

2.0 THE SHAPING OF THE SALISBURY DISTRICT LANDSCAPE

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2.1 General

2.1.1 This section describes the physical and historical features that have influenced the shape of the Salisbury District landscape, and highlights past and current perceptions of the landscape. It also provides an overview of recent forces for change affecting the character of the Salisbury District landscape.

2.2 Physical Influences

2.2.1 The landscape of Salisbury District, like all others, retains traces of the many different influences that have acted upon it. The character of the landscape has evolved in response to the basic underlying geological characteristics of the land upon which natural processes and human activities have operated, which in turn influences the patterns of land use as well as ecological and cultural character.

2.2.2 Salisbury District is dominated by upper chalk of the Cretaceous period, which forms the upland landscape of the downs. The chalk strata dip southeast and are buried beneath the younger, softer Tertiary deposits of the Reading Beds, Bagshot Beds and London Clay. To the west, Kimmeridge Clay, Gault and Upper Greensand create a varied landscape which culminate in the Rolling Clay Vale and Greensand Terraces within Cranborne Chase AONB.

2.2.3 An overview of the physical factors that have influenced the character of the Salisbury District landscape can be found in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment¹³. Based on this overview, the following is a summary of the physical influences that have shaped the Salisbury District landscape.

Landform (see Figure 2.1), Geology (see Figure 2.3) and Soils

2.2.4 In the late Cretaceous period rising sea levels progressively inundated the area and calcareous sediments, which eventually became chalk, were deposited. Chalk was originally deposited throughout Wiltshire but during Alpine tectonic phases the south part of the County was folded into the broad asymmetric syncline of the London Basin. The principal outcrop of this chalk forms a broad arc radiating from Salisbury Plain with one arm stretching across Wiltshire, Hampshire and Sussex and the other across Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

2.2.5 The chalk was deposited sequentially into layers of Lower, Middle and Upper Chalk; the latter being the only layer present in the District. Upper chalk comprises pure white chalks which have resisted weathering, giving rise to the distinctive elevated plateaus of expansive downs that characterise the District, typically characteristic of the Salisbury Plain.

2.2.6 The high plateaus of open, smoothly rolling downland are dissected by a network of dry valleys and long sinuous scarp slopes interlocking with gently rounded domed summits. The thin covering of well-drained soils overlying the chalk bedrock supports a characteristic vegetation of herbs and grasses. Traditionally grazed by sheep and rabbits, these create the distinctive short springy chalk downland turf. These soils are also ideal for cereal growing and much of the downlands are now under intensive arable cultivation.

2.2.7 To the west, in the Vale of Wardour, is the fine mudstone of the Kimmeridge Clay. The Vale also contains areas of two other later Jurassic rocks, the Portland and Purbeck limestones. These have been quarried for many centuries e.g. Chilmark Stone, which was

¹³ Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (Land Use Consultants, December 2005)

used in the 13th century for Salisbury cathedral. An outcrop of Upper Greensand lies between the Chalk and the Gault, forming steep hills. The loam soils arising from the sandstone support a mix of arable and pasture with woodland on the steep slopes.

- 2.2.8 Further geological contrast is evident in a small area to the south east of the county where the chalk strata dip and are buried beneath the younger, softer Tertiary deposits of the Reading Beds, Bagshots Beds and London Clay. The varied geology gives rise to a range of soil types with fertile loamy soils overlying the London Clay supporting a mixture of improved pasture, arable farming and blocks of woodland, while the nutrient poor acidic soils and gravels have given rise to heathland, woodland and pasture.
- 2.2.9 An unusual feature of the chalk uplands are blocks of quartz sandstone, known as sarsens. The hard siliceous sandstones derive from Tertiary deposits, later eroded and moved by periglacial processes. The sarsens have long been used for building stone, and today can be seen within the landscape, as well as within vernacular buildings.
- 2.2.10 The landscape is also considerably influenced by drift deposits, which overlay the solid geology. Many of the plateaux and ridges of the chalk downs are capped with Quaternary deposits of Clay-with-Flint; pockets of reddish brown clay containing flint pebbles. The heavier clay soils have retained their woodland cover and form the characteristic landscapes of the wooded downs.
- 2.2.11 Slope deposits, also known as 'combe deposits', are local features where frost-weathered debris accumulated during winter, forming a slurry when the snows melted and flowing down the slopes to create deposits resembling till. This type of deposit is widespread in the dry valleys of the downs.
- 2.2.12 River alluvium dominates the main valley floodplains throughout Salisbury District from the narrow river valleys through the chalk such as the Bourne to the broad Vale of Wardour. The alluvium gives rise to rich wetland landscapes and pasture while the gravel of the river terraces supports arable farming.

Drainage (see Figure 2.1)

- 2.2.13 Salisbury District is bisected by the Hampshire Avon from which flow a number of tributary rivers, joining around Salisbury.
- 2.2.14 The incised river valleys of the Wylde, Till, Bourne and Upper Avon are key features of the chalk uplands. With their clear waters these watercourses are highly prized for their distinctive ecology and their valleys form the main routes for communication and settlement, contrasting with the sparsely populated chalk summits. The downland is also dissected by a number of dry valleys, some of which support distinctive ephemeral winter streams or 'bournes'. These were formed during the Ice Age, when permafrost impeded sub-surface drainage and valleys, or coombes, were cut through the chalk. Today, however, much of the high open downland is waterless due to the porous nature of the bedrock.
- 2.2.15 Springs are also a feature of the chalk landscapes, particularly the valleys and scarps, issuing at the point where the porous chalk overlies the impermeable clays. These give rise to the distinctive scalloped coombe landform and spring line villages clustered along the foot of the slope.

Ecological Habitats

- 2.2.16 The South Wessex Downs Natural Area (NA) dominates Salisbury District. This NA comprises a landscape that is strongly characterised by the underlying chalk geology. The South Wessex Downs are especially important for the numerous and often extensive areas of remnant unimproved chalk grassland and are of international importance for both their chalk grassland and chalk rivers, and for the many notable animal and plants species associated with these habitats. Chalk grasslands are notable for supporting an exceptional diversity of plants species and invertebrates, many of which have a restricted distribution in the UK.
- 2.2.17 The Wessex Vales NA extends into the South Wessex Downs from the West and forms a narrow finger, which extends east almost to Salisbury. The Wessex Vales corresponds approximately with the extent of sand and clay deposits, which overlie the chalk bedrock. These deposits give rise to a variety of soil types ranging from acid through to basic, which is in contrast with the more or less homogenous chalk soils associated with the South Wessex Downs NA. This wide range of soil types supports a variety of associated habitat types, such as wet woodland, acid woodland and both neutral and calcareous meadows.
- 2.2.18 There are a wide range of habitats within the District, the most characteristic types of which include grassland (including calcareous, neutral and acid grassland), arable farmland, hedgerows, woodlands, wood-pasture/parkland, chalk rivers and associated habitats, and standing open water. Many of these habitats are of particular value for nature conservation and are protected by European, national and local designations (see **Figure 2.2**).

