

**NORTHUMBERLAND
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT**

**PART A
LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION**

**Prepared for Northumberland
County Council
by
Land Use Consultants**

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I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1. This report comprises Part A of the Landscape Character Assessment of the County of Northumberland, prepared by Land Use Consultants (LUC) on behalf of Northumberland County Council. It presents a consolidated landscape character assessment for the whole County, building on previous work undertaken in the area.
- I.2. Landscape character comprises the distinct set of elements that makes a landscape recognisable, and gives it a unique 'sense of place'. Landscape character assessment is the process of mapping, classifying and describing the patterns and variations which contribute to the character of a landscape.

PURPOSE OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- I.3. Following local government reorganisation, the unitary Northumberland County Council was formed in April 2009, from the former Northumberland County Council, and the district and borough councils of Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale, and Wansbeck. The new local authority inherited a range of landscape character assessments from the previous authorities. In July 2009, LUC were appointed to prepare a consolidated landscape character assessment for the County, drawing on the previously issued assessments, and carrying out original research where needed.
- I.4. The consolidated landscape character assessment was commissioned to provide part of the evidence base that will be used by Northumberland County Council to inform the preparation of the new Local Development Framework and associated Development Plan Documents. It is envisaged that the study will assist in the process of development management, and should also be of use in informing a wider range of user groups, including, for example: key landowners and managers; those managing and promoting tourism; and those seeking to site development within the Northumberland landscape.
- I.5. Landscape character assessment sets the context for decisions relating to policy and development, but at the county scale it cannot provide in full the detail required for consideration of specific sites or planning applications. Consideration of the landscape character assessment can inform, but cannot be a substitute for, detailed site-specific analysis.
- I.6. The landscape of Northumberland has evolved through centuries of human interaction with the environment. Ongoing changes driven by social, economic, and natural factors will continue to shape the landscape in the future. Landscape character assessment can only offer a point-in-time picture of the landscape, but sets a baseline against which future change can be managed.
- I.7. Guidance on the management of future change is included in Part B of the landscape character assessment, entitled The Changing Landscape. This is published as a separate document, although the two Parts were developed together. Part B presents principles and guidelines relating to the landscape in general, and specifically

to each landscape type. It is intended that the landscape classification (Part A) is retained as a static baseline, while Part B can be regularly updated to take account of ongoing change.

- I.8. The landscape has been classified into a number of discrete areas, represented by boundaries drawn on a map. However, it is important to note that such boundaries are notional, as character changes more gradually across the landscape. Character area boundaries should therefore be considered to represent zones of transition from one landscape to another.

STUDY AREA

- I.9. The study area for the consolidated landscape character assessment is the whole of Northumberland, excluding the area of Northumberland National Park, the landscape of which, in terms of development and management policy, is within the remit of the Northumberland National Park Authority.
- I.10. Northumberland has a long coastline to the North Sea, incorporating many of the most recognisable views in the County. Seascape has therefore been considered as an integral part of the assessment, and the study area subsequently extends 2km beyond the coastline. The study area is illustrated in Figure 1.
- I.11. Landscape does not stop at administrative boundaries, but continues seamlessly north into Scotland, west into Northumberland National Park and Cumbria, and south into County Durham, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Although these physical areas are excluded, their landscape still has an indirect effect upon that of the study area. This can most clearly be seen around the Cheviot Hills, which form an important backdrop to landscapes within the study area. The consolidated landscape character assessment therefore considers landscapes which extend beyond the study area, and indeed all those which are visible.

REPORT STRUCTURE

- I.12. Section 2 of this report describes the approach to landscape character assessment, summarises the guidance drawn on, and sets out the methodology which was used. Section 3 provides background on the landscape of Northumberland, detailing its geological and geographical origins, its historical development, and an overview of its present condition. Section 4 sets out the landscape classification, describing each of the landscape units identified. A standardised set of landscape characteristics, identified for each unit, is included in a separate Annexe A to this report.
- I.13. Details of the earlier character assessments on which this document is based are included in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 includes a summary of public consultation on the character assessment.

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. This section gives further detail on the nature of landscape character assessment (LCA), and briefly describes the published guidance which has been drawn on for this study. It also identifies relevant previous landscape character studies in Northumberland, and describes the methodology whereby a consolidated LCA was produced.

2.2. The requirements set out in the consultant's brief for the consolidated LCA have guided the development of the approach and methodology. The brief included the requirement to:

“Achieve full Landscape Character Assessment coverage for Northumberland excluding the National Park, drawing primarily on existing data and findings but updating it, as necessary, to reflect current best practice, climate change and land management issues, as well as removing inconsistencies and filling gaps in coverage, (geographical or otherwise) through new field research and character assessment.”

2.3. The following sections therefore set out a brief introduction to LCA, a short review of policy and guidance, a survey of previous character assessments, and a description of the methodology used.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

2.4. *Landscape character* is the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that makes one area of landscape different from another. Variations in geology, soils, landform, land use, vegetation, field boundaries, settlement patterns and building styles all help give rise to different landscapes, each with its own distinctive character and 'sense of place'. These differences are the product of both natural and human influences. Within the study area there is a great diversity of landscapes, from the coastal landscapes of the north-east, to the uplands of the North Pennines, to the rolling farmland of the central areas, and the developed south-east.

2.5. *Landscape character assessment* involves mapping, classifying and describing these variations in landscape character. The resulting classification of the landscape can be used as a basis for making judgements about the character and condition of the landscape, to identify how landscape character can be maintained.

POLICY AND GUIDANCE

European Landscape Convention

2.6. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) was adopted on 20 October 2000 in Florence, and came into force on 1 March 2004. The ELC is aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, and includes a requirement to assess landscapes, and to integrate landscape into regional and town planning policies.

2.7. The ELC is important in that it recognises that *all* landscapes matter, be they outstanding, ordinary, or degraded. It puts emphasis on the whole landscape and all its

values, and is forward-looking in its approach, recognising the dynamic and changing character of landscape.

- 2.8. Guidelines on the implementation of the ELC encourage the use of LCA as a tool to promote understanding of the landscape, and to form the basis for policies and plans which apply to the whole landscape. The guidance also emphasises the ELC requirement to involve the public in consideration of the landscape. Following this guidance, the consolidated LCA covers the whole landscape of the area, including seascapes and urban areas, and involved a stakeholder consultation exercise.

National Planning Policy

- 2.9. Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7), *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* (ODPM, 2004), encouraged a move towards criteria-based planning policies grounded in an understanding of the whole landscape. PPS7 was the driver behind Local Development Frameworks, the successor to Local Plans, and led to the commissioning of new or updated LCAs in several parts of the study area.
- 2.10. The consolidated LCA is also driven by this requirement to achieve a thorough understanding of the landscape, as part of the evidence base for preparation of the Local Development Framework for Northumberland.

Guidance on Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.11. The principal guidance document for LCA is *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*, published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage in 2002. This publication forms the basis for the methodology used for this consolidated LCA.
- 2.12. Guidance on the assessment of seascape character is provided in the *Guide to Best Practice in Seascape Assessment*, published in 2001. 'Seascape' is defined in this document as 'views from land to sea, views from sea to land, views along coastline, and the effect on landscape of the conjunction of sea and land'. For the purposes of local-level seascape assessment, a limit of 2km from the coastline is recommended. Seascape has been considered as an integral part of the coastal landscape.

EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

- 2.13. A number of existing LCA studies have been carried out within the study area, and have informed the consolidated LCA. These are briefly reviewed below.

National and Regional Studies

- 2.14. The *Countryside Character of England* project was initiated by the Countryside Agency in 1994, and aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of what gave the countryside of England its character. The project identified 159 national character areas (NCA) across England, of which eleven occur wholly or partly within the present study area. These broad areas form the highest level of LCA across the study area, and are illustrated in Figure 2.
- 2.15. The *National Landscape Typology* represents a more detailed attempt to classify England's landscapes at a national scale. The typology was undertaken as a GIS-driven, desk-based study, which identified landscape character types (LCT), based on

measurable qualities such as physiography, ground type, land cover, and cultural patterns. Across the study area there are sixteen landscape character types, representing various types of upland, lowland, and valleys. The National Landscape Typology does not attempt to consider the more qualitative aspects of landscape, such as views, noise, distinctiveness, condition, and so on.

- 2.16. The 2003 report *Landscape Appraisal for Onshore Wind Development* included a refined version of the National Landscape Typology, covering the North East Region. Although still largely desk based, this study was more detailed in scope, and therefore forms a more robust baseline than the National Landscape Typology itself.

