on the outer edge of any development
- Break up the built form with tree planting
- Open space provision as part of any new development to link physically and visually with the open countryside beyond.
- Conserve the rural character of Welford Road

#### **7.10. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area D**

- Conserve the largely undeveloped skyline of Staple Hill
- Considered the impact of new development on views from the high ground



**PLCA:D Photographs**



Photo 1. Distinctive lines of trees on ridge and isolated Old Stone Barn partially contained by lines of trees and mature hedgerows



Photo 2. Long reaching views from Staple Hill to surrounding hills including Marlcliff Hill and Marriage Hill



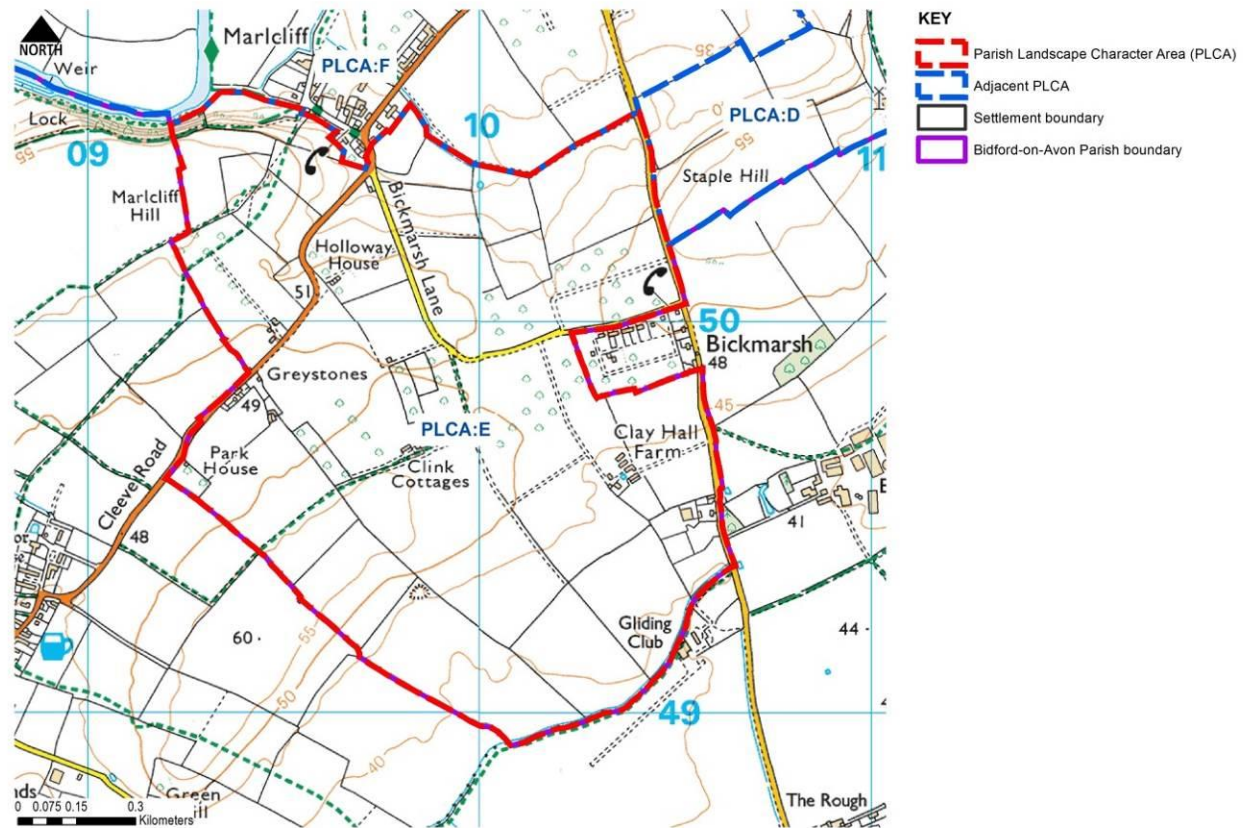
Photo 3. Sloping small pasture/paddock fields on the edge of Barton Village



Photo 4. Woodland blocks and largely undeveloped skylines

## 8. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E – Marlcliff Hill

Character area map:



### **8.1. Landscape Character Area Description**

Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E (PLCA.E) falls within the Vale Orchard Belt landscape type. The Vale Orchard Belt landscape comprises large scale rolling topography rising from the Avon Valley floor in the north and continuing beyond PLCA.E to the south-west and east. The eastern boundary follows the line of Honeybourne Road skirting around the edge of Bickmarsh; the southern follows the line of a stream and tree belts; the eastern boundary follows field boundaries and crosses the brow of Marlcliff Hill; and the northern boundary follows a short section of the Avon river, skirts around Marlcliff village and follows the edge of a stream then continues to Honeybourne Road. The area contains several areas of orchard, horticultural and agricultural fields. Woodland is limited with a notable wooded scarp at Marlcliff Hill. Hedgerows are gappy and thin in places with some tree belts, trees and hedgerows around farmsteads/farm buildings and along some roads.

This character area comprises mainly large and medium scale agricultural and horticultural fields with curvilinear and straight boundaries including a curvilinear line along the stream on the southern edge and the stream and river on the northern edge. Marlcliff village's southern settlement edge lies immediately to the north-west and there are a number of isolated farmsteads/farm buildings in the area.

The key features of the PLCA.E is the rolling topography, prominent hills, the pattern of hedgerows. The key landscape features are the steep wooded scarp on the northern slope of Marlcliff Hill; orchards around Bickmarsh Lane; the pattern of small pasture fields on the sloping ground around Marlcliff; and the winding streams and their tree and scrub vegetation on the southern and northern edge. Secondary but distinctive features include the tree and hedgerow setting to the farmsteads/farm buildings; the surviving curvilinear hedgerows.

The character area abuts the southern edge of the Marlcliff village. The settlement edge comprises a mix of building types and ages including a farmstead and post war semi-detached houses with a degree of enclosure provided by local topography and mature trees. The mature boundary trees and pattern of small pasture fields on the sloping ground around the village edge play an important contribution to the setting of village.

This character area contains the largest area of remaining orchards in the Parish around Bickmarsh Lane. Orchards were a feature of PLCA. E (as the landscape type suggests) and further extensive areas were found around the isolated farmsteads and the village of Marlcliff. Ridge and furrow?