2.3 Historical Influences

- 2.3.1 The landscape of Salisbury District has long been subject to episodes of settlement, abandonment and reuse, evolving from Palaeolithic times into the present day rich tapestry.
- 2.3.2 An overview of the historical factors that have influenced the character of the Wiltshire landscape can be found in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment¹⁴. Based on this overview, supplemented where appropriate by the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs¹⁵ AONB Landscape Character Assessment, the following is a summary of the historical influences that have shaped the Salisbury District landscape.

Palaeolithic to Mesolithic Periods (c.500,000 to c.4,500 BC)

- 2.3.3 During the time of the last glacial maximum (c.18,000 BC) Salisbury District lay to the south-west of an ice sheet extending over Europe. As the climate began to stabilise (11,000 BC) forest spread, giving way to scrub and then mixed broad-leaved forest. There is little evidence for Palaeolithic occupation within Salisbury, other than a few finds of scattered flint handaxes, and occupation seems likely to have been confined to very limited activity in river valleys.
- 2.3.4 By 8500 BC people had returned to the area, and evidence for the Mesolithic period consists of scatters of worked flint. The higher downland may have formed upland hunting areas, with valleys exploited for food. By the late Mesolithic, groups were deliberately clearing areas of the forest uplands to attract grazing animals, and generally becoming more sedentary.

¹⁴ Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (Land Use Consultants, December 2005)

¹⁵ Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (Land Use Consultants, June 2003)

Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age Periods (c.4,500 BC to c.43 AD)

The fourth and third millennia BC saw a major transformation in the landscape of Wiltshire, from the gatherer-hunter economy to one involving food production. This resulted in a series of changes in material culture, plants cultivated and animal domesticates and the first human influenced changes to the landscape.

- 2.3.5 Evidence indicates a Neolithic landscape that was still substantially wooded, although areas of grassland were now established. New settlements had the appearance of clearance areas within woodland. Communities would still have been small, though people were gathering for certain activities, for example the building of monuments.
- 2.3.6 By the late Neolithic (3000 BC), there is more evidence for cultivation and a decreasing amount of woodland. No field systems have been dated to the Neolithic period but almost certainly, the first fields were established at this time. Overall there is very little archaeological evidence for permanent settlement structures during the Neolithic, however evidence for occupation within Salisbury District includes:
- Causewayed enclosures;
 - Long barrows;
 - Flint scatters and pottery fragments;
 - Henge complexes, for example Stonehenge (the bank and ditch are Neolithic).
- 2.3.7 During the Bronze Age monument construction continued, but the most dramatic change in the landscape was the widespread appearance of field systems defined by banks, ditches and possibly hedges. Associated with these fields were small enclosures containing roundhouses and ancillary buildings. Settlements are still rarely found belonging to the Bronze Age, but three huts were found under Longbarrow Crossroads, west of Stonehenge. Landscape evidence for the Bronze Age includes:
- Round barrows which are scattered throughout the area, for example at Fifield Down, Chaddenwick Furze, Middle Chase and Downbarn West
 - Larger linear earthworks, for example those running across the Bulford Ranges.
- 2.3.8 In the Iron Age most people lived in open settlements of roundhouses, and field systems continued to be used, or were re-used from earlier periods. Examples of Iron Age monuments include:
- Hillforts, such as Yarnbury Camp;
 - Fields and farmsteads linked together by trackways, for example Grim's Ditch, and complex social networks of kinship, reciprocity and trade.

Romano-British Period (c.43 AD to 4th century AD)

- 2.3.9 Following the Roman invasion of Britain (AD 43), the landscape was under widespread agricultural use and they exploited this by establishing towns and a road system. Villa estates were established, particularly in the valleys, some over previous Iron Age settlements. These tended to be grouped around urban settlements and used the limestone for building stone.
- 2.3.10 Roman roads were an important development as they resulted in new markets being created. The Romans also introduced significant agricultural innovations. Improvements in ploughs meant that heavier soils could be cultivated and place names indicate that much of the land in the clay vales had been cleared of forest.

Early Medieval Period (4th century to 1066 AD)

2.3.11 Early Saxon evidence suggests there was a decline of centralised political control following the withdrawal of the legions, and the loss of the market meant that agricultural production returned largely to subsistence levels. There is little evidence for this period, but it does include:

- Saxon church remains, for example at Amesbury;
- Strip fields that dissected the valleys from side to side;
- Saxon estate boundaries that are reflected in modern landscape boundaries;
- Saxon burials, examples of which have been found at Harnham and Market Lavington.

Medieval Period (1066 to 16th century AD)

2.3.12 The Norman conquest (1066) replaced the earlier social structure. The Domesday survey (1086) shows that medieval villages were located in the valleys, and some may have been continuations of Saxon settlements.

2.3.13 Trade became wider and large-scale once more. Strip lynchets and ridge and furrow reflect this period of agricultural expansion. Many medieval droveways and tracks may have had earlier origins, and some were themselves incorporated into later roads.

2.3.14 The Saxons had established hunting parks, but it was the Normans who codified their management. Forests provided deer and revenue for the king, but the areas of woodland also provided timber for construction and other resources for the local communities.

2.3.15 The phase of agricultural expansion was slowed or even reversed during the later 14th century, with the Black Death causing rural depopulation and an economic depression. By the 15th century, in many areas of the chalk downlands this led to the consolidation of land blocks and their enclosure as fields using hedges, banks or ditches.

Post Medieval Period (16th century to 1900)

2.3.16 This period is marked by the transformation to a capitalist market economy. Many field systems remained little altered, but elsewhere enclosure during the 15th and 16th centuries meant land use became more intensive. In some cases, enclosures were informal and the result of moves within the communities involved, but in others they were forcible events dictated by Crown officials. Large areas of former arable land on the downs were converted to pasture and long sheep runs were created between existing roads, tracks and paths, often several kilometres long, and some are still reflected in present-day field patterns. From the 16th century systems of managed water meadows developed in many valley bottoms.

2.3.17 By the 18th century informal, piecemeal enclosure had created a patchwork of small, irregularly shaped fields and winding lanes and tracks in many areas. From the later 18th century though, some areas of down pasture were converted to arable, and common woods, heaths and grasslands were also enclosed. The rectangular, regular patterns of field systems bounded by hedges on low field banks, which are especially evident on the West Wiltshire Downs, were the result of these later enclosures.

2.3.18 Further changes include turnpike roads and, towards the end of the 18th century, canals which were significant improvements in communication.