District-scale Studies

- 2.17. Of the former district councils within Northumberland, all but Wansbeck commissioned LCA studies. The earliest was the 1993 Berwick-upon-Tweed study, which is now quite dated in its approach. In 2006 an LCA was published covering Blyth Valley, and a joint study was published covering Alnwick and Castle Morpeth. In 2007, the Tynedale and Northumberland National Park study was published. Coverage of Existing LCAs is shown on Figure 3.
- 2.18. A review of the relevant LCAs was carried out.¹ This concluded that the Alnwick and Castle Morpeth LCA, and the Tynedale and Northumberland National Park LCA, were the most up to date, and the most relevant to characterisation on a county-wide scale. These two studies between them cover around two thirds of the study area. The Tynedale study will continue to be used by the Northumberland National Park Authority, and consistency with this study was considered important. The hierarchy of assessment used was therefore adopted for the consolidated Northumberland LCA.

HIERARCHY OF CLASSIFICATION

- 2.19. For the purposes of this LCA, it was decided to use the hierarchy of landscape classification set out in Diagram 2.1, drawing on that used for the Tynedale and Northumberland National Park LCA.

National character areas

- 2.20. National character areas (NCA) are those defined by the Countryside Character of England study. They are broad in scope and do not always relate in detail to features on the ground. They are, however, well-established and describe generally recognisable geographic areas.

Refined national character areas

- 2.21. As part of the present study, the NCAs have been refined based on more detailed assessment, and form the framework in which the county-level landscape classification sits. The refined NCAs form the link by which the county-scale consolidated LCA can be related to the national-scale Countryside Character study. The refined NCAs take the form of groups of landscape character types, with a unique set of types within each refined NCA.

¹ Land Use Consultants (2009) *Review of Existing Landscape Character Assessments*. Unpublished report to Northumberland County Council

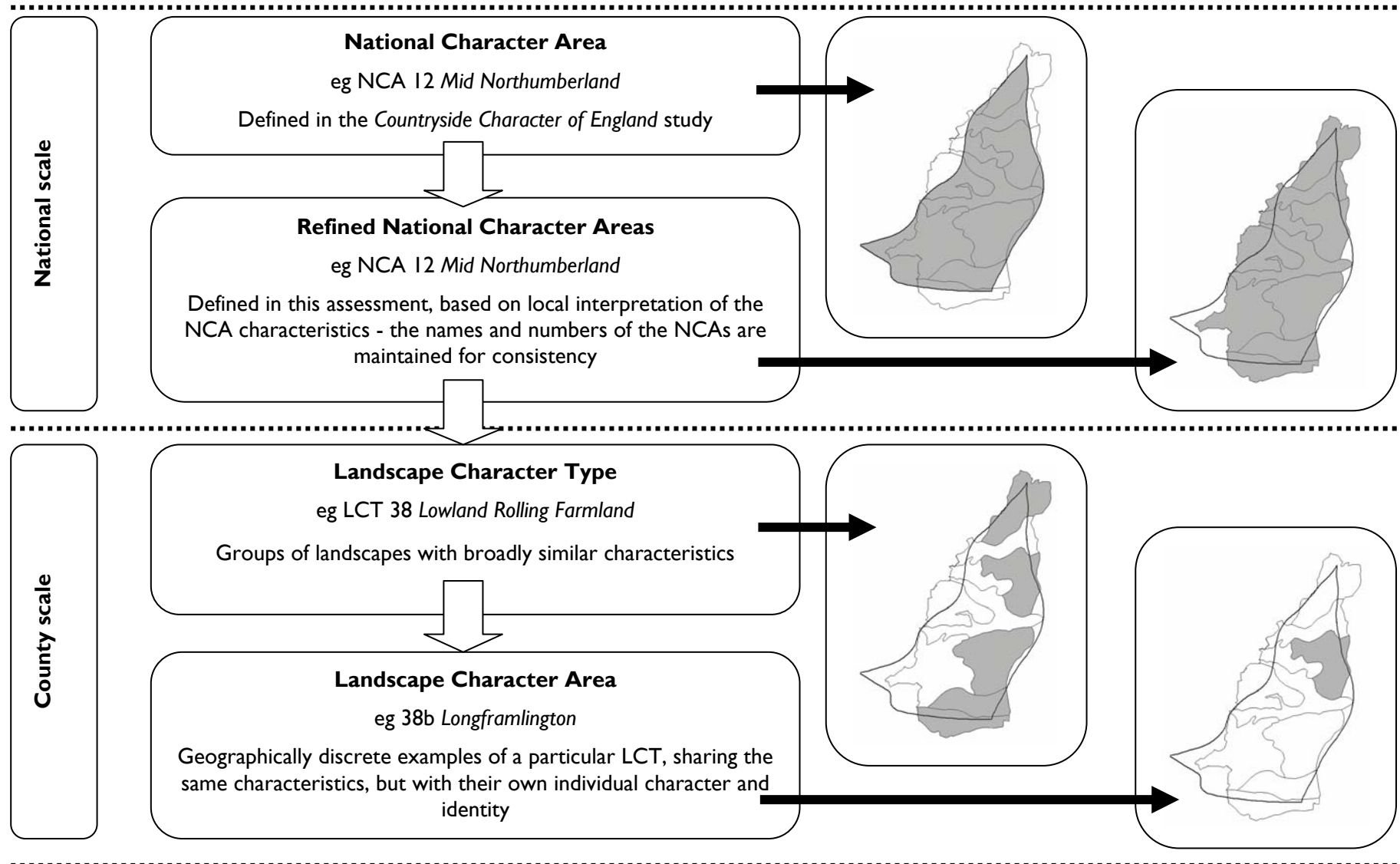
Landscape character types

- 2.22. Landscape character types (LCT) are groups of landscapes with broadly similar combinations of geology, landform, vegetation, land use, and settlement patterns. Landscapes belonging to a particular LCT may or may not be contiguous.

Landscape character areas

- 2.23. Landscape character areas are geographically discrete examples of a particular LCT. Landscape character areas share the same elements as the landscape character type, but also have their own individual character and identity.

Diagram 2.1 Hierarchy for the consolidated landscape classification



Data Gathering

- 2.24. As a consolidation exercise, the LCA draws on relevant previous assessments, as detailed above. A number of LCTs and character areas have been adopted or adapted from those studies, principally the Tynedale and Alnwick and Castle Morpeth LCAs. These 'pre-defined' areas have been combined with LCTs and areas which were the result of new analysis. Appendix I sets out the origin of each of the LCTs and character areas within this assessment.
- 2.25. The focus of new field survey was the former Berwick-upon-Tweed borough, and on the former Wansbeck and Blyth Valley districts. In addition, field survey was carried out in areas where the 'pre-defined' character types overlapped or adjoined.
- 2.26. Public consultation exercises were held between November 2009 and January 2010. This included raising awareness at a series of planning workshops run by the Council, followed by an online consultation exercise. Further details of the consultation exercise and responses gathered are included in Appendix 2.

Landscape Description

- 2.27. Following the data gathering exercises, landscape descriptions were developed for each LCT. These take the form of a written description, focusing on geology and landform, land use and land cover, settlement and human features, perceptual characteristics, and historical and recreational aspects. These were then distilled into a series of 'key characteristics', summing up the fundamental components of each LCT.
- 2.28. A matrix was developed to enable standardised recording of a number of landscape characteristics. These characteristics were chosen to represent the main features of each landscape character area in a way which facilitates direct comparison with other character areas. The characteristics are divided into landscape, visual, cultural, perceptual, and qualitative aspects. It is intended that the matrices will assist, for example, in the consideration of relative sensitivity of different character areas to development. The matrices are included in Annexe A to the LCA.

3. THE EVOLUTION OF THE LANDSCAPE

- 3.1. The landscapes which make up the study area are the result of numerous processes, both natural and man-made, which have been operating over time to produce the present day situation. Several million years ago, the underlying geology began to form, which principally determines landform, but also influences landcover through soil composition. Glaciation has further influenced the landform, which continues to be shaped by erosion and deposition, particularly at the coast, where these processes are especially dynamic.
- 3.2. Since the coming of humans to Britain, man has modified the landscape to suit himself, through cultivation, and later through building, mining, and other development. These activities have left a rich heritage of historic buildings, landscapes, earthworks, and other cultural heritage features across the study area. These range from the castles of Bamburgh and Alnwick, to ridge and furrow cultivation traces, to 20th century industrial heritage.
- 3.3. Landscape is dynamic. It changes on a daily basis, according to the weather, and, in coastal areas, according to the tide. It changes on a seasonal basis, as the annual agricultural cycles of sowing and harvest, and the cycles of deciduous vegetation, take place. It also continues to change in the longer term, through human-influenced changes in management or development, and through ongoing natural processes. These are combined in climate change, now recognised as one of the most important factors affecting the future landscape.
- 3.4. Landscape character assessment can therefore only offer a 'point in time' picture, which can serve as a baseline for managing and monitoring continuing change. Current and potential future trends relating to pressures for landscape change, and the potential effects of climate change, are explored in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment Part B: The Changing Landscape.