### **8.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Vale Orchard Belt**

- Rising ground with a large scale rolling topography
- A large scale often poorly defined field pattern
- Large orchards on hilltops and south facing slopes
- Prominent hilltop woodlands

- Steep wooded scarps and associated unimproved grassland
- Varied settlement pattern of small nucleated villages and loose clusters of roadside dwellings
- Local vernacular Blue Lias stone buildings.

### **8.3. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E**

#### Natural

- Orchards around Bickmarsh Lane
- Tree lines of remnant orchard trees and hedgerows
- Hedgerows and tree belts defining medium scale agricultural and horticultural fields with curvilinear and straight boundaries
- Steeply rising ground at Marlcliff Hill with wooded scarp
- Undulating and sloping topography forming part of the southern valley slopes falling north towards River Avon valley floor
- Undeveloped ridge line of Marlcliff Hill is a feature
- Small pasture fields on the sloping ground around Marlcliff
- Stream with tree and scrub vegetation along part of northern and southern boundary of character area
- Small ponds in field corners

#### Cultural

- Isolated farmsteads partially contained by lines of trees and mature hedgerows
- Far north-western boundary defined by semi-vegetated edge of Marlcliff village
- Small sloping pasture fields and mature boundary trees contribute to the setting of Marlcliff village
- Evidence of some field boundary loss since the OS 1st edition
- Ridge and furrow in fields adjoining Marlcliff village to south-east

#### Perceptual

- Marlcliff Hill is an important local natural landmark
- Some enclosure provided by hedgerows and undulating topography, more exposed on higher ground
- Network of public rights of way along Marlcliff Hill providing links to Shakespeare's Avon Way and Cleeve Prior village; and public right of way near Clink Cottages.

#### **8.4. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E**

Key views into the area are afforded from:

- Marlcliff Hill is highly visible from much of the Parish, both from the valley floor and more elevated sections and including Shakespeare's Avon Way, Heart of England Way and the Stratford Road
- Northern and eastern area is visible from Honeybourne Lane and Cleeve Road; eastern area from B4083; and much of the area visible from Bickmarsh Lane along elevated ground

Key views out of the area to:

- Long views from Marlcliff Hill and elevated ground around Bickmarsh Lane to the Avon valley, with Bidford and Marlcliff village mainly set on lower ground
- Parish church of St Lawrence, Bidford
- Long reaching views from Marlcliff Hill to surrounding hills including Staple Hill, Marriage Hill and Oversley Castle
- Long views out from public right of way near Clink Cottages to surrounding landscape

Key views within the area:

- Up to undeveloped skylines of Marlcliff Hill
- Undeveloped skylines along high ground
- Along sloping pasture fields around Marlcliff
- Across horticultural land and orchards

#### **8.5. Relationship to Settlement**

- PLCA.E is separated from Bidford by the Avon Valley within PLCA.F
- Marlcliff Hill, the sloping small pasture fields and mature trees contribute to the setting of Marlcliff and approach to village

#### **8.6. Summary (including extent to which PLCA:E is representative of the wider LCA)**

The area demonstrates many key natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics of the wider landscape. Although in the same landscape type as PLCA.C and PLCA.D, PLCA.E has a more varied landscape pattern with smaller field sizes and has more scattered rural settlement along its road network. Marlcliff Hill has a close relationship with Marlcliff village and contains the river landscape at this point.

### **8.7. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines**

- New agricultural buildings should be sited, designed and landscaped to blend with the surrounding farmed landscape
- Conserve rural character by limiting standardized treatments during highway improvement schemes
- Protect the character and special features of country roads
- The siting and design of new development should complement the historic character of the Avon towns
- Conserve and restore old orchards as landscape features, especially those around village fringe
- Conserve and enhance tree cover within and around rural settlements
- Enhance the structure and unity of the landscape through large scale woodland planting
- Conserve and restore all primary hedgelines and manage them more positively as landscape features
- Strengthen the wooded character of streamlines and primary hedgelines through replanting or natural regeneration

### **8.8. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E**

- Seek opportunities to create wide non arable margins around woodland and along streams
- Seek opportunities to replace prominent non-indigenous evergreen trees around Bickmarsh with locally appropriate species
- Conserve and strengthen the existing hedgerow network, seek opportunities to reinstate historic hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve and extend the steep wooded scarp, tree belts and woodland blocks and encourage active woodland management and successional planting
- Conserve existing tree and hedgerow cover on the edge of the Marlcliff and around isolated farms – identifying opportunities for Tree Preservation Orders where necessary
- Conserve small scale pastoral field pattern around Marlcliff
- Conserve and replant new orchards around Marlcliff and farmsteads
- Conserve and enhance potential ridge and furrow in fields adjoining Marlcliff village to south-east

### **8.9. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E**

- Seek to better integrate existing agricultural buildings and associated development into the landscape with tree and hedge, particularly on ridgelines where built form breaks the skyline
- Any redevelopment of the existing agricultural buildings should reflect the rural character of the open landscape, should be no greater in height mass or scale than the existing built form and be commensurate with retaining the open character of the area
- Maintain the open and undeveloped skylines – avoid siting of buildings, telecommunication masts, power lines and wind turbines etc. on the sensitive skylines

- Linear ribbon development along roads should be resisted
- Generous hedge and tree planting to be included on the outer edge of any development
- Break up the built form with tree planting
- Conserve the rural character of Bickmarsh Lane

**8.10. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area E**

- Conserve the undeveloped skyline of Marlcliff Hill
- Considered the impact of new development on views from the high ground

**PLCA:E Photographs**



Photo 1. Long reaching views from Marlicliff Hill



Photo 2. Wooded scarp and small pasture fields on the sloping ground around Marlicliff