Modern Period (1901 – present day)

- 2.3.19 Following the Napoleonic Wars conditions in the countryside were poor, and town populations grew rapidly. By the end of the 19th century, more people were working in industries based in towns than were working in agriculture.
- 2.3.20 Post-war intensification of agriculture continued with the ploughing of slopes and elevated downland, and the removal of hedgerows and field boundaries to create large scale fields.
- 2.3.21 In recognition of the value of the historic environment to current and future generations, the post-war planning system in England has sought to protect features of historic and archaeological significance. In respect of Salisbury District, these include:
- 593 Scheduled Monuments which are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) (compared to 1,292¹⁶ in Wiltshire as a whole)
 - 70 Conservation Areas of special architectural or historical interest protected under the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990) (compared to 244¹⁷ in Wiltshire as a whole)
 - 118 Grade I, 253 Grade II* and 2603 Grade II Listed Buildings of architectural merit, protected under the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990) (compared to 279 Grade I, 684 Grade II*, and 11,200 Grade II in Wiltshire as a whole)
 - 16 Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest included on the English Heritage non-statutory national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (compared to 37¹⁸ in Wiltshire as a whole).

2.4 Past and Current Perceptions

- 2.4.1 An examination of the way that others have perceived the landscape over time provides an insight to what particular features of the landscape have consistently attracted attention and comment. This section considers the perception of the landscape of Salisbury District chiefly through its literary and artistic associations.

In the late Victorian period a romantic and symbolic view of the Salisbury District landscape was provided by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928). His last novel, *Jude the Obscure*, was partly set in Salisbury (re-named Melchester) and an important scene in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* takes place at Stonehenge. Hardy describes daybreak at the conclusion of the flight of Tess after the killing of Alec d'Urberville. The scale and grandeur of the landscape are used to highlight the plight of the heroine and her fate is hinted at in the reference to the 'Stone of sacrifice'.

“The Band of silver paleness along the east horizon made even the distant parts of the Great Plain appear dark and near; and the whole enormous landscape bore that impress of reserve, taciturnity and hesitation which is usual just before day. The eastward pillars and their architraves stood up blackly against the light, and the great flame-shaped Sun-stone beyond them, and the Stone of Sacrifice midway. Presently the night wind died out, and the quivering little pools in the cup-like hollows of the stones lay still.”

¹⁶ English Heritage, 2004, Heritage Counts 2004 The State of South West's Historic Environment. English Heritage: London.

¹⁷ English Heritage, 2004, Heritage Counts 2004 The State of South West's Historic Environment. English Heritage: London.

¹⁸ English Heritage, 2006, Heritage Counts 2006 The State of South West's Historic Environment. English Heritage: London.

- 2.4.2 In his 1914 prose work ‘In pursuit of Spring’¹⁹ Edward Thomas describes a journey through southern England and, in this extract, recounts a walk through the gentle landscape of the Wylye Valley:

“I did not go into Wilton, but kept on steadily alongside the Wylye. For three miles I had on my left hand the river and its meadows, poplars, willows and elms – the railway raised slightly above the farther bank – and the waved green wall of down beyond, to the edge of which came the dark trees of Gravely ... The road was heavy and wet, being hardly above the river level, but that was all the better for seeing the maidenhair lacework of the greening willows, the cattle among the marshmarigolds of the flat green meadows, the moorhen hurried down the swift water, the bulging wagons of straw going up a deep land to the sheepfolds, and the gradual slope of the Plain where these sheepfolds were, on my right.”

- 2.4.3 The river valleys, which are the focus for communication and settlement, appear to have inspired much more in the way of descriptive writings than the open downland. Common themes include the character and density of old villages, the close juxtaposition of river, watermeadows, arable fields and grass downland, and the way that the valleys are hidden among the folds of the downs. Indeed, Defoe²⁰ writing in 1722 wrote that:

“while you view the downs, and think the country wild and uninhabited; yet when you come to descend into these vales you are surprised with the most fertile country in England.”

- 2.4.4 Defoe goes on to describe how:

“these hills and plains are most beautifully intersected, and cut through by the course of divers pleasant and profitable rivers; in the course, and near the banks, of which there is always a chain of fruitful meadows and rich pastures ...”.

- 2.4.5 The Wylye Valley is regarded as being particularly attractive. Cobbett²¹, writing in 1830, wondered at the concentration of “one and thirty churches in the space of twenty seven miles” and described the “innumerable flocks of sheep, watermeadows and the cornfields which were sometimes up to 100 acres in size”.

- 2.4.6 Hudson described the character of the old stone and flint cottages that make up villages within these valleys as:²²

“weathered and coloured by sun and wind and rain and many lowly vegetable forms to a harmony with nature. They appear related to the trees amid which they stand, to the sloping downs at the side, and to the sky and clouds over all.”

- 2.4.7 In all these chalk river valleys, the landform and availability of water has had a profound influence of the settlement pattern, as Massingham²³ observed:

“River and hill-scarps ... squeeze out such villages into long, irregular, parallel lines and yet, by the courteous, unforced habit of the river’s passage through the chalk and the generosity of slope along the hill-flanks, allow the houses plenty of elbow room to settle in. The street that gently winds in conformity with the river and down and the spacious disposition of the houses great and small, together or detached, catch the genius of the chalk and translate it into a different medium.”

¹⁹ In Pursuit of Spring, (Thomas, E, 1914)

²⁰ Defoe, D (1962), *A tour through England and Wales in 1722*, Everyman.

²¹ Cobbett, W (1922), *Rural rides*, Cambridge University

²² Hudson, WH (1910), *A shepherd’s life*, republished in 1981 by Macdonald Futura Press, London

²³ Massingham, H J (1936) *The English Downland*, Batsford, London

2.4.8 A Mrs Haughton, in her book ‘In a Wiltshire Valley’²⁴, wrote:

“Where the modern system of farming has broken up the down, there I most willingly allow that nothing can be so ugly, so dreary, so wild and desolate as the Wiltshire Downs! What used to be a vast expanse of grass, is now turned into as many miles of turnips, or ploughed fields, and it is only in the harvest time that there is any redeeming feature in the view.”

2.4.9 By the middle of the 20th century the conversion of downland pasture to arable cultivation was almost complete. Massingham²⁵ mourned the change, arguing that:

“Yes, sheep are the treasure of the downs ... it was sheep whose teeth created the very tapestry of the downland surface ... and I have noticed how disastrously the decline of the village community combined with the post-war depression in agriculture have, by the withdrawal of multitudes of sheep from the uplands, affected the growth and quality of their pasture.”

2.4.10 The dramatic archaeological monuments and varied landscapes of Wiltshire has drawn artists for many centuries. Turner painted Stonehenge, as noted by Nikolaus Pevsner in his volume of the Buildings of England on Wiltshire:

“Its stones have a remarkable quality of reflecting light and its moods are as varied as our climate. Most dramatic during a thunderstorm, the weathered stones thrown up in stark relief take on new meaning, thrusting upwards like the bones of the landscape – an aspect so wonderfully observed by Turner in his watercolour.”