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology

- 3.5. The underlying solid geology of Northumberland is comparatively simple. In the north are the igneous rocks which underlie the Cheviot Hills. These are surrounded by sedimentary limestones and sandstones, which extend east to the coast, and south to the Tyne Gap. To the south-east is a band of gritstones, and beyond these the coal measures.
- 3.6. The oldest rocks in the area date from the Silurian period (400 million years ago). These sedimentary rocks outcrop in Coquetdale and Redesdale. The igneous rocks of the Cheviot Hills are the result of volcanic activity in the Devonian period (380 million years ago). This area comprises drifts of lava, known as andesite, while the magma core cooled to form a large granite emplacement. Subsequent weathering has exposed the granite dome, which forms the tops of the Cheviot Hills. The surrounding pink-grey andesite extends into the present study area.

- 3.7. Progressively younger rocks occur towards the south and east, outcropping in broad arcs at increasing distance from the Cheviot Hills. These rocks tilt to the south and east, forming a series of alternating scarp and dip slopes, the more resistant strata tending to form ridges of higher ground called 'cuestas'. The cuestas also arc around the Cheviot Hills, with the scarps facing inwards. Resistant thick strata, particularly the sandstones, form major cuestas, while thinner beds form minor ones, perhaps only a few metres high. Upland Northumberland is classic cuesta country, and many of the long views are from the crests of cuestas. Between are belts of lower ground, varying in width from a few tens of metres to one or more kilometres.
- 3.8. During the Carboniferous period (360–290 million years ago), the area of Northumberland was beneath a shallow tropical sea, and layers of marine sediment deposits were laid down, consisting of the hard parts of marine invertebrates (e.g. corals, crinoids and brachiopods) encased in carbonate mud. These form the strata of sedimentary limestones, sandstones, siltstones and mudstones which underlie the northern and central parts of the study area. Moving south-east from the Cheviot Hills, the main groups of Carboniferous rocks are the Cementstones, the Fell Sandstone, which forms the sandstone hills of northern Northumberland, the Scremerston Coal, the Lower Limestone and Middle Limestone groups, and the Millstone Grit. These are all formed of layers of limestone, shale, sandstone and narrow bands of coal.
- 3.9. At the end of the Carboniferous, further volcanic activity pushed up the land, forming cracks which were infilled with molten material. This cooled to form hard dolerite, which resisted subsequent erosion to create the Great Whin Sill, one of the region's most important landscape features. This runs as a narrow, rolling, east-west ridge north of the Tyne valley, turning north-eastwards in the area west of the North Tyne valley, and continuing more intermittently to the coast at Craster. The dolerite cooled quickly and, like the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland, formed hexagonal columns, which can be seen in exposures such as those at Cawfields Quarry near Haltwhistle. Other dolerite outcrops include the rock on which Bamburgh Castle is built.
- 3.10. South of the Tyne corridor, rocks of Carboniferous age again underlie most of the landscape, but in this area sit more horizontally. The Stublick Fault marks the northern edge of the North Pennines, where resistant Millstone Grit sandstones form wide flat plateaux, broken by deep river dales, whose sides are benched and stepped, as weak and resistant mudstones, sandstones and limestones crop out successively.
- 3.11. In the lowlands of the south-east of the County, the cuesta forms are subdued, or lost under thick glacial drift. The Coal Measures, with their thick, productive coal seams underlie this area, and do not outcrop. Much opencast coal excavation is still ongoing in this area, though all of the deep mines have now been closed. The Lower and Middle Coal Measures lie close to the surface east of a line between Prudhoe and Amble.

Glaciation

- 3.12. Successive ice ages affected the British landscape extensively during the Quaternary period, from around 2.6 million years ago. The most recent glaciation, known as the Devensian, occurred between 73,000 and 10,000 years ago, with the ice sheets reaching their maximum extent around 20,000 years ago. At this time, all of the study area, with the exception of some parts of the Cheviot Hills and North Pennines, was covered by relatively fast-moving 'ice streams', flowing in an easterly or south-easterly direction within the wider ice sheet. Their effects on the landscape can be seen in the Tweed basin, where highly elongated glacial landforms can be identified, and the topography has been 'streamlined'. The ice streams were particularly strong through the Tyne Gap, from which ice escaped eastwards, carving a glacial trough. This erosional deepening subsequently encouraged tributary rivers such as the River Allen to cut down and form deeply incised river courses.
- 3.13. Boulders were detached from their beds and dragged forward by the ice sheet, then deposited some distance away as erratics – the Kielder Stone, a huge sandstone erratic on the Kielderhead Moors, is an example. The ice also scoured and lowered the weaker rocks, notably next to the Whin Sill, where it formed basins that were later infilled by loughs, meres and peat bogs. The bedrock over much of the study area was covered in glacial till, generally thin and sandy on the upland plateaux, but thicker and heavier on lower ground. West-facing slopes, facing the direction of the ice, were often steepened and benched by erosion, while east-facing slopes, in the lee of the ice, received the thickest deposits of till. The resulting asymmetric profile is particularly distinct in the dales of the North Pennines, although it also appears in Coquetdale. Extensive glacial till occurs on the coastal plains, where it is associated with sands, gravels and laminated clays deposited in sub-glacial meltwater channels and lakes.
- 3.14. As the ice retreated, there was extensive deposition by glacial meltwaters. North of Wooler, a delta flowing into a vast meltwater lake formed a wide, level terrace of sand and gravel within the Till valley around Milfield. In the Tyne valley, sands and gravels deposited by the decaying ice formed a moundy topography of kames, eskers and intervening hollows, for example in the floor of the South Tyne valley west of Hexham. The Holocene Epoch (11,000 years ago to the present) followed the final retreat of the ice, and sediments of this period include extensive peat deposits on the uplands, and alluvial deposits in the river valleys, as well as the development of sand dune systems along the coast.

Topography

- 3.15. The landscape of Northumberland can be broadly divided into the upland west, the coastal east, and the transitional landscapes between. There is a general trend from higher ground to lower from west to east, although with great variation. Topography is shown on Figure 4.
- 3.16. The highest point in Northumberland is The Cheviot at 815m. The highest points outside Northumberland National Park are at Grey Nag (656m) in the North Pennines, and Wool Meath (652m) on Kielder Moor. The North Pennines are generally above 300m, while the Kielder Moors are consistently above 200m, although again, both tend to be lower towards the east.

- 3.17. A ridge of outlying sandstone hills, the 'cuesta' described above, curves around from the Kyloe Hills and Doddington Moor in the north, to the edge of the North Tyne valley in the south. These hills present a scarp face to the north and west, with high points ranging from just under 200m in the north, to over 300m in the south. The eastern slopes are gentler, and merge in to the transitional farmland, which shelves down to the coast.
- 3.18. Both the Kielder uplands and the North Pennines are deeply cut by river valleys, which drain into the Tyne river system (see Rivers and Drainage Systems below). Smaller river valleys are more common in the north, and these too are generally incised and enclosed rather than broad and open. The only exception is the Milfield basin of the River Till.
- 3.19. The coastline is low lying, with significant cliffs occurring only in the extreme north of the study area, north of Berwick. However, broad coastal levels are not a feature of this coast, with undulating land extending to the coastal margin, providing visual contrasts and dramatic views.

Soils

- 3.20. Soils within the study area are dominated by glacial till- and drift-derived types, which cover much of the lowland farmed areas, and much of the uplands. The principal farmland areas in the north and centre of the County lie over 'stagnogleys'; seasonally waterlogged fine loamy and clayey soils. Better drained brown earth soils are limited to the Tweed and Tyne valleys, part of the coastal plain around Bamburgh, and the Cheviot fringe. These soils are associated with the only areas of Grade 2 agricultural land (very good quality) in Northumberland, with the majority of the remaining lowland being classed as Grade 3 (good to moderate quality).
- 3.21. In intermediate areas such as Ingoe Moor and the fringes of the North Pennines, soils are more clayey and prone to waterlogging. These become more peaty and acidic in upland fringes ('stagnohumic gleys'), culminating in large areas of blanket peat across the Kielder moors and North Pennines. On the sandstone hills, peaty, iron-rich acid podzols cover the highest ground. In places these light coloured soils lie under a dark peaty layer, and become visible when exposed by erosion, for example along footpaths. Again, soil types are reflected in the agricultural land classification, with almost all the North Pennines, the Kielder moors, and the sandstone hills being classed as Grade 4 (poor) or Grade 5 (very poor). The blanket peat around Kielder is classed as non-agricultural land.
- 3.22. Other notable soil features include pockets of acidic brown podzols associated with Whin Sill outcrops, for example at Craster, and areas of unconsolidated sandy deposits associated with the sand dunes around Holy Island. In the south-east of the County, extensive mineral extraction and restoration appears as large areas of disturbed soils.