Photo 3. Tree line of remnant hedgerow/orchard

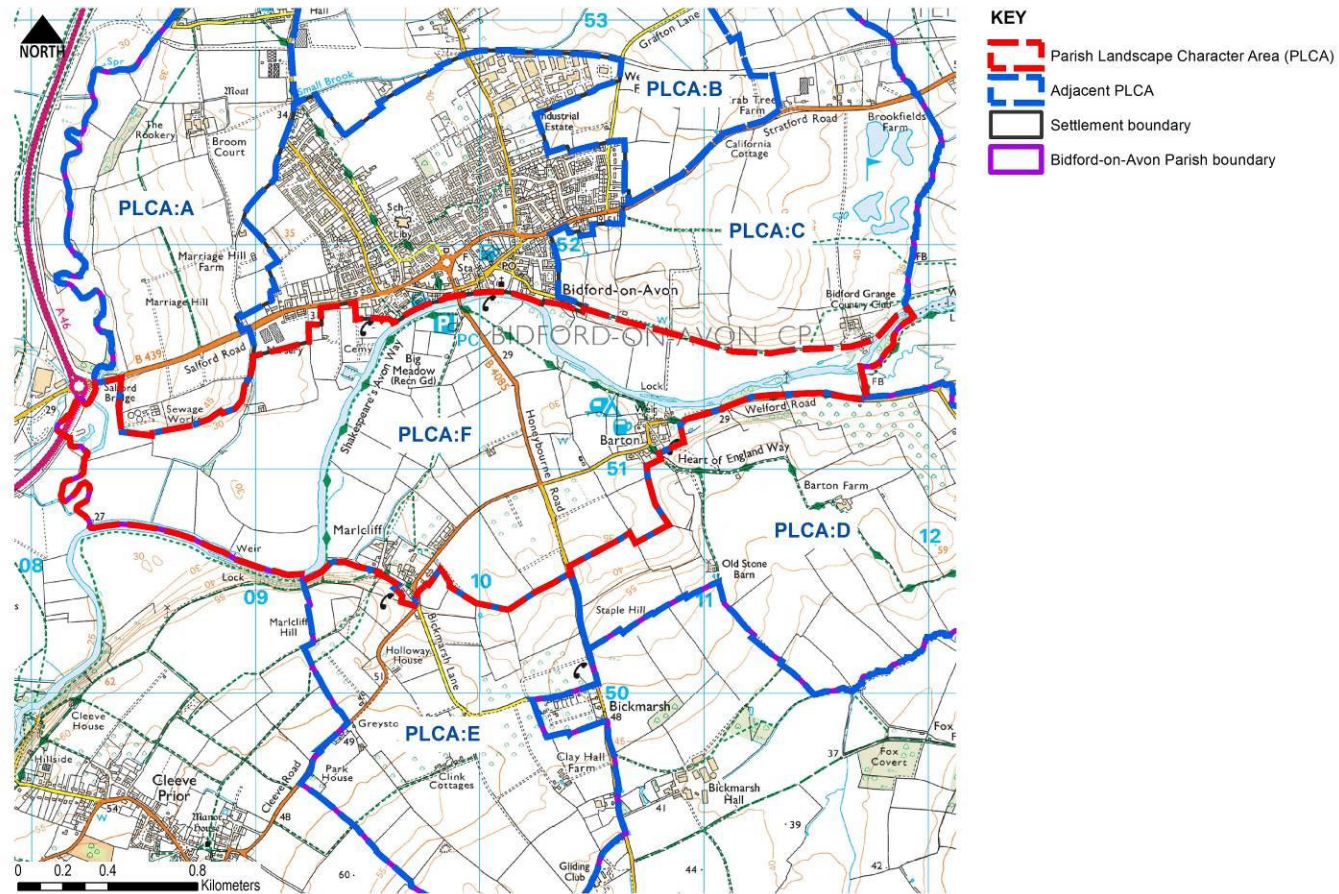


Photo 4. Orchard and undeveloped skyline



## 9. Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F – Avon River Meadows and Terrace Farmland

Character area map:



### 9.1. Landscape Character Area Description

The Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F (PLCA.F) includes the River Meadows landscape type which covers the River Avon and its floodplain from its confluence with the River Arrow in the west to the Barton Moorings in the east and the River Arrow and its floodplain north from the confluence as far as the B439. It also includes the lower terraces of the Terrace Farmlands landscape type where the change from the floodplain to the terrace is almost imperceptible south of the B439 and between Barton and Marlcliff. It also contains the very small floodplain villages of Marlcliff and Barton. The River Meadows here are largely a broad floodplain at around 30m AOD along the Avon Valley south of Bidford-on Avon, narrowing in the east between Welford Road and the hillside at Bidford Grange. The Terrace Farmlands included in PLCA.F are small areas of low lying terrace, typically around 35m AOD, with a high degree of physical and visual continuity with the River Meadows. This character area comprises mainly large open fields in cereal, grass or horticultural production. Close to the villages, the field sizes are much smaller and under pasture as found north of Marlcliff, south of the B439, and south of Bidford east of the B4085. The historic small villages of Marlcliff and Barton, a Conservation Area, lie in the west and east of the Parish within PLCA.F.

The western boundary of PLCA.F is the River Arrow. The southern boundary follows the River Avon to Marlcliff and then continues along the base of the higher ground to the south in PLCAs D and E (following hedgelines) as far as Barton and then follows the Welford Road as far as the Barton Moorings. A short eastern boundary roughly follows the River Avon to the north-side of the river. The northern boundary is mainly defined by the settlement boundary to Bidford-on-Avon, extending westwards in part along the B439 and in part around the southern base of Marriage Hill (following hedge and tree lines) and eastwards from the village along the base of the hillside east of Bidford Grange (following a track).

The key features of the PLCA.F are as follows. The River Avon crosses the full length of the PLCA with its well-defined gently meandering course through its floodplain; its lock at Barton; its marinas at The Moorings, West Bidford, and Barton Moorings; its meadows in the east and arable fields in the west; and its intermittent groups of trees and scrub. The River Arrow is more meandering with tree and scrub intermittently along its bank and flanked by arable fields at the confluence; and pasture west of Marriage Hill. The PLCA.F contains the two most important landmarks in the Parish: the Parish Church of St. Lawrence at Bidford and the bridge at Bidford over the river Avon. Other key local landmarks include the tree avenue through Big Meadow; the lock at Barton; and the S bend past the listed buildings at Barton.

PLCA.F is particularly important as an open riparian landscape setting to the historic cores of Bidford and Barton and the Parish Church of St. Lawrence at Bidford and the bridge at Bidford within the Area of Restraint. Barton is a compact village contained by the steeply rising bluff of pasture land with trees to the south which makes a significant contribution to the setting of the village. The area between the historic core and the river unfortunately detracts from the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed buildings but the S bend in the Welford Road with views to the historic buildings gives rise to a distinctive sense of place. The landscape setting of Marlcliff includes the steep sided wooded bluff to Marlcliff Hill, the land west leading to the river, the tree cover and pastures flanking houses on The Bank and the ridge and furrow field to the north. The landscape setting to west Bidford is more mixed with allotments, a marina, pasture, the cemetery and a commercial horticultural business. These create a landscape of rural and open space land uses and built form in part reflecting the riparian and traditional horticultural use of the landscape.