2.5 Forces for Change in the Landscape

2.5.1 The landscape, ecological and historic character of Salisbury District is dynamic, and is constantly changing in response to human activity and natural processes. Historically changes in agriculture, the socio-economic structure of local communities, and industrialisation have all had important impacts. The pace of change today is far greater than ever before. Development and other environmental changes are having increasingly visible, cumulative and far-reaching effects on landscape character. These include increasing demands for road transport, new infrastructure and high rates of residential and commercial development. The landscape is also undergoing significant change from new patterns of agricultural land use in response to changing climatic and market conditions.

Agriculture and Land Management

2.5.2 The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, and Government policy to reduce production subsidies in favour of environmental subsidies, provides significant opportunities to safeguard and restore characteristic features of the agricultural landscape through Environmental Stewardship schemes.

2.5.3 Key changes include:

- Agricultural improvement resulting in rationalisation of an early field system of small, irregular fields into larger field units and decline of fen and neutral meadows on the valley floors, and continues to threatens the remaining medieval field patterns and traditional pastoral landscape;
- Changes in agriculture leading to lack of maintenance of traditional valley features including watercress beds, water meadow systems, mills and leat;

²⁴ Massingham, H J (1935), *The English Downland*, Batsford, London

²⁵ Massingham, H J (1935), *The English Downland*, Batsford, London

- Positive land management of military training areas to conserve landscape features;
- Positive management and clearance of scrub encroachment on Salisbury Plain by the military;
- Conifer blocks within deciduous woodland can be visually intrusive, particularly where they occur on skylines. The rate of change in the landscape is rapid during felling of large coniferous blocks;
- Damage to ancient monuments from intensive arable cultivation;
- Decline in species rich grasslands and hay meadow with intensification of agricultural practices;
- Elm loss of 1970s;
- Encroachment of scrub into grassland due to changes in farming practices leading to change in balance of grassland/scrub mix;
- Growing intensity of farming practices, including the shift from spring sown to autumn sown crops, has resulted in a change in landscape character and decline in farmland birds and a loss of biodiversity on chalk grassland;
- Loss of hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees plus poor management of remaining hedgerows;
- Intensification in farming leading to drainage and improvement of permanent pasture and water meadows on the floodplain and loss of riparian vegetation;
- Loss of semi-natural woodland plus creation of new coniferous plantations has resulted in a change in visual and ecological character;
- Need for sustainable woodland management including traditional maintenance techniques where appropriate to conserve ancient woodlands and particularly surviving areas of wood pasture and coppice;
- Nutrient pollution from riverside arable land plus road and urban run off affecting the high water quality of the streams and rivers;
- Over maturity and non-replacement of old tree stock within hedgerows has resulted in the loss of trees as landscape features;
- Growing of crops for energy production (biomass fuels.);
- The fall in the agricultural incomes and the structural change in the ownership and management of farmland have lead an increasing number of farmers and land mangers in the AONB to diversify their business out of traditional agriculture. In terms of the landscape, these changes are evident in the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential or industrial uses and the growing of new crops;
- Increasing transfer of land, especially with residential properties, from agricultural to amenity use;
- Redevelopment of agricultural buildings to residential, amenity or industrial use creating broader economic activity but a change in landscape character.

Built Development

2.5.4 As elsewhere in the country, housing development represents a significant pressure for change in Salisbury District. Continued urban development around the towns have all had impacts on local landscape character. The challenge for the future is to accommodate housing development without eroding local character and distinctiveness.

2.5.5 Key forces for change are:

- Development pressures, particularly for new housing which will affect the character of the existing small settlements - villages may appear to coalesce and suburbanisation may occur;
- Isolated development such as new single dwellings that might compromise rural character;

- Loss of vernacular architectural features such as old barns and industrial heritage features such as mills;
- Modern residential developments in more open locations, some close to the floodplain, have weakened the pattern of tight knit villages in the past;
- Pressure for development on main road corridors such as services which are highly visible in more open landscape types;
- Pressure for further expansion of settlement and new development along rural lanes threatening the character of the small villages and scattered farmsteads.

Transport and Traffic

2.5.6 Reflecting the national trend, the District has seen increasing levels of car usage. This is leading to major congestion, pollution problems, and pressures for new road schemes in the countryside between the towns and road improvements that significantly affect landscape character.

2.5.7 Key forces for change are:

- Increased traffic on the rural road network, plus improvements to the lanes including kerbing, widening, signing and new river crossings which, in places create a more 'urban' character and further diminishes the rural tranquillity of the landscape;
- Pressure to build new roads;
- The presence of major transport corridors particularly the trunk roads has brought pressures for development and associated amenity planting and signage;
- Upgrading of the rail network may create new types of pressure and the building of new multi-modal transport interchanges.

Access, Recreation and Leisure

2.5.8 In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number and proportion of people taking part in outdoor recreational activities. Tourism, leisure and the boating industry make a vital contribution to local employment. In addition the many 'traditional' villages and the countryside in the District are an attraction in their own right.

2.5.9 Key forces for change are:

- Recreational pressure on chalk scarps;
- Managing high visitor numbers to key sites with potential adverse effects on historic landscapes, archaeological sites and nature reserves, and need for supporting infrastructure.

Climate Change

2.5.10 Climate change is a global issue, and evidence of it is growing in the UK with trends towards increased temperatures, wetter winters, and more extreme weather events in the last ten years already identified. The scenarios produced by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP02) suggests that the UK could experience by 2080:

- An increase of current average temperatures by 2-3.5°C;
- Drier summers and wetter winters;
- More frequent summer droughts, winter flooding and storm;
- A rise in the average level of the sea.