Rivers and Drainage Systems

- 3.23. The principal rivers within the study area are the Aln, Coquet, Wansbeck, Blyth, Tyne and Wear, each of which drains eastward to the North Sea. In the northern part of the study area drainage is to the north, via the River Till, into the River

Tweed. By far the largest river is the Tyne, with a catchment of 2,145 km², draining both the Cheviot Hills and the North Pennines via its tributaries, the North Tyne, South Tyne, Rede, and Derwent. By contrast the River Coquet has a catchment of only 240 km², with no major tributaries.

- 3.24. There are few large areas of open water within the study area, the most significant being the man-made Kielder, Catcleuch and Derwent Reservoirs. Smaller reservoirs and natural loughs are scattered across more upland parts of the study area. Flooded mineral workings and industrial lagoons are located in the south-east of the study area. Some of these have developed important ecological value, such as the Hauxley Nature Reserve near Amble.
- 3.25. Northumberland is mostly within the Northumbria River Basin District (RBD), as defined by the Environment Agency, with the exception of the River Till catchment, which is within the Solway Tweed RBD. The Northumbria RBD extends from the Scottish border to Middlesbrough. According to the River Basin Management Plan, in 2009 43% of water bodies within the Northumbria RBD had good or better ecological status, and 37% of water bodies had good or better biological status.

Coastline

- 3.26. Seascapes are an important aspect of the Northumberland landscape, featuring in many of the most significant views within the study area. Northumberland has a long, generally low-lying coastline to the North Sea. The coastline comprises a series of rocky headlands alternating with sandy bays, which are the result of underlying geology. As the Carboniferous sedimentary strata, and the Whin Sill, sequentially intersect the coast in their broad arcs around the Cheviot Hills, they make a sequence of cliffed headlands, bays and reefs. Thick sandstones form most of the headlands, although those at Cullernose Point and Castle Point are formed by the Whin Sill. Thinner sandstones and limestones form reefs running out to sea or parallel with the shore. Weaker rocks have been eroded to form bays. Glacial drift backs the longer bays such as Druridge and Beadnell.
- 3.27. There are several offshore islands along the Northumberland Coast. The sandy Holy Island was an important medieval religious and monastic centre, and is now a key tourist attraction, connected to the mainland by a tidal causeway. The smaller, rocky Farne Islands, also with historical associations, are a major seabird and seal sanctuary. Other important habitats along the coast include the saltmarsh found at the Aln estuary, and the extensive dune systems backing Druridge Bay and other beaches.

HUMAN INFLUENCES

- 3.28. The relationships between the human communities and landscapes of Northumberland are as complex as the environments are varied. From the rugged uplands of the Cheviot to the sweeping dune systems of the coast, the effects of human activities are legible throughout the landscape in the pattern of fields, woodland and settlements as well as buildings, as upstanding archaeological sites, cropmarks and relict patterns of vegetation.

- 3.29. Rather than providing a static backdrop for the passage of human history, the landscapes of Northumberland have played an active role in shaping patterns of settlement, economic, political and ritual activity.

Early Prehistoric

- 3.30. Towards the end of the Devensian glaciation, the North East of England was ice-free by around 15,000 BP. Torrents of meltwater, massive deposits of outwash sands and gravels and great depths of till reconstructed the ice-scoured landscape, creating a blank canvas for the gradual recolonisation of flora, fauna and hunter-gatherer communities.
- 3.31. There is little palynological evidence (pollen and spore analysis) of clear human impact on the area's vegetation cover during early prehistory. However, it is likely that Mesolithic hunter-gatherers engaged in limited clearance of vegetation. The presence of heather pollen in the earliest strata in peat cores from Bloody Moss, Otterburn, may imply some limited felling of forest during this period (Moore and Passmore 1999, 21). Similarly, persistent charcoal deposits in early peat strata suggest that Mesolithic communities burned areas of forest to create clearings, encouraging new growth to attract prey species.
- 3.32. During the final stages of deglaciation, between around 10,000 and 6,000 BP, sea level was perhaps around 4.5m below current levels, exposing a significantly larger coastal plain than exists today. Submerged peat deposits around the Tyne estuary hint at the extent of this area which, until at least 5,800BC, was connected to the vast land bridge (known as 'Doggerland') that spanned what is now the southern North Sea. To the north of Holy Island, isostatic rebound has had a more significant effect on coastal landscapes, preserving mid-Holocene beach deposits well above current sea levels. On Holy Island itself, raised beach deposits around Lindisfarne Castle have yielded later Mesolithic material.
- 3.33. The recent discovery and excavation of a significant Mesolithic settlement at Howick, on the coast just to the south of Craster, offers an important insight into the ways of life of communities from this period. While it is generally assumed that 'camp' sites were occupied on a temporary, probably seasonal, basis this site reveals year-round occupation. Large midden sites, such as Low Hauxley, confirm long-term occupation and exploitation of coastal resources. It is therefore possible that such communities had a more significant impact on the landscape than previously surmised.
- 3.34. Research focussing on the Milfield Basin, on the eastern fringe of the Cheviot Hills, reveals a high density of later Mesolithic activity and the establishment of long-distance communication routes supplying flint and stone for tools from the Lake District and Yorkshire, via the Pennines. The fringes of the upland areas also appear to have been exploited by Mesolithic communities with evidence of occupation from rock shelter sites such as Goat Crag, Dove Crag and Corby's Crag.
- 3.35. Although Mesolithic occupation was small-scale and relatively low intensity, it established patterns of settlement, communication and resource exploitation that would persist for many thousands of years. It also began the slow process of reshaping the natural vegetation pattern to facilitate hunting and, by around 4000BC, small-scale agriculture. There is evidence of an overlap in Mesolithic and Neolithic

‘cultures’ (specifically where Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowheads are found in association with Mesolithic flint scatters), potentially suggesting that either the use of the technology overlapped (or was exchanged), or that the same areas of landscape were being used by both hunter-gatherer and early farming communities.

- 3.36. Early Neolithic pollen evidence indicates patterns of forest clearance for cereal-based agriculture in lowland areas and valley bottoms. Clearance in upland areas results in an increase in heathland species, particularly heather. This period represents the earliest attempts by human communities to ‘domesticate’ the landscape, reshaping the natural order to facilitate new and radically different ways of life. The fundamental economic changes during the Neolithic were accompanied by apparently profound changes in social and religious life, expressed in the development of monumental ritual and funerary sites.
- 3.37. While the settlement record for the Neolithic is ephemeral and poorly understood, the ritual and funerary monuments of the period are some of the most evocative aspects of Northumberland’s historic environment. Communal funerary architecture established a physical and temporal link between the people of a community, both living and dead, and specific places. Such monuments represent a major transition in patterns of thought and behaviour from those of hunter-gatherer communities, with people seeking to establish permanent structures in the landscape – literally altering the earth. Further evidence of this behaviour is manifested in the few Neolithic henge monuments located in the Milfield Basin – an important hub of prehistoric activity. The relationship between monuments in the landscape is particularly important, as it is argued that they often define ancient routes or ‘gateways’ to particularly significant areas. As in earlier periods, major natural features – such as rivers and mountains – are likely to have had considerable symbolic significance. Stone circles at Hethpool and Threestone Burn, on either side of the College valley, have been argued as ‘gatekeepers,’ ritualising access to the Cheviot Hills (Topping 1997). The Cheviot Hills themselves are home to a unique type of monument, the tri-radial cairn. Of likely late Neolithic-early Bronze Age date, this relatively recently recognised monument type suggests a specific association between the area and specific symbolic activity, which is not yet well understood.
- 3.38. Northumberland is nationally significant for its dense, and well understood, distribution of Neolithic and Bronze Age rock art. Although generically referred to as ‘cup-and-ring marks,’ these often large and complex pieces of symbolic imagery have an intimate relationship with their landscape context. Their use and function appears to evolve over at least two millennia, beginning with carvings in natural rock outcrops and progressing into incorporation of the symbols in the full spectrum of Neolithic ceremonial monuments: from long cairns and stone circles to standing stones and henges. By the Early Bronze Age they are specifically associated with funerary monuments, suggesting an evolution in their meaning and potential function.