The character area abuts the historic core of Bidford and the settlement edge is characterised by the openness of the landscape south of the river, views of the river setting to the village and the lack of built form. PLCA.F includes the large open space known as Big Meadow which lies south of the River Avon and the Bidford historic core

which very well used for both formal and informal recreation area. The meadow is mainly laid out as grassland for recreation with play facilities close to the bridge and a tree lined avenue walk along the Shakespeare's Avon Way. The play and other facilities are rather cluttered, slightly detracting from the character and appearance of this area. The Shakespeare's Avon Way crosses through the PLCA following the banks of the River Avon except where it crosses the meadow east of the B4085; and rises onto the higher ground at Marlcliff Hill in the west. The route provides extensive views of the historic town core in particular the bridge and the Parish Church of St Lawrence, the surrounding hillsides, the floodplain and settlement at Bidford. The Heart of England Way meets this route at Barton as it passes through the village historic core to the river bank. Access to the PLCA.F on foot is otherwise limited to a path linking Bidford to Marlcliff via Big Meadow. Outside of the villages, built form is sparse in PLCA.F but includes the recreational buildings at Big Meadow, modern large barns west of Honeybourne Road, and one or two individual houses and farms.

Medium sized orchards were once a feature of PLCA. F situated on the low terraces west of the allotments on Salford Road, Bidford; west of Barton on the current site of the mobile home park; north of Marlcliff on what are now gardens; and in two larger fields west of Honeybourne Road. Three gardens which originally all belonged to Avonside House have been identified as a local historic landscape asset recommended for local listing with substantial remains of the designed formal gardens from 1930s. A further modern garden at Woodpeckers, Marlcliff is also recommended for inclusion in the local listing. There is evidence of ridge and furrow north of Marlcliff.

### **9.2. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the River Meadowlands:**

- Part of the prosperous rural Avon Valley
- The relatively narrow meandering river Avon corridor with flat alluvial floodplains
- The small River Arrow tributary of the River Avon
- Arable fields, market gardens, commercial horticultural development and remnant orchards
- Grazing meadows often with patches of wet grassland under permanent pasture
- Prominent steeply sloping wooded bluffs
- Some steep banks and marginal vegetation to the rivers
- Fringe tree and scrub cover with alders and willow
- Curvilinear hedgerows along the boundary of the floodplain
- Poorly defined field pattern
- Largely intact river landscape with a peaceful undisturbed pastoral character and strong sense of unity, interrupted by arable farmland close to Bidford-on-Avon
- Lack of built form
- Development and movement in the adjacent areas outside of the river corridor can be very noticeable
- River corridor forms an important green wedge running into towns in use for informal recreation

### **9.3. Relevant Integrated Key Characteristics from the Terrace Farmlands:**

- Market gardening
- Flat open landscape

- Broad flat gravel terraces
- Large scale geometric arable field pattern with commercial horticulture between Bidford and Evesham (in the west)
- Some smaller arable plots growing vegetable crops
- Well wooded steams
- Small nucleated villages
- Lack of hedgerows or poorer low and gappy hedgerows
- Sparse woodland but with wooded streamlines and isolated nature trees
- Densely settled landscape with many villages on the terrace deposits just above the river floodplain.

#### **9.4. Key Landscape Characteristics and Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F**

##### Natural

- Well defined meandering Rivers Avon and Arrow with scattered tree and scrub cover defining the banks
- Alignment of Small Brook with tree cover close to Salford Road and leading through open arable fields to the River Avon
- Bluff woodlands in the adjoining PLCAs A, D and E overlooking the river (east of sewage works, at Marlcliff and east of Barton)
- Open arable farmland either side of the river with a curvilinear hedgerow surviving as part of the field pattern linking Marlcliff and Bidford
- Scrub, trees and grassland north of Marlcliff, west of Barton, south of Grange Road
- Open arable farmland between Bidford and Barton and Marlcliff
- Patches of wet grassland associated with the flat alluvial floodplain north of the river Avon east of Bidford
- Important areas of pasture and amenity grassland associated with the river floodplain and lower terraces
- River Avon Local Wildlife Site

##### Cultural

- Small nucleated villages of Barton and Marlcliff have a distinct rural character and are clearly separated from Bidford-on-Avon
- Northern boundary defined by often exposed urban edge of the historic core of Bidford but with more softer edges against the more modern built form west of the core;
- Lack of built form outside of the villages except for a few isolated and often exposed farmsteads and individual houses;
- Limited development south of Salford Road beyond the historic core broken up by small fields, open grassland, hedgerows and the community and recreational uses at the marina, cemetery and allotments
- Local flood defences (grassed bunds) west of mobile homes park at Barton contrast with the flat river floodplain
- Open recreational areas at Big Meadow with its river frontage, avenue of trees and footpaths
- River recreational facilities such as river moorings, marinas, a lock, informal car parks, seating at Big Meadow
- Well developed gardens in large plots with two notable ones at Avonside House and Woodpeckers which are recommended for listing
- Ridge and furrow at Marlcliff

- Several listed buildings within the compact Barton Conservation Area
- Listed buildings, attractive gardens, the steep topography and woodland and pasture give Marlcliff as distinct character

#### Perceptual

- Flat open landscape in contrast with surrounding low hills in PLCAs A to E
- Visually exposed landscape in views out from Bidford and from the Shakespeare's Avon Way and Heart of England Way
- Limited access on foot to most of area except for three footpath links
- Exposed built edge to the historic core of Bidford in the southern approach across the area
- Well defined physical and visual gap between Bidford and Barton (pasture, strong tree belts, arable field and flood defences on the edge of Barton)
- Well defined gap between Bidford and Marlcliff (open arable fields, hedgelines, Big Meadow) .