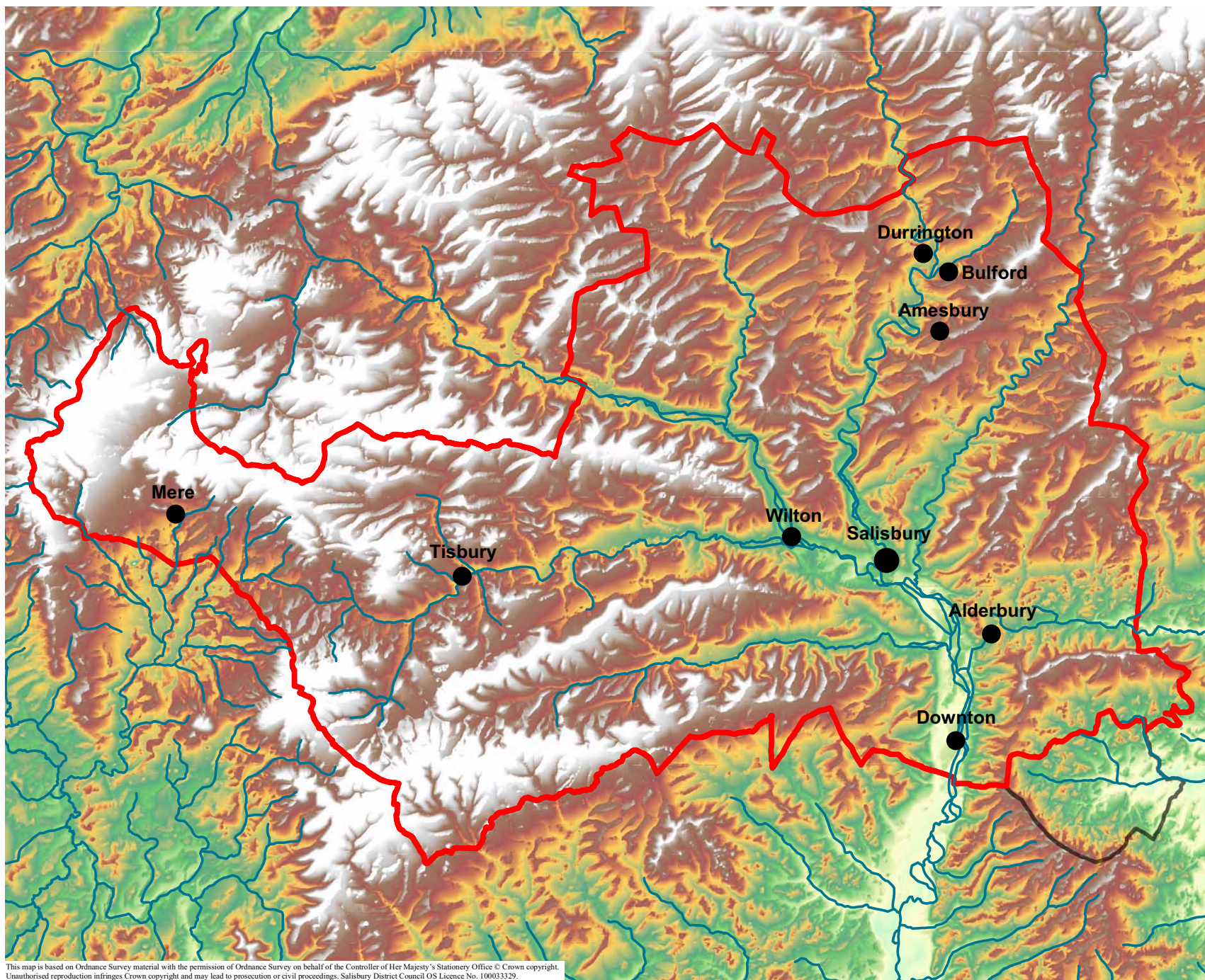
- 2.5.11 Whilst there are still uncertainties regarding exact changes at regional and local levels, it is clear there could be both direct and indirect impacts on landscape character. The potential implications for landscape character in Salisbury District include changes in habitats and species composition, habitat fragmentation, water resources, soils, agricultural land use, recreation and tourism and cultural heritage. Rises in river levels, frequent summer droughts and winter flooding and the potential drying out of winter bournes, due to lower water tables, are also anticipated changes in the landscape as a result of climate change.

Energy Generation and Supply





- 2.5.12 Changes in the way in which energy is generated are evident throughout the country and this is no different within Salisbury District. The Wiltshire Renewable Energy Action Plan may impact on the landscape of the Salisbury District through the potential impact of tall structures - communications masts and transmitters plus future renewable energy developments (wind turbines) that will be particularly intrusive on the skylines and could have a major impact on the sense of remoteness. The planting of biofuels is also a potential change to the character of the landscape.

Minerals Extraction and Waste Disposal

- 2.5.13 Salisbury District produces a range of minerals including chalk, limestone, natural building stone and clay for cement manufacturing. The effects of minerals/landfill operations on the landscape include changes to field pattern, loss of landscape features, introduction of incongruous landforms, land raising, haulage routes and lighting. Restoration to agriculture, woodland or other uses can be unsympathetic to landscape character if not designed with care.



KEY

-  Principal Rivers
- Elevation (mAOD)
-  High : 290
Low : 0
-  Study Area Boundary
-  New Forest National Park within Salisbury District

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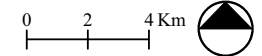
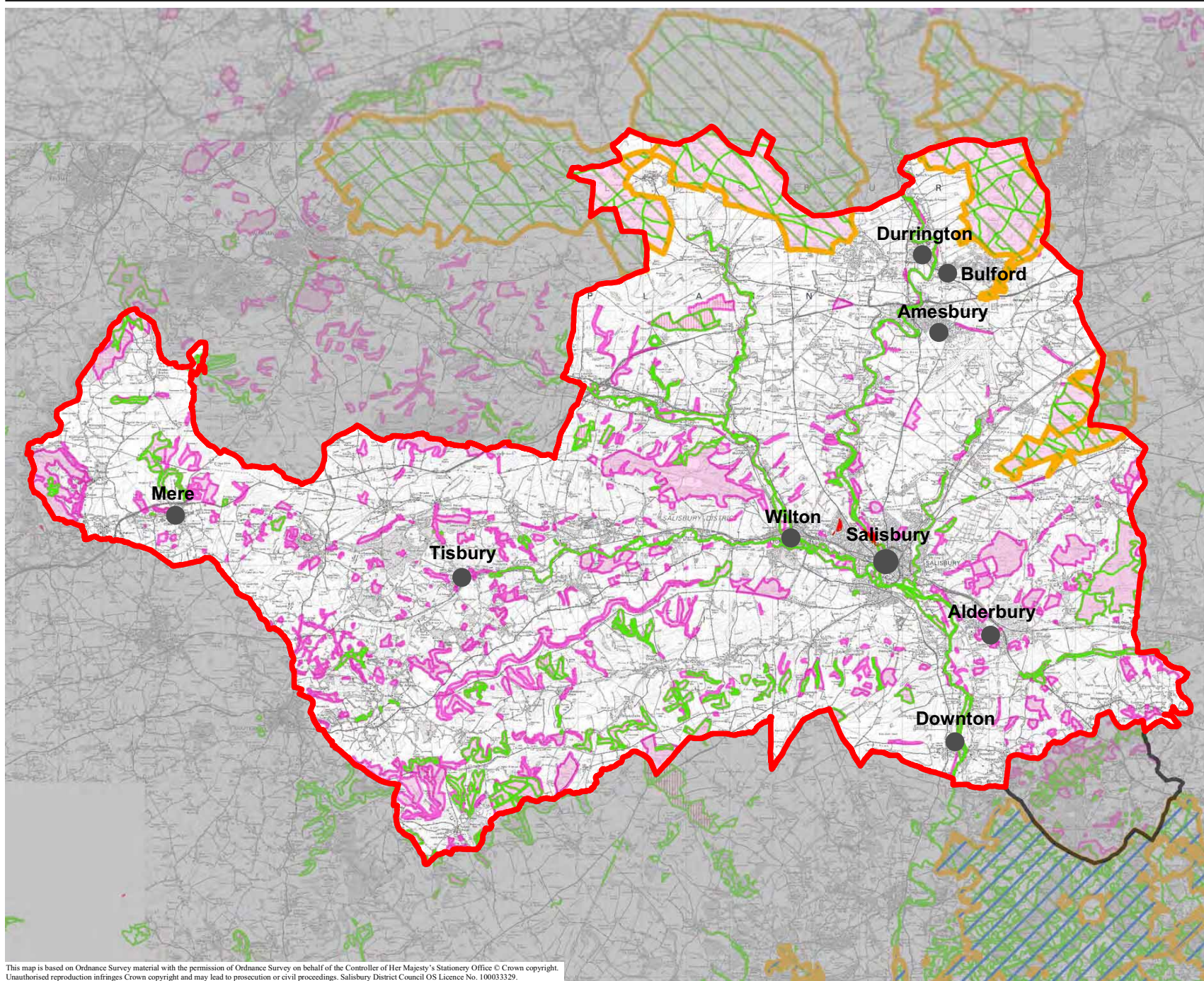