Bronze and Iron Ages

- 3.39. As communities expanded, and demands on agriculture and pastoralism increased, further woodland clearance was necessary. During the early and middle Bronze Age, the climate was significantly warmer than at present, enabling cultivation at higher altitudes than currently possible. Field systems and ‘cairnfields’ of this date are an

important feature of the upland landscape and are often associated with the remains of contemporary settlements ('hut-circles'). In some areas, cultivation terraces were established to allow steeper slopes to be exploited for agriculture.

- 3.40. Early Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments maintain a strong link to the landscape. Reuse of earlier monuments, and the construction of new cairns in close association with earlier rock art sites, reinforces the significance of places in the landscape. Similarly, deposition of cremations at the foot of rock outcrops in upland areas, such as at Goat's Crag and Corby's Crag, suggest a strong link to natural places.
- 3.41. Environmental records indicate that the climate deteriorated rapidly between around 1395 and 1155BC, necessitating the abandonment of upland farming landscapes. Cooler temperatures also contributed to accelerated peat formation, gradually inundating and preserving upland sites and changing the face of the landscape.
- 3.42. Although the pattern of settlement and agriculture is relatively well understood in upland areas, because of the preferential conditions for preservation, the picture in lowland areas is less clear because of the effects of intensive agriculture.
- 3.43. Material culture and funerary traditions that develop through the Bronze Age illustrate an increasing focus on the individual, in sharp contrast to the communal monuments of earlier periods. Similarly, their association with the landscape appears to lessen, perhaps as the distinction between the 'domestic' and 'wild' dissolves in the face of increasingly extensive settled and farmed landscapes.
- 3.44. The development of increasingly effective tools, particularly with the availability of iron in the second quarter of the 1st millennium BC, dramatically improves the ability of communities to clear large areas of woodland quickly and relatively easily. Environmental evidence suggests that a pattern of intensive clearance began during the later Iron Age, fanning out from a core zone on the Teesside/Yorkshire boundary and only reaching its peak in the early historic period – suggesting that there were still significant stands of woodland throughout the Iron Age.
- 3.45. Again, the upland record is the most revealing, with extensive field-systems of 'cord-rig' preserved around settlements, and some of Northumberland's more impressive monuments – its suite of hill forts. These are concentrated within the Cheviot Hills, but other sites – such as those on Doddington Moor and Bewick Hill – give an impression of their significance in the wider landscape. With the exception of Yeavering Bell, the largest and most complex of Northumberland's hill forts, the majority appear to draw on the same broad tradition of design and construction (Ainsworth *et al* 2002; Oswald *et al* 2000; Oswald and McOmish 2002). In some areas, such as the Breamish and College valleys (with 10 forts each), they are very densely distributed. This appears to be a feature of the Border country, as the pattern is echoed on the north side of the Cheviot Hills in Scotland. Similarly, Yeavering Bell is more likely to belong to the southern Scottish tradition of massive defended sites, and could perhaps suggest an earlier date (c. 1000BC) for the primary fortifications hitherto supposed.

- 3.46. Lowland settlements and field-systems are characterised by complex sequences of open and enclosed roundhouse settlements, often with attendant field-systems. A range of pit-alignments associated with settlements may imply a sophisticated system of land division. The landscapes of this area are therefore likely to have had a strongly agricultural character, albeit with relatively dispersed settlement. The picture is complicated by large-scale losses incurred through intensive agriculture and later industrial activity (particularly coal and other mineral extraction) and the differing suitability of soils for displaying cropmarks.
- 3.47. The later Bronze and Iron Ages are notable for a lack of monumental ritual sites, with a focus on activity rather than place. The main form of archaeologically visible behaviour in the landscape is the deliberate deposition of metalwork and other high-status objects, often in watery contexts. However, many of these significant locations have subsequently been altered or destroyed in the course of land drainage works (which often turned up the finds of metalwork).

Roman

- 3.48. The advent of Roman control in the North-East of England had a profound effect on the local Iron Age communities and, consequently, on the archaeological record of the area. It introduced an entirely alien suite of sites and infrastructure to the landscape and also occurs in the context of the first written histories in Britain.
- 3.49. The 2nd century frontier system formed by Hadrian's Wall and its associated infrastructure is the most obvious Roman contribution to the development of Northumberland's landscapes. Along with the associated military way and *vallum* – a double bank and ditch fortification to the south of the Wall – the frontier cut a swath across England more than kilometre wide (from the outer mound to the 'Stanegate' military road) for a distance of 117km. The sequence of 'milecastles,' watchtowers and signal stations was designed to afford total surveillance of the frontier and facilitate a rapid response to any emergent threats from the large forts on the Stanegate (the pre-Hadrianic frontier).
- 3.50. The Wall itself makes extensive use of topography and landform to enhance its defensive effect. Running for some of its length along the northern edge of the Whin Sill, an elevated intrusion of dolerite, the functional relationship between the frontier and topography is clear. Similarly, it is configured to control major river crossings and likely north-south communication routes.
- 3.51. Aerial photography has revealed an amazing quantity of surviving networks of fields, cord-rig and native settlements dating to the period of occupation. These can often be closely dated, as some Roman installations overlie earlier field systems, while other respect the boundaries established by Roman works.
- 3.52. In addition to the frontier works, a number of roads link the installations, including: the Stanegate, originally built in the AD70s; the Devil's Causeway, running north-east from the Wall to Berwick; and, Dere Street, the main road between York and the Roman installations in southern Scotland. Interestingly, Dere Street follows a difficult route through Redesdale, via High Rochester, up into the Cheviot Hills and into Scotland, rather than taking a route through the flatter coastal plain. These roads often form the basis of modern routes, and this is particularly noticeable where they

follow unerringly – sometimes illogically – straight paths across country. In other places, routes are preserved in the pattern of field boundaries.

- 3.53. The presence of the Roman military, although resource-hungry, does not seem to have resulted in an archaeologically visible intensification in agriculture. However, the settlement record is irreversibly altered by the Roman presence. Civilian settlements – known as *vici* – developed around the larger forts. Although the large-scale civil urban landscapes like those of southern Britain never developed, small towns like Corbridge paved the way for the development of urbanism in the North East. The villa landscapes that characterise the Roman landscape of Britain south of the Tees are absent from the North East. Contemporary native settlement is widespread, and several have been excavated prior to development. Sites such as Pegswood, to the east of Morpeth, demonstrate continuity of use from the Iron Age into the Roman period, where there is a significant phase of re-planning (Proctor 2002). Romano-British settlements in close proximity to Hadrian's Wall, particularly in North Tynedale and Redesdale, tend to be rectilinear in form, whereas those to the north of the frontier tend to be more irregular and are harder to distinguish from the pre-Roman Iron Age settlement record.

Medieval

- 3.54. Roman rule in Britain was effectively over by the start of the 5th century AD, as troop numbers were too few to effectively repel the constant attacks from 'barbarian' tribes. With no help forthcoming from the western Empire, Roman military commanders were forced to look to their own defences. Incursions and settlement from Germanic tribes during the early 5th century paved the way for the establishment of a number of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms on the East Coast, displacing and assimilating the native Brythonic-speaking peoples. During the following century, the kingdom of Bernicia developed, with its power centre at Bamburgh.
- 3.55. Environmental evidence suggests that, in some areas, while open heathlands remained stable, there was a decline in arable agriculture accompanied by some woodland regeneration following the end of the Roman period (Dumayne and Barber 1994). Direct evidence for early medieval settlement, other than at major power centres, is extremely variable. Evidence for occupation in this period has been noted near Shotton, and in a number of locations in the Milfield Basin. At the foot of Yeavinger Bell, the development of a 'palace' complex of characteristically Anglian timber halls and ancillary structures indicates the progress of the conquering elites into the hinterland (Hope-Taylor 1977). Sites in the vicinity of Milfield and Yeavinger were recorded in the Venerable Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* as 'Maelmin' and 'Ad Gefrin' respectively.
- 3.56. The sub-Roman and early medieval landscapes of Northumberland are likely to have displayed considerable continuity to those of the preceding Romano-British period. While the typical house structure may have evolved, it is likely that the general pattern of dispersed farmsteads and small villages persisted relatively unchanged.
- 3.57. At the beginning of the 7th century, the Anglian kingdom of Deira (approximating to modern Yorkshire) was subsumed by Bernicia to create the kingdom of Northumbria. At its height in the late 7th century, this powerful entity stretched from

the Humber to Edinburgh, taking in much of western Yorkshire, Cumberland and Westmorland.