### **9.5. Key Visual Sensitivities specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F**

#### Key views into the area are afforded from:

- View from the historic core, the bridge and Parish Church of St Lawrence
- Views from the River Avon
- Views from elevated hillsides at Marriage Hill, Marlcliff and Stable Hill over the valley floor
- Views from regional promoted long distance footpath routes: Shakespeare's Avon Way and Heart of England Way; and the footpath link between Marlcliff and Bidford along the historic curvilinear hedgerows
- Views of the open landscape visible from Honeybourne Road, Cleeve Road, Welford Road and from Salford Road

#### Key views out of the area to:

- Views to the surrounding skylines on the low hills of Marriage Hill, Marlcliff and Stable Hill
- Long views through gaps in these hills to higher hills on the horizon
- To the historic core of Bidford and its landmarks
- To more modern Bidford softened by layers of tree and mature hedgerow cover

#### Key views within the area:

- Across the open fields from the various public rights of way
- To the rivers and Small Brook, defined in the low level views by the bank side vegetation
- To the historic and attractive buildings within Marlcliff and Barton softened by tree cover

### **9.6. Relationship to Settlement**

- The whole area is an important open landscape setting to the town at Bidford and in particular its historic core

- The River Avon clearly defines the settlement edge at the historic core
- Indented settlement edge in the west where the soft open small areas of horticultural, recreational and community uses are an important transition from the heavily developed townscape north of Salford
- Vegetation and pasture form a well defined edge to a strong townscape character at Grange Road and Avon House and its grounds
- The small villages of Marlcliff and Barton are inward looking with the wider landscape forming a well defined rural envelope
- Important open undeveloped gateway to Bidford from the south

### **9.7. Summary (including extent to which PLCA. F is representative of the wider landscape)**

The area demonstrates many key natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics of the wider Avon landscape between Stratford and Evesham. PLCA.F makes a major contribution to the continuity of the Avon riparian landscape retaining the important relationship between the open floodplain and the lower terraces and the settlements which grew up and prospered along the river. It is typical of the pattern of arable and horticultural land uses along the valley (with surviving pockets of wet pasture, orchards and ridge and furrow) with very little settlement except in the historic villages and in isolated agricultural or horticultural buildings.

### **9.8. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines**

- The siting and design of new development should complement the historic character of the Avon towns
- Reinforce the identity and unity of the historic settlement pattern
- Conserve and enhance local vernacular character and tree cover within and around rural settlements
- Conserve the character and continuity of river landscapes
- Conserve the diversity of unimproved flood meadows and identify opportunities for re-creating riverside wetland habitats
- Retain grassland along alluvial floodplains
- Retain and enhance river channel meandering form, diversity and marginal vegetation of the Rivers Avon and Arrow
- Conserve and enhance curvilinear hedgerows defining river floodplains
- Enhance continuity of the river channel through appropriate tree and shrub planting
- Avoid development along the alluvial floodplain to retain the continuity of the open floodplain
- Enhance the structure and unity of the Terrace Farmlands through strengthening primary features including planting of hedgerow oaks
- Conserve and restore hedgerows as landscape features in the Terrace Farmlands
- Enhance woodland character of the streams
- Soften hard edges to new development through tree planting
- Encourage wide field margins along streamlines and woodland edges

### **9.9. Land Management guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F**

- Conserve tree and scrub cover along the river banks

- Seek opportunities to conserve and enhance the riparian river corridor with reinstatement of pasture, appropriate tree and scrub planting and marginal habitats
- Seek opportunities to create wide non arable margins along streams and the river
- Seek opportunities to reinstate continuity of curvilinear hedgerows between Marlcliff and Bidford
- Conserve small scale pastoral field pattern adjacent to the settlements
- Conserve and enhance existing tree and mature hedgerow cover on the edge of the settlements – identifying opportunities for Tree Preservation Orders where necessary
- Seek opportunities to replant new orchards around Barton and west of Bidford
- Conserve and enhance the historic open meadow landscape east of Bidford
- Seek opportunities to identify surviving local historic gardens and landscape features for example at Avon House and Woodpeckers.

#### **9.10. Development guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F**

- Avoid any further introduction of unsympathetic or over-engineered flood defenses or changes to the river or stream alignments
- Any further marina development to be small in scale and well integrated into the river corridor landscape
- Development to be resisted between the villages of Barton and Bidford in order to retain the separate identity of these two historic settlements
- Expansion of Marlcliff and Barton to be resisted but seek for opportunities to enhance the built form and landscape setting to the village cores
- Any increase in the scale and mass of development in the existing isolated developed domestic and agricultural plots to be carefully assessed to ensure that there is no harm to the character and appearance of the area
- Seek opportunities for additional tree planting in keeping with the local landscape pattern around existing isolated developed plots
- Any redevelopment of the existing horticultural buildings should reflect the rural character of the open landscape, should be no greater in height mass or scale than the existing built form and be commensurate with retaining the open character of the landscape between the villages
- Development along Salford Road to be limited to as far as Small Brook in the west in order to protect the rural approach to Bidford down Marriage Hill
- The rural undeveloped character of the river corridor along the rivers Arrow and Avon and Small Brook to be conserved and any new built form resisted
- Generous linear tree lines and woodland cover to be included on the outer edge of any development
- Break up the built form with tree planting linking into existing tree cover
- Create where possible tree planting and hedgerows to better integrate and screen visually prominent agricultural or horticultural buildings
- Open space provision as part of any new development to link physically and visually with the open countryside beyond.

#### **9.11. Visual guidance specific to Bidford-on-Avon Landscape Character Area F**

- Conserve the views from the valley floor to open undeveloped skylines of Marlcliff Hill, Marriage Hill, at Bidford Grange and at Staple Hill
- Particular care to be taken to conserve views over the valley, to the above hillsides and to the historic core and landmarks in Bidford from Big Meadow, Shakespeare's Avon Way and Heart of England Way

- Conserve and enhance the views northwards in the gateway approach to Bidford from the south. Seek opportunities to improve the fragmented character and appearance of the recreational and other facilities at Big Meadow
- Maintain the visual separation of Barton and Bidford
- Avoid any visually intrusive development within the visual envelope of the key views from PLCA.F



**PLCA:F Photographs**



Photo 1. View from Marcliff Hill on the border of the Parish looking north over the Avon Valley with Marriage Hill in the centre distance, Small Brook winding across the floodplain and the western edge of Bidford



Photo 2. View from Shakespeare's Avon Way looking over the river and its floodplain to Marriage Hill on the skyline