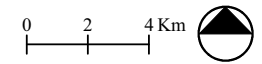
FIGURE 2.1
LANDFORM AND DRAINAGE



KEY

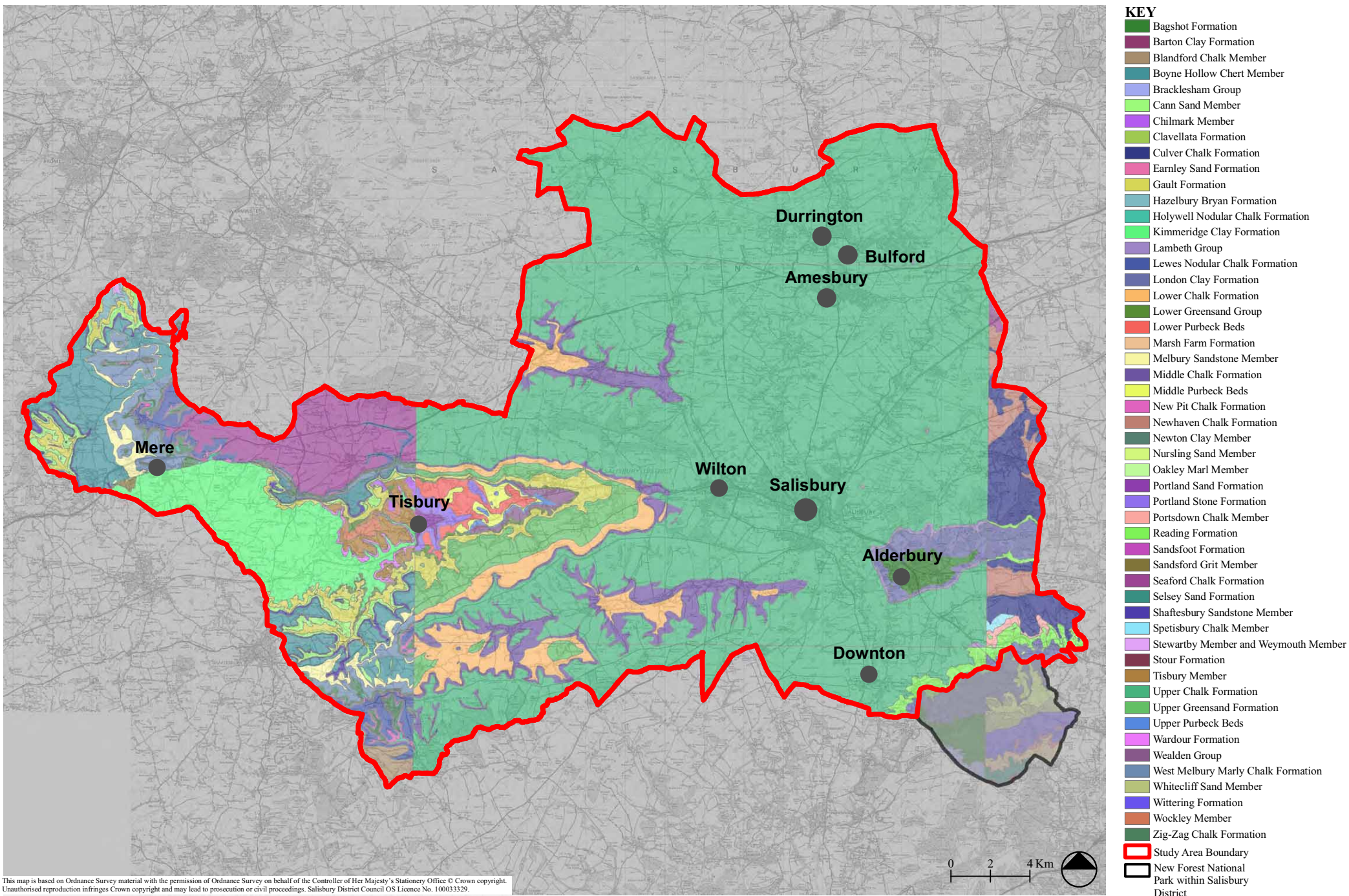
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Special Protection Area
-  RAMSAR Site
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest
-  National Nature Reserve
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  County Wildlife Site
-  Study Area Boundary
-  New Forest National Park within Salisbury District

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FIGURE 2.2
NATURE CONSERVATION DESIGNATIONS



3.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

3.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

3.1 General

3.1.1 This section describes the context provided by the hierarchical classification of Landscape Character Areas and Types defined at the national and county levels. It also explains the relationship of the study to the classification of landscape character units provided by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment within the District. Within this context, the classification of Landscape Character Types and Areas within the District is presented.

3.1.2 The descriptions of individual Landscape Character Areas in Section 4.0, should be read in conjunction with this information to ensure that the contextual relationship with the wider landscape is understood.

3.2 National and County Level Context

The National Character Context

3.2.1 The national context for defining the boundaries of the different Landscape Character Units within the District is provided by the Countryside Character Areas from the Character of England Map²⁶.

3.2.2 As illustrated on **Figure 3.1**, the District contains part of the following four Countryside Character Areas defined at 1:250,000 scale:

- New Forest (131)
- Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs (132)
- Blackmoor Vale and the Vale of Wardour (133)
- Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase (134)

3.2.3 The character of these Countryside Character Areas is described in Countryside Character Volume 8, published by the Countryside Agency²⁷.

3.2.4 The Countryside Character Areas provide the contextual framework within which more detailed classifications of Landscape Character Units at 1:50,000 (County) and 1:25,000 (District) scale can be defined.

The County Character Context

3.2.5 Informed by the framework of the Countryside Character Areas and the Agency's National Landscape Typology²⁸, the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment²⁹ identifies seven Landscape Character Types and 19 Landscape Character Areas within Salisbury District (see **Figure 3.2**). The County assessment was arrived at through mapping all the areas and types at 1:50,000 scale and using these along with the characteristics and other information in the existing assessments, the national landscape character framework, the neighbouring district and county level assessments and the baseline information such as geology, topography and

²⁶ Character of England Map (Countryside Agency, English Nature, Rural Development Service, English Heritage, updated 2006).