- 3.58. As an island nation, the sea has always been the main conduit for forces of change in Britain, and Northumberland is no exception. Just as the Romans, Angles and Saxons arrived by sea, other less tangible influences made a maritime arrival in Northumberland. Although Christianity had had some impact in the late Roman period, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms from the 7th century onwards was driven by sea-borne monasticism. St Aidan, dispatched from Iona at the request of King Oswald² in AD635, established the monastery of Lindisfarne as a base for evangelising in the north of England. The development of church architecture from this period onwards started a tradition of building which makes a unique contribution to landscape character. Pre-Norman fabric has been recognised in churches at Corbridge, Ovingham, Warden and Whittingham, and Hexham Abbey has an impressively-preserved Anglo-Saxon crypt – reputedly built by St. Wilfred, Bishop of York, in AD674-8.
- 3.59. The late 7th and 8th century landscapes of Northumberland may have hinted at the beginnings of small towns and villages concentrated around monastic sites. The Roman road network is likely to have remained the principal means of inland communications. Intensification of dairy production around monastic centres, attested to by large numbers of calf bones recovered from Green Shiel, Holy Island, may have had an effect on the landscape as more lowland pasture was required. In addition to dairy products themselves, a ready supply of calf hides was required for the production of vellum – necessary for the creation of illuminated manuscripts such as the Lindisfarne gospels.
- 3.60. Despite Northumbrian domination of the neighbouring Anglian kingdoms, the area was far from immune from the depredations of the next wave of invaders crossing the North Sea. The first recorded Viking raid in Northumberland was on Lindisfarne in AD793, with devastating results. Continued incursions in the early 9th century, accompanied by settlement activity on the coast, culminated in the establishment of a Viking kingdom at York by the middle of the century. Despite the increasingly Scandinavian character of the sculpture and material culture to the south, Northumberland remained distinctively Anglian until the Norman Conquest and is lacking the dense distributions of Scandinavian place-names prevalent in Teesside.
- 3.61. The imposition of Norman rule in Northumberland was far from straightforward and there were repeated uprisings through the mid-late 11th century. ‘Plantation’ of Norman nobles was intended to secure the region’s loyalty to the King, by force if necessary, and to implement a feudal system of land holding and taxation. The construction of motte-and-bailey castles marks this early period of consolidation. It also begins a major reshaping of the political, social and physical landscapes of Northumberland. Fortifications were also necessary to protect the frontier of the kingdom from increasingly common Scottish incursions into Northumberland. A chain of earthwork castles were constructed during the early 12th century, including Norham, Wark-on-Tweed, Alnwick, Mitford, Bamburgh and Warkworth.

² Oswald was already a Christian, having been exiled to live in the Scottish kingdom of Dal Riata in AD616. This also accounted for his adoption of Irish/Scottish Christianity rather than the Roman form of the religion.

- 3.62. Punitive raids and formal conflict in the aftermath of the Norman invasion are likely to have destroyed many pre-existing Anglo-Saxon villages, meaning that new foundations were required. Although the original buildings were likely to have been timber-built, they often followed the now-characteristic form of medieval villages – two rows of houses on either side of a road, with plots of land associated with each house running perpendicular to the road. This form is still clearly visible in the plans of towns such as Alnwick, Hexham and Berwick and in smaller villages such as Norham, on the Tweed, and Whalton, near Morpeth, where the associated cultivation strips and ridges are well preserved by later enclosure. Deserted medieval villages are also preserved in both lowland and upland settings, such as Shilvington, just to the east of Whalton, and in the grounds of Belsay Tower; and at Branshaw in the uplands of the National Park. Many upland examples beyond current limits of cultivation owe their preservation to climatic deterioration during the 14th century, which forced their abandonment.
- 3.63. The open field systems surrounding settlements were divided into strips – or rigs – which were shared between villagers. These ridge and furrow field systems, with their distinctive curving corrugations, would have covered much of the lowlands, valley bottoms and more fertile upland areas. They tend to survive in more marginal areas, where they have escaped the effects of intensive arable agriculture and are an important aspect of historic landscape character, particularly in upland areas. Other upland sites of this period include shielings – temporary structures inhabited during the summer months while grazing livestock on higher pastures – which occur throughout the Cheviot Hills. The pattern of transhumance and intensive summer grazing which, to some extent, is maintained to this day is partly responsible for the creation and persistence of open grassland and heath in the uplands.
- 3.64. The high-status settlement record is more complex. In addition to the earthwork castles, a series of moated manor houses are distributed throughout the area, with notable examples at Ogle and Belsay Park. Increasing instability and conflict with Scotland, both formal and related to small-scale raiding and feuds, forced the creation of more obviously defensive architecture in the north of the County. The increased militarisation of the landscapes of this period are readily apparent, as earthwork castles were enlarged and refortified in stone, creating impressive fortresses like Warkworth, Alnwick and Bamburgh that have come to embody Northumberland's past. Berwick-upon-Tweed is an ideal case in point: between 1147 and 1482 it changed hands between Scotland and England more than 13 times. A number of Royal hunting forests were created in the uplands, such as at Rothbury, Knarsdale, Cheviot, Kidland and Chatton. Smaller private deer parks were established at sites like Hulne Park, Alnwick and Warkworth. For the first time, large parts of the landscape were given over to the leisure pursuits of the elite, excluding local people from what had often previously been common land.
- 3.65. Re-foundation and expansion of the monastic houses, notably Blanchland, Hexham, Lindisfarne and Newminster, was accompanied by the development of large land-holdings in the Cheviot Hills. The monasteries were important drivers of the medieval wool industry, both as major producers (through tenant farmers) and as significant consumers of finished products. In some areas this industry was so important that whole villages were cleared to make way for sheep runs. Conversely,

other settlements such as Alnwick, Morpeth, Hexham and Berwick grew rapidly, boosted by trade from markets and fairs.

- 3.66. The industries of Northumberland also benefitted from religious patronage, and began a long history of mineral extraction. Newminster Abbey was granted rights to extract sea coal from the shore at Blyth, and the industry developed rapidly through the 14th and 15th centuries. Lead was mined, probably near Hexham, and exported from Newcastle (this industry was particularly significant during the 16th and 17th centuries). Similarly, the monastic houses themselves were major consumers of lead, largely for roofing

Post-Medieval

- 3.67. The defeat of James IV of Scotland in Northumberland at the Battle of Flodden in 1513 marked the beginning of gradually improving relations between the ‘old enemies.’ However, the early 16th century marked the beginning of a new period of smaller scale, but often more destructive, violence. The landowning families of North Tynedale, Redesdale and Liddesdale (in Scotland) were particularly belligerent, raiding each other’s lands, stealing cattle (reiving), and indulging in kidnap and blackmail. Although these practices had been relatively common from at least the 12th or 13th centuries, the relative weakness of both Crowns’ control over the border lands during this period contributed to a ‘golden age’ for the ‘Border Reivers’ or ‘Mosstroopers.’ Patterns of raiding had little to do with nationality and, in times of war, borderers were prone to changing sides in mid-battle depending on the likely outcome, or merely pretending to fight each other. This instability produced its own characteristic architecture. Bastle houses – often little more than a fortified barn with a dwelling on the second floor – and larger, more formidable, tower houses are distributed throughout the ‘debatable lands’ of the border country. More than 300 bastle houses are known from Northumberland alone, giving a stark impression of the danger faced by local people during this period.
- 3.68. By the death of Elizabeth I, so intense was the raiding that the English government reputedly considered rebuilding Hadrian’s Wall. This way of life, with its own – albeit unwritten and somewhat dubious – laws and customs persisted until the Union of the Crowns in 1603 when James I made a concerted effort to curb their activities.
- 3.69. The Civil War and the two 18th century Jacobite uprisings, while representing significant disruption, did not have the systemically detrimental effects of previous centuries of daily, intensely personal, turmoil. This relative peace allowed major landowners to develop their homes and estates into more luxurious and fashionable residences, opening up formerly defensive buildings or demolishing them to build large country houses with ornamental parks and gardens. Attendant improvements in agricultural practices during this period represented a fundamental reshaping of the landscape. Piecemeal enclosure had occurred from the late 16th century – with records of evictions of tenants at Hartley and Seaton Delaval related to conversion of arable land to pasture. However, the process accelerated rapidly during the late 17th and 18th centuries, wiping away the old open field systems of tenure and cultivation in a short space of time. Large areas of land were enclosed in rectilinear fields, and improved patterns of crop rotation, higher quality breeds of livestock and crops were adopted, dramatically improving yields. Vast tracts of upland common were enclosed

by Act of Parliament for large-scale sheep farming, with limited displacement of small tenant farmers. However, as noted above not all open field systems disappeared entirely – often the boundaries of land parcels were preserved in hedgerows and fence lines, fossilising the medieval landscape. Large-scale conversion to a pastoral economy has also preserved the cultivation ridges themselves, as the destructive ploughing regimes necessary for improved arable agriculture were never implemented in these areas.