Photo 3. View from Shakespeare's Avon Way down the avenue of trees in big Meadow to Bidford bridge with the Parish Church of St Lawrence in the background



Photo 4. View from the meadow east of Honeybourne Road from Shakespeare's Avon Way to the Parish Church of St Lawrence, historic core of Bidford and Bidford Bridge

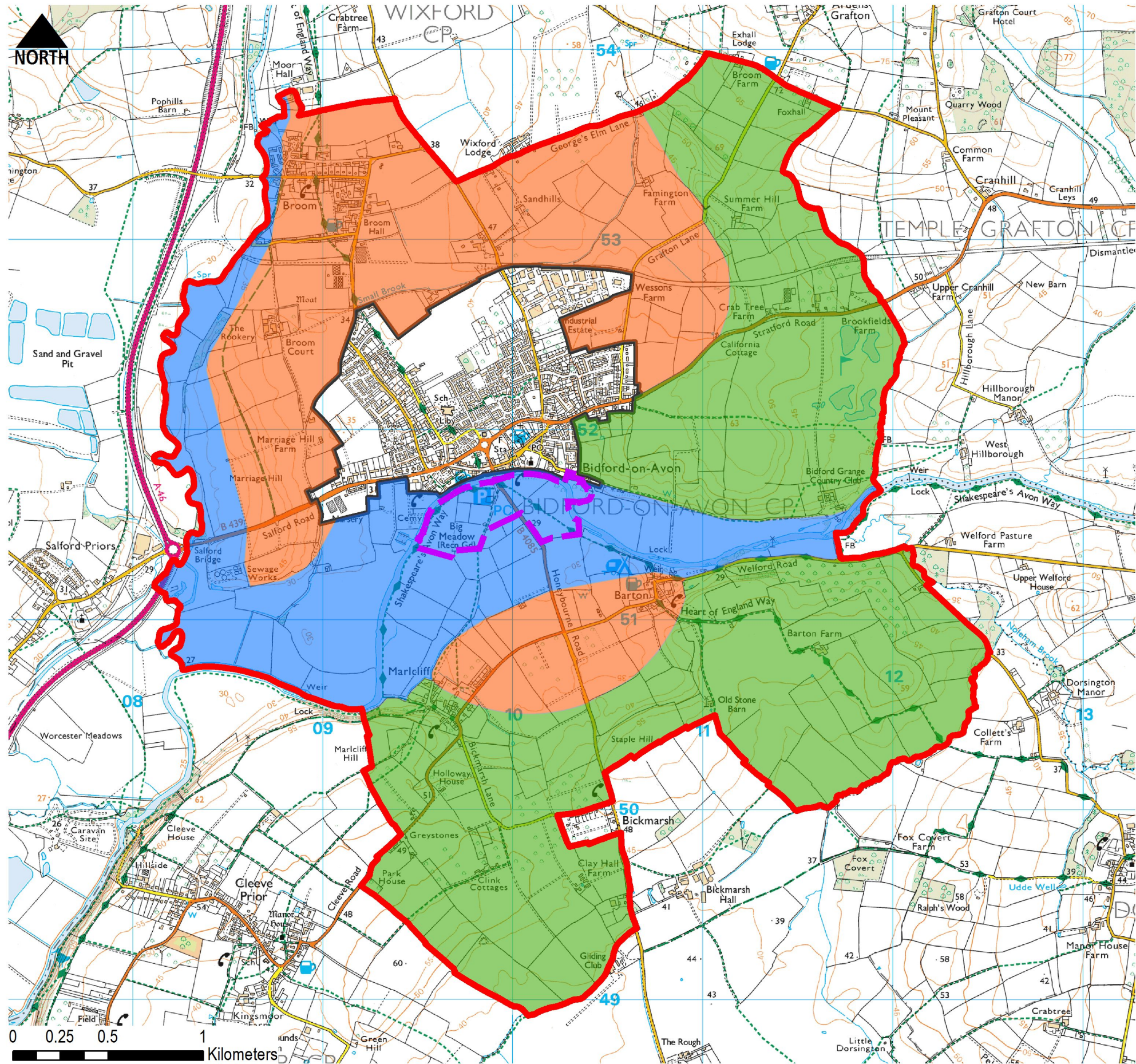


Photo 3. View from Shakespeare's Avon Way to the River Avon and Barton Lock with the river floodplain and rising ground at Bidford Grange in the background



Photo 4. Views from the footpath between Bidford and Marcliff looking over ridge and furrow pasture and the village with the rising land of Marcliff Hill on the skyline