²⁷ Countryside Character Volume 8 – South West (Countryside Agency, 1999, CA 14).

²⁸ The National Landscape Typology is a hierarchical classification of Landscape Character Types, which has been developed by the Countryside Agency and English Nature (now Natural England). The Typology has produced a national classification of 'Level 1' Landscape Character Types defined at a 1:250,000 scale. These are homogenous units of land with a uniform character that are distinct from each other on the basis of definitive natural and cultural attributes.

²⁹ Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (LUC for Wiltshire County Council, December 2005).

hydrology, to group areas and types together thus forming the new classification. For the purposes of the county-wide assessment, emphasis was placed upon the definition and subdivision of the landscape at a scale of 1:50,000 and at the Landscape Type scale.

The AONB Assessment

- 3.2.6 Approximately 47% of the District is recognised as being of national landscape importance and has been designated as AONB. This designated area, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, is indicated on **Figure 1.1**.
- 3.2.7 A Landscape Character Assessment mapped at 1:25,000 scale was published in 2003 for the AONB.³⁰ In order to ensure consistency with this study, wherever possible, information has been summarised and in some cases augmented, to form the basis of those Landscape Character Area profiles that fall within Salisbury District. A Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLC) has also been undertaken by the AONB, which is due for completion in June 2008. For those Landscape Character Areas that fall within the AONB, this detailed HLC information should be used to inform decision-making.

3.3 The District Assessment

- 3.3.1 The County Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas provides the framework for the more detailed assessment of landscape units within Salisbury District at 1:25,000 scale. The distribution of the District Landscape Character Types and Areas defined within Salisbury District are shown on **Figure 4.1** in Section 4.0, and this section includes the detailed descriptions or ‘profiles’.

- 3.3.2 Nine Landscape Character Types were defined within the District. These are listed below:

- **Narrow Chalk River Valley (Type A)**
- **Broad Chalk River Valley Slopes (Type B)**
- **Broad Chalk River Valley Floor (Type C)**
- **Chalk Downland (Type D)**
- **Chalk Escarpments (Type E)**
- **Forest Heath Mosaic (Type F)**
- **Greensand Terrace (Type G)**
- **Greensand Hills (Type H)**
- **Rolling Clay Vale (Type I)**

Each of the above generic Landscape Character Types has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover, biodiversity and historical evolution.

- 3.3.3 Within the nine generic Landscape Character Types, 25 Landscape Character Areas have been identified within the District. The Landscape Character Areas reflect distinctive variations in local character within each Landscape Character Type based on visual analysis of how different combinations of physical features and perceptual qualities such as scale, pattern, tranquillity, cultural associations, etc. create areas of distinctive landscape character.

³⁰ Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (LUC for the Countryside Agency, June 2003)

3.3.4 The Landscape Character Areas are:

A Narrow Chalk River Valley

- A1 Till Narrow Chalk River Valley
- A2 Upper Avon Narrow Chalk River Valley
- A3 Bourne Narrow Chalk River Valley
- A4 Lower Avon Narrow Chalk River Valley

B: Broad Chalk River Valley Slopes

- B1 Wylve Broad Chalk River Valley Slopes
- B2 Ebbble Broad Chalk River Valley Slopes

C Broad Chalk River Valley Floor

- C1 Wylve Broad Chalk River Valley Floor
- C2 Ebbble Broad Chalk River Valley Floor

D Chalk Downland

- D1 West Wiltshire Downs Chalk Downland
- D2 Tilshead Chalk Downland
- D3 Larkhill Chalk Downland
- D4 Boscombe Down Chalk Downland
- D5 Porton Down Chalk Downland
- D6 Downton Chalk Downland
- D7 Cranborne Chase Chalk Downland
- D8 Netherhampton Chalk Downland

E Chalk Escarpments

- E1 West Wiltshire Chalk Escarpments
- E2 Fovant and Chalke Chalk Escarpments

F Forest Heath Mosaic

- F1 Farley Forest Heath Mosaic
- F2 Landford Forest Heath Mosaic

G Greensand Terrace

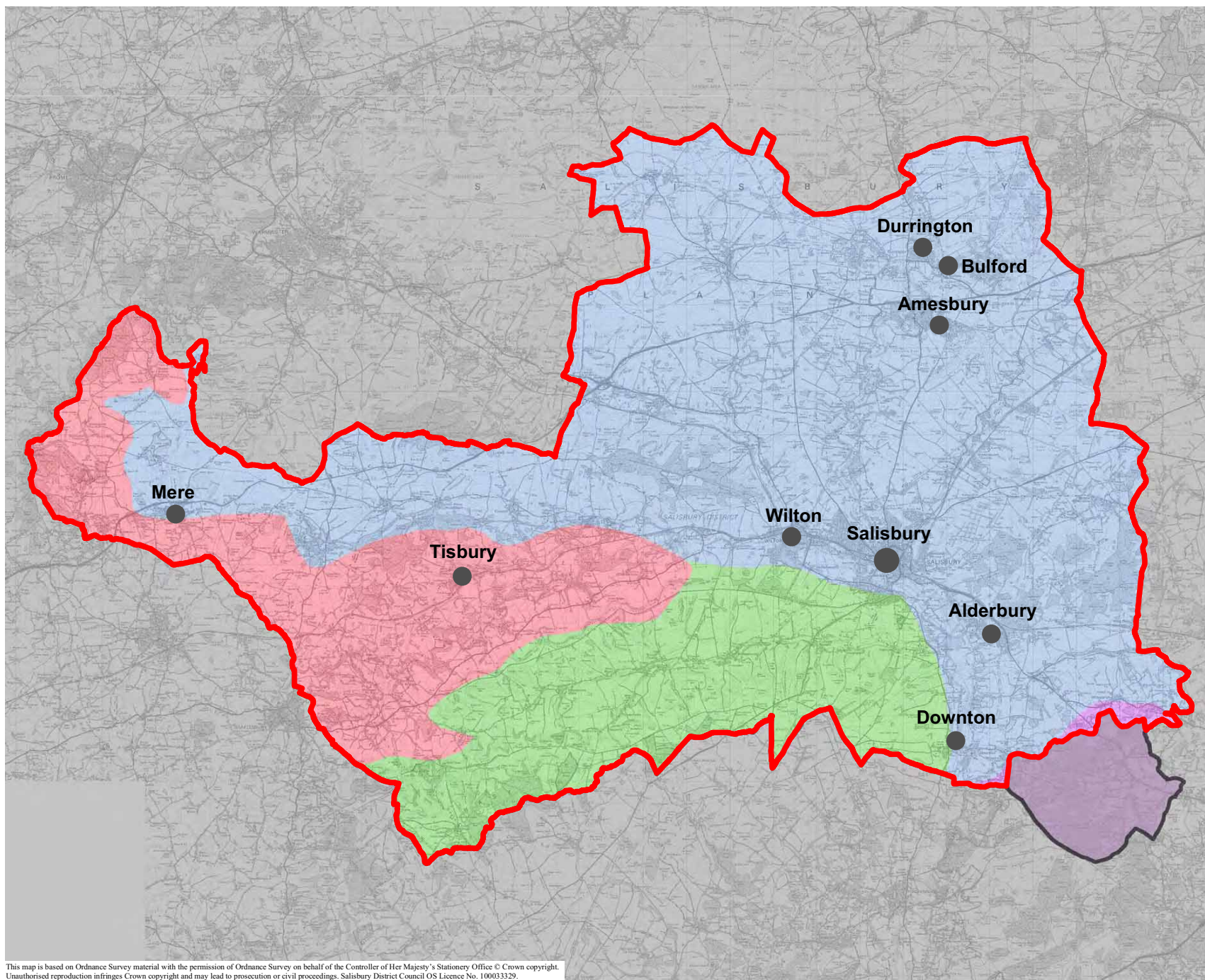
- G1 Kilmington Terrace Greensand Terrace
- G2 Fovant Greensand Terrace

H Greensand Hills

- H1 Longleat to Stourhead Greensand Hills
- H2 Donhead, Fovant and Fonthill Greensand Hills

I Rolling Clay Vale

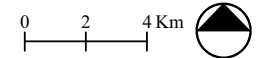
- I1 Vale of Wardour Rolling Clay Vale



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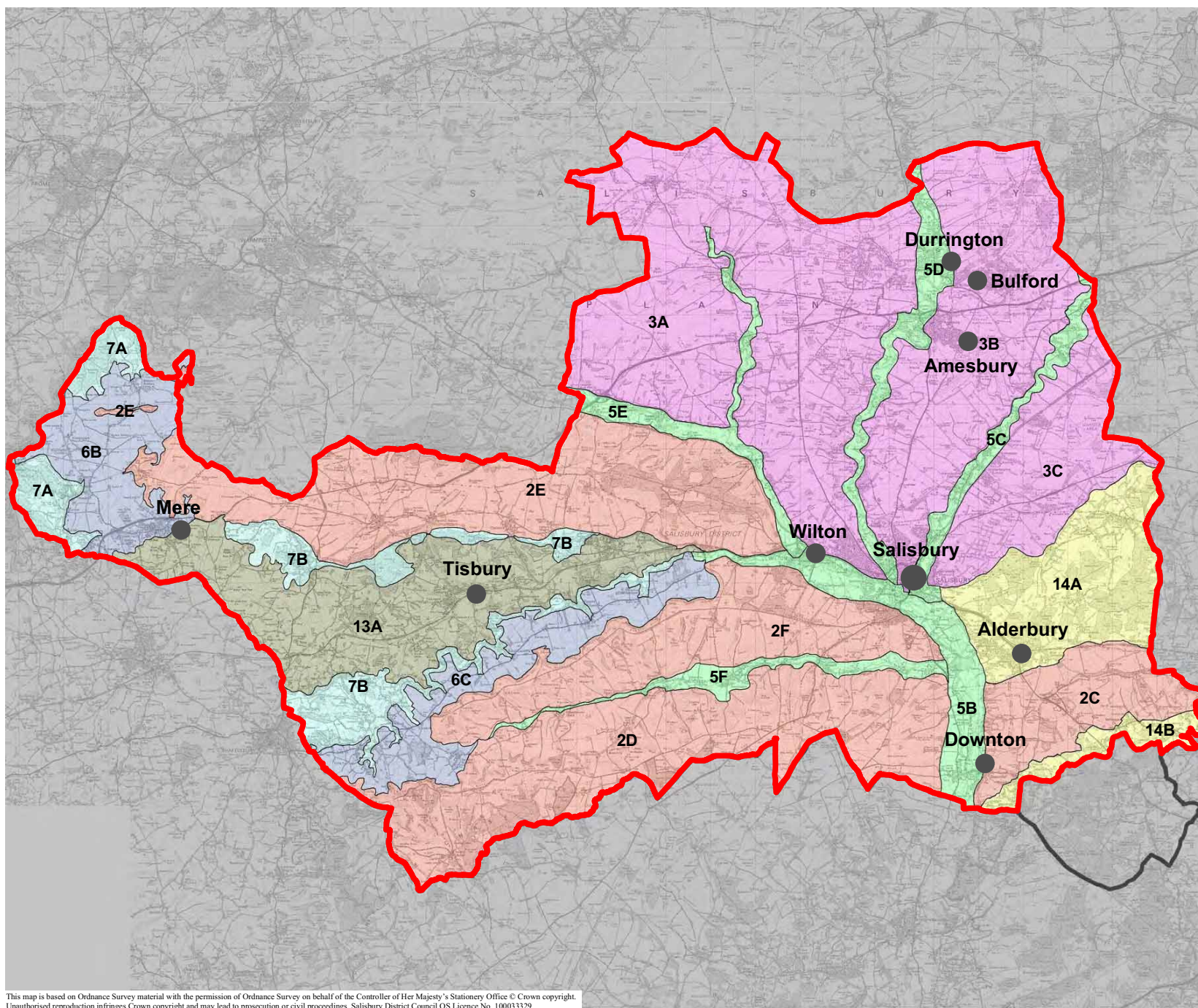
- 131 New Forest
- 132 Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs
- 133 Blackmoor Vale and the Vale of Wardour
- 134 Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase
- Study Area Boundary
- New Forest National Park within Salisbury District

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FIGURE 3.1
JOINT CHARACTER AREAS
IN THE STUDY AREA



KEY

- 2 Wooded Downland**
 - 2C Witherington Wooded Downland
 - 2D Cranborne Chase Wooded Downland
 - 2E West Wiltshire Downs Wooded Downland
 - 2F Fovant Down Wooded Downland

- 3 High Chalk Plain**
 - 3A Salisbury Plain West
 - 3B Salisbury Plain East
 - 3C Porton Down

- 5 Chalk River Valley**
 - 5B Avon Valley
 - 5C Bourne Valley
 - 5D Upper Avon
 - 5E Wylde Valley
 - 5F River Ebble

- 6 Greensand Terrace**
 - 6B Kilmington Terrace
 - 6C Fovant Terrace

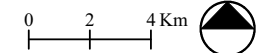
- 7 Wooded Greensand Hills**
 - 7A Longleat - Stourhead Greensand Hills
 - 7B Donhead - Fovant Greensand Hills

- 13 Wooded Clay Vale**
 - 13A The Vale of Wardour

- 14 Forest - Heathland Mosaic**
 - 14A Farley Forest - Heathlands Mosaic
 - 14B Landford Forest - Heathland Mosaic

- Study Area Boundary

- New Forest National Park within Salisbury District



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FIGURE 3.2
COUNTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
TYPES AND AREAS IN THE STUDY AREA