- 3.70. The post-medieval period, and especially the 19th century, also witnessed the development and growth of industry, and the North East is especially linked with coal mining. Pits were sunk across the County from Ford in the north to Wylam in the south, the main concentration growing in the south-east. More than 300 coal mining sites and over 70 lead mining sites are known in the County. Other industries flourished for short periods, such as the iron works at Ridsdale and Bellingham. Moving large quantities of industrial materials, particularly coal, drove innovation in transport. From the early wooden waggonways built to move coal from mines to the navigable rivers, the first railway network developed. While elsewhere in the North East, towns and cities took on a distinctly industrial character, Northumberland remained largely rural.
- 3.71. Although the sea had long been economically important, it gained increasing significance through the 19th century. The construction of larger, deeper harbours allowed the use of larger ships to service the rapidly growing herring fisheries. In addition to the growth of the ports, onshore processing facilities were also required, such as the salt works at Amble and smokehouses on Holy Island and at Seahouses and Craster. The largest harbour in Northumberland was, and is, Blyth which was dredged out in 1858. By 1900 over 3 million tons of coal passed through the harbour on its way from the coalfields of the County to all corners of the growing British Empire.

Twentieth Century

- 3.72. In 1914 there were 130 collieries in Northumberland and the industry peaked during the First World War, fuelling wartime industry. However, the end of the war marked the decline of lucrative export markets and the beginnings of the decline of the deep coal industry in the North East. The construction and expansion of mining towns and villages such as Lynemouth, Linton, Pegswood and Hirst had an important influence on the character of the area, with the typical ‘rows’ of colliers houses lending a more regimented appearance to contemporary developments.
- 3.73. Amble, and most notably, Blyth continued to grow in stature as coal exporting ports with ever more complex networks of mineral railways connecting the collieries with the port. Blyth was also an important centre of shipbuilding, constructing many iconic ships for the Royal Navy – including HMS *Ark Royal*, the first British aircraft carrier, in 1914. During both world wars, it was an important submarine base.
- 3.74. In a century marked by conflict, the landscapes of Northumberland bear significant traces of military and defensive installations. With a generally low-lying and gently shelving coastline, coupled with extensive beaches and a convenient east-facing aspect, Northumberland was a prime target for invasion and attack. While a major

new artillery fort was constructed at Seaton Sluice during WWI to protect Tyneside from marine bombardment (although this was not ready by the end of the war), it is World War II defences that are the commonest sight in the landscape. More than 280 pillboxes and 120 other defensive structures, including tank-traps and the characteristic concrete cubes lining the dune systems of the coast, have been recorded in the County. RAF airfields, including Acklington, Boulmer, Brunton, Eshott, Morpeth (Tranwell) and Ouston were constructed or expanded to provide fighter cover for the industrial centres of Tyneside, and as training units and for maritime patrol and convoy protection. Although many of these sites went out of use at the end of the war and were partly reclaimed for agriculture, others survived as civilian airfields or continued as military installations. Northumberland continues to have an important role for military training, with major barracks at training ranges in the Cheviot Hills, centred on Otterburn Camp in the Northumberland National Park.

- 3.75. The profusion of cheap and plentiful coal resources stimulated the construction of major electricity generating infrastructure in the post-war period. The twin Blyth power stations, fed by rail and latterly by sea, generated sufficient power for around 300,000 homes from commissioning in 1958 until 2001. Similarly, this vast energy reserve and excellent communication network enabled the construction of the Lynemouth aluminium smelter in 1974. Since extracting metallic aluminium from its ore, bauxite, requires vast amounts of electricity, this site has its own coal-fired power station which was originally fed directly by conveyors from the neighbouring Bewick drift mine (part of the vast Ellington colliery complex).
- 3.76. These huge industrial installations are important landmarks on the east coast of southern Northumberland and were major drivers of another later 20th century land use with significant landscape impacts – opencast mining. The coalfield area, a broad band stretching from the coast inland to Morpeth, and from Amble to the boundary with Newcastle, contains over 4,500ha of former opencast workings, the majority of which have been restored to farmland or amenity uses. The excavations themselves and the subsequent reorganising of land division had a major impact on the historic character of the landscape. Spoil tips, deep excavations and associated transport infrastructure are a common sight in the corridor between the A1 and the coast. Similarly, the homogenous rectilinear patterns of the restored fields, although relieved by new hedgerows and woodland, stand in marked contrast to the more ad hoc arrangements outside the affected areas.

THE MODERN LANDSCAPE

Land Cover and Land Use

- 3.77. The dominant land cover in Northumberland is farmland.³ This is divided quite distinctly between principally arable areas along the coast, in the south-east, and in the north of the County, and mainly improved grassland in the centre, west, and south. This distinction also shows as concentric arcs, with pasture occupying the edge of the Cheviot Hills, arable land in the Cheviot fringe, and further pasture on

³ This section is based on the 2000 Land Cover Map of England and Wales, produced by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

the sandstone hills running through the centre of the County. This pattern reflects the underlying geology, and results from the general prevalence of pasture on higher ground.

- 3.78. There are smaller areas of neutral and acid grasslands on upland areas, although the latter are largely confined to the hills within the Northumberland National Park. The highest moors and fells are covered with peat bog, which is particularly extensive on the plateaux of the North Pennines. Other upland areas support heather moorland, known locally as 'black moor', in contrast with the grassland 'white moor'. Some moorland areas support grouse shooting, and patterns of muirburn are prominent in places.
- 3.79. Broadleaf woodland is relatively sparse and dispersed in nature. Woodlands tend to be clustered along river corridors, while hedgerow trees and shelterbelts lend a more wooded character to lowland areas. Estate woodlands remain a key resource in terms of native and mixed woodland. Uplands are very open with little or no native woodland. Here, commercial coniferous forestry takes place on a large scale. Kielder Forest covers almost 650km², and there are significant plantations at Harwood, Rothbury and Slaley. Small plantations and blocks of forestry are a common feature across much of the rural area also.

Habitats and Biodiversity

- 3.80. The Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sets out a number of priority habitats which are considered to be characteristic of Northumberland's natural heritage, and are thought to be most at risk. Specific habitat action plans exist for a range of habitat types.
- 3.81. Coastal habitats of international importance include extensive intertidal mud and sand flats and areas of rocky shore that support large populations of wintering wildfowl and waders. Rocky reefs and sea caves are home to important marine communities, and islands such as the Farne Islands and Coquet Island support breeding seabird populations. Sand dune systems support diverse dune grasslands. Saltmarsh and dune heath are uncommon but important habitats in the County.
- 3.82. Moving inland, key habitats in lowland Northumberland include the few remaining areas of species-rich neutral grassland, and whin grassland, which occur on skeletal soils above the whin sill. This is a very rare and distinctive form of grassland occurring only in north-east England, and supporting uncommon species such as wild chives, maiden pink and annual knawel. Ancient woodland is of very limited extent, and mainly found along the steep-sided river valleys such as those of the Coquet, Aln and Wansbeck. Subsidence wetlands, formed by the settlement of land following deep mining, form an important habitat in south-east Northumberland, with valuable plant, invertebrate, amphibian and bird communities. There are over 100 such wetlands present in the County, and there are other wetlands which have been deliberately created as part of opencast mining reclamation schemes, such as the extensive reed beds at East Chevington and the ponds at Hauxley, both managed as nature reserves by Northumberland Wildlife Trust. The River Wansbeck has a particularly important population of white-clawed crayfish, and the salmon and sea

trout populations of the Tweed catchment rivers, the Tyne and the Coquet span both the lowlands and the uplands.

- 3.83. The uplands of Northumberland include extensive areas of upland heath and blanket bog with their wader and raptor populations, and much smaller but very important upland hay meadows. One particular meadow community, with wood cranesbill, globeflower, pignut, wood anemone, melancholy thistle and several species of lady's-mantle, is of global significance, being confined to the uplands of northern England and a few scattered sites in Scotland. There are scattered areas of ancient woodland, and significant examples of raised and valley mires, as well as important plant communities in upland water bodies such as the Roman Wall loughs. Calaminarian grassland is a distinctive grassland community confined to river shingles in the Tyne catchment which have elevated levels of heavy metals such as lead; a consequence of the geology of the catchment and especially the long history of mining. Notable plants include mountain pansy, spring sandwort and alpine pennycress. There are also good examples of an upland form of whin grassland.
- 3.84. Protected sites across Northumberland include Ramsar sites, designated to protect wetlands of international importance, at Lindisfarne, covering Holy Island Sands, and extending intermittently along the whole Northumberland coast. Inland, Holburn Moss in the Kyloe Hills is a Ramsar site. European Natura 2000 sites include Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated for bird interests, and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which protect habitats. SPAs overlap with the Ramsar designations along the coast. SACs cover the River Tweed and its tributaries, including the Rivers Till and Glen. The North Pennine Moors are designated both as a SAC and SPA.
- 3.85. Nationally protected areas within Northumberland include over 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), ranging from small woodlands, areas of dunes, and moorlands, to the Farne Islands and the River Coquet. Eight National Nature Reserves (NNR) lie wholly or partly within the study area, including the wetlands of Newham Bog and Muckle Moss, the moors of Whitelee and Kielderhead, and the woodlands of the Derwent Gorge. There are small, scattered areas of ancient woodland, associated with rivers and country estates, though much of this falls into the 'replanted' category, rather than the 'semi-natural' category. Natural heritage designations are illustrated in Figure 5.

Settlement Pattern and Buildings

- 3.86. By far the most settled part of the study area is the south-east, with habitation concentrated in the urban areas centred on Blyth, Ashington and Cramlington. 2001 census results show that almost half of the Northumberland population of approximately 300,000 live in this small south-eastern corner of the County. Beyond this area, settlement becomes more scattered to the north and west. A chain of small to medium settlements follows the Tyne valley west from Newcastle, from Prudhoe through Hexham to Haltwhistle. To the north, the main settlements of Morpeth, Alnwick and Berwick are located along the Great North Road. These larger towns tend to have the greatest variation in building materials, types and ages.

- 3.87. Beyond these main settlements are a large number of smaller towns and villages. Local centres, serving the extensive rural areas of the north and west, include Wooler, Rothbury and Bellingham. Many villages are associated with country estates, such as Ford and Etal on the Ford Estate, Belsay by Belsay Hall, and Cambo on the Wallington Estate. The estate influence is prominent in the architecture and planned layout of these villages. On a larger scale, the estate influence is also characteristic of Alnwick, through its close association with Alnwick Castle.
- 3.88. Elsewhere, industry has been the primary driver. Towns in the North Pennines, such as Allendale, have distinctive rows of miners' cottages and chapels. The later forestry settlements such as Byrness are also very distinctive.
- 3.89. Vernacular buildings across the study area are most frequently constructed from sandstones, usually buff in colour but including pinks and reds in certain areas. Granite is used locally around Wooler. Much of the building stock dates from the 18th century onwards, when extensive agricultural improvement and rationalisation led to the rebuilding of rural housing. In the more settled south-east, brick is the most common material, reflecting the 19th-century development of these industrial areas. Slate is the most common roofing material on all these building types, though traditional stone flag roofs can be seen in places. Pantiles occur most commonly in coastal settlements, where they were imported as ballast in ships trading from the Netherlands.
- 3.90. Farmsteads in the region are varied in character, and are often extensive complexes of buildings, particularly in prosperous arable areas. These include large stone farmhouses, often quite grand in scale, as well as smaller stone cottages. Traditional stone or brick farm buildings have, in many cases, been usurped by large-scale utilitarian barns. Brick farm chimneys are a characteristic feature to the south of Berwick. In upland areas focused on more marginal sheep farming, farmsteads are modest, consisting of a single house and one or two functional buildings.

Cultural Heritage

- 3.91. The landscape of Northumberland has a rich cultural heritage, with prominent historic features forming landmarks in many areas. The County's foremost historic remains are associated with Hadrian's Wall, and form part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site, one of 16 sites in England on UNESCO's World Heritage list.
- 3.92. There are a total of around 960 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the County.⁴ These are more commonly found in undisturbed upland areas. The majority are prehistoric earthworks, with fewer Roman and medieval monuments, although medieval monuments are often more extensive. The County has over 5,500 listed buildings, of which around 3% are Grade I and around 4% are Grade II*. The Historic Environment Record for Northumberland contains over 22,000 separate entries.
- 3.93. There are over 100 country houses in the County, with at least 50 high quality landscaped parks and gardens – representing a major aspect of landscape character, particularly in the lowlands. Of these, 18 are included in English Heritage's Register

⁴ Figures in this section relate to Northumberland as a whole, including the National Park.

of Parks and Gardens, with three listed at Grade I and three at Grade II*. Four registered battlefields lie within the study area: Halidon Hill (1333); Otterburn (1388); Homildon Hill (1402); and Flodden (1513). 69 Conservation Areas have been established across Northumberland. Cultural heritage designations are illustrated in Figure 6.

- 3.94. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a technique developed by English Heritage to map the historical development of the landscape. The HLC study of Northumberland was completed in 2008, and the results have been used to inform the historical dimension of each landscape character area. In 2009, the HLC method was extended to seascape, and the Historic Seascape Characterisation for the North East coastline has been similarly referred to in writing the descriptions of the coastal areas. The HLC mapping of Northumberland is illustrated in Figure 7.

Access and Recreation

- 3.95. Northumberland has a range of tourist attractions, many of which relate directly to experience of the landscape. Major visitor destinations include Hadrian's Wall, the Northumberland National Park, and the two AONBs. Other landscape-focused attractions include several of the parks and gardens within the area which are open to the public.
- 3.96. The Pennine Way national trail runs the length of the Pennine range, although it lies within Northumberland National Park until it reaches the Tyne Gap near Greenhead. It then follows the valley of the South Tyne through the North Pennines AONB. The Hadrian's Wall Path national trail follows the line of the Roman frontier from Tyneside to the Solway Firth.
- 3.97. There are over 2,300 miles of public rights of way in the study area, forming a network of footpaths and bridleways across both upland and lowland landscapes. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), extended access rights over moor, heath, and registered common land. Access to these areas is on foot only. Open access land is concentrated in the upland west of the study area, with particularly extensive areas in the North Pennines and around Kielder. Much of the uplands of the Northumberland sandstone hills are accessible, as are a number of smaller areas within farmland and along the coast, such as village commons and some areas of sand dunes. Coastal access is also important, and will become more so following the implementation of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

4. LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION

- 4.1. This section sets out the findings of the LCA, beginning with a brief overview of the Northumberland landscape, and the list of LCTs and landscape character areas (Table 4.1). Detailed descriptions of each LCT and character area are given. These are arranged by the refined NCA into which they fall. In the interests of consistency, the numbering of the refined NCAs retains the numbering used by Natural England. The landscape classification is illustrated in outline in Diagram 4.1, and in more detail in Figure 8.

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS

- 4.2. The upland part of Northumberland takes in the Pennine range, including the *Cheviots*, the *Border Moors*, and the *North Pennines* NCAs, divided by the valley of the *Tyne Gap* NCA. The Pennines are a major chain of hills, extending south to the Yorkshire Dales, and north into Scotland. The *Border Moors* and *Cheviots* are remote landscapes of hills, the former extensively forested, the latter distinctively rounded. Sparsely settled, these areas are valuable resources of wildness and tranquillity, recognised in the popular tourist destination of Kielder Water, and the designation of the Cheviot Hills as part of the Northumberland National Park.
- 4.3. The National Park extends south across the *Tyne Gap*, taking in the striking Whin Sill, and the remains of Hadrian's Wall, a World Heritage Site, which follow it. Although excluded from the study area, the National Park landscape is a key feature of Northumberland, and the hills provide a backdrop to many of the neighbouring landscapes. Their setting is also a key consideration for the siting of any development. South of the *Tyne Gap*, the *North Pennines* is more active, with settlement in the dales, and a long history of mineral extraction. This NCA extends well beyond the boundary of Northumberland, and is also protected as an AONB.
- 4.4. A series of transitional landscapes bridge the relatively narrow gap between the Pennine uplands and the coastal plain. These include the *Cheviot Fringe* NCA wrapping around the Cheviot Hills, the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills* NCA forming a chain of outcrops through the centre of the County, and the *Mid Northumberland* NCA, a farmed upland fringe area. The *Cheviot Fringe* is formed by broad valleys and farmed plateaux, and is contained by the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills*. These form a series of rocky escarpments, with steep slopes facing the Cheviot Hills, and gentler inclines toward the coast. Tranquillity remains a key characteristic, although there is much more human activity than in the hills. A rich cultural heritage derives from the turbulent distant past, as well as from more recent influences such as the many large country estates.
- 4.5. These human influences continue into *Mid Northumberland*, where settlement and farming becomes more intensive. Estate parkland is again important, and the landscape is generally well wooded. Across the Tyne valley, the north edge of the *Durham Coalfield* NCA overlaps a small part of Northumberland. Wind farms are an increasingly common sight across these transitional landscapes, and development pressure for more wind power development, in this area of low population and relatively high wind speed, is likely to increase.

- 4.6. The coastal plain runs the length of the Northumberland coast, forming a low-lying edge to the County. The open coast is generally made up of sandy beaches and low headlands, though occasional rocky outcrops and islands in the north make for spectacular views, recognised in the AONB and Heritage Coast designations. The