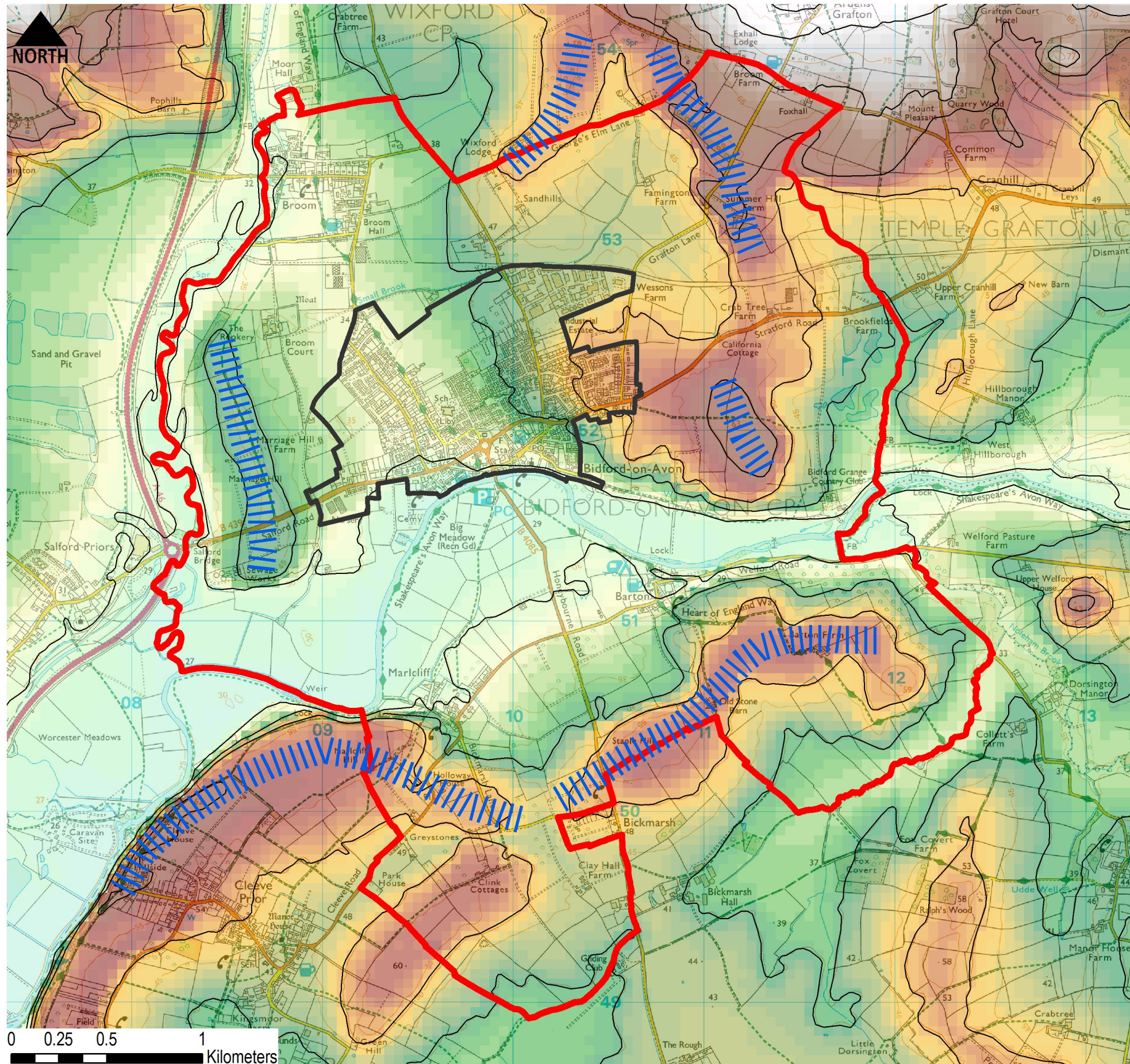
**FIGURE 2**






**KEY**

-  Bidford-on-Avon Parish boundary
-  Settlement boundary
-  Areas of Restraint
- Warwickshire Landscape Project Landscape Types**
-  River Meadows
-  Terrace Farmlands
-  Vale Orchard Belt

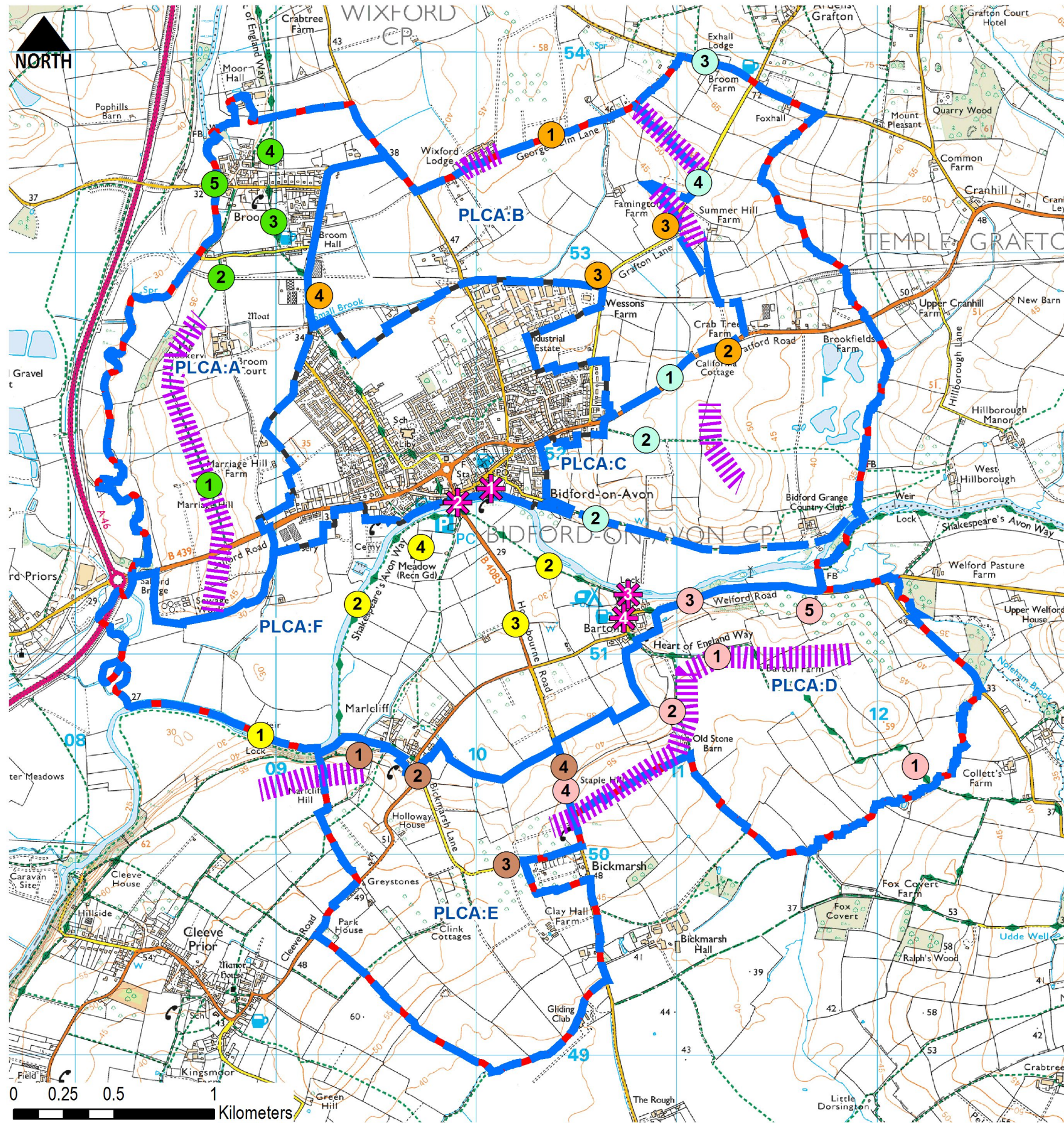
**FIGURE 3**








**KEY**

-  Settlement boundary
-  Bidford-on-Avon Parish boundary
-  Key Ridgelines

**FIGURE 4**




**KEY**

-  Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA)
-  Settlement boundary
-  Bidford-on-Avon Parish boundary
-  Skylines
-  Landmarks:


1. Parish Church of St. Lawrence, Bidford
2. Bidford Bridge
3. Barton Lock
4. Centre of Barton Village

**PLCA:A Key Views**

-  Key views:

  1. Marriage Hill 360°
  2. Footpath linking King's Lane, over the disused railway to Marriage Hill
  3. Heart of England Way and connecting paths in centre of village
  4. Heart of England Way between Broom and Moor Hall
  5. Entrance to the village

**PLCA:B Key Views**

-  Key views:

  1. George's Elm Lane
  2. Stratford Road approach
  3. Grafton Lane north and south
  4. Bidford Road across open gap

**PLCA:C Key Views**

-  Key Views:

  1. Stratford Road approach
  2. Footpaths linking Bidford to golf course
  3. Wixford Road
  4. Grafton Lane

**PLCA:D Key Views**

-  Key Views:


  1. Heart of England Way
  2. Staple Hill
  3. Shakespeare's Avon Way & Welford Road
  4. Honeybourne Road
  5. Dorothy's Wood

**PLCA:E Key Views**

-  Key Views:

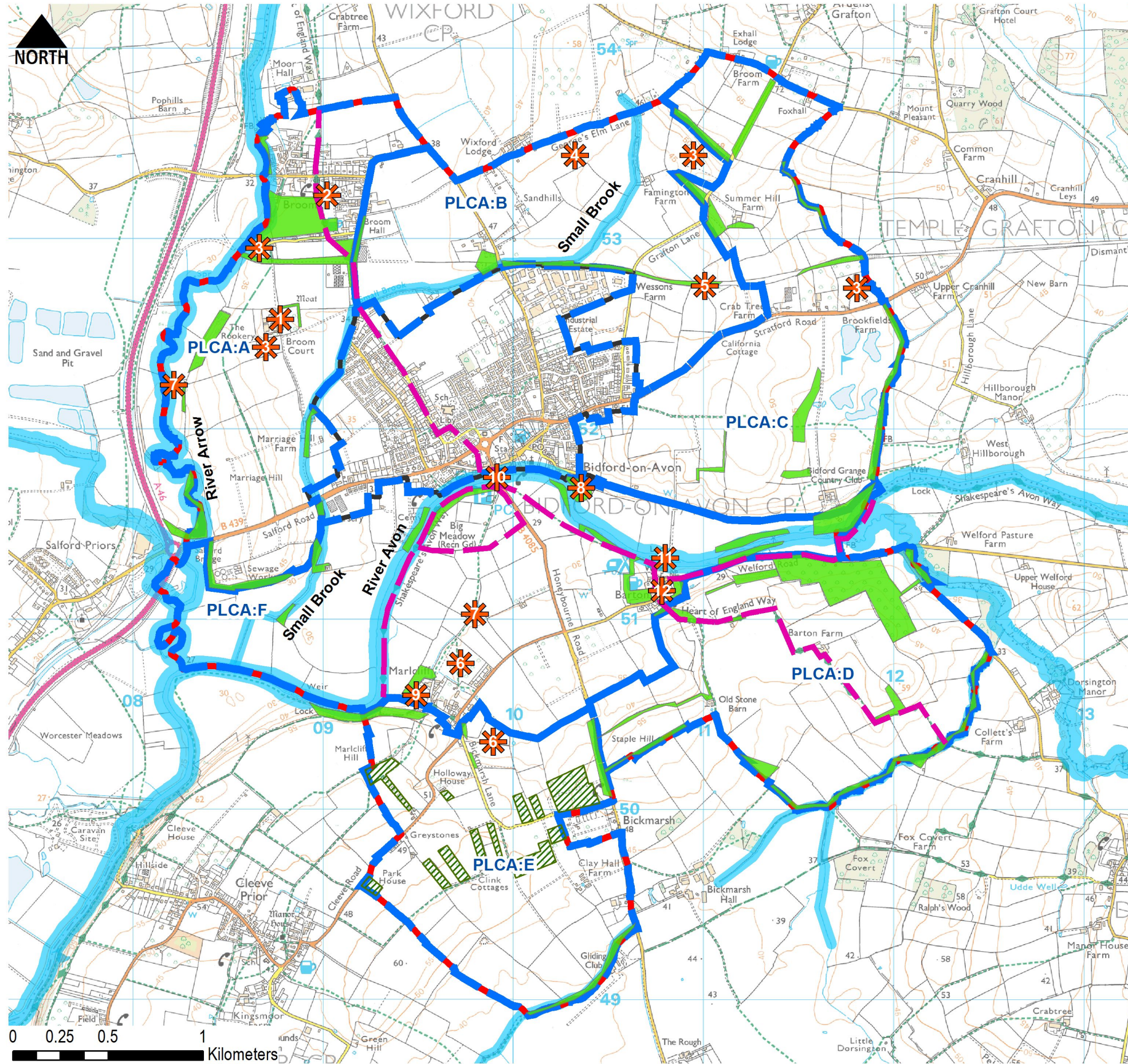
  1. Marlcliff Hill
  2. Cleeve Road
  3. Bickmarsh Lane
  4. Honeybourne Road

**PLCA:F Key Views**









-  Key views:

  1. Marlcliff Hill on edge of Parish
  2. Length of Shakespeare's Avon Way
  3. Honeybourne Road approach to Bidford
  4. Big Meadow views to historic core

**FIGURE 5**



**KEY**

-  Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA)
-  Bidford-on-Avon Parish boundary
-  Settlement boundary
-  Woodland and tree belts
-  Orchards
-  Watercourses
-  Recreational routes and public open space
-  Historic and Cultural Landscape Features

- Big Meadow
- Shakespeare's Avon Way
- Heart of England Way

1. Broom Court
2. Broom Conservation Area
3. Possible remnant ridge and furrow
4. Remnant early 20C orchard
5. Disused Railway
6. Ridge and furrow pasture
7. Curvilinear hedgeline
8. Avonside House gardens
9. Woodpeckers garden
10. Bidford bridge
11. Barton Lock
12. Barton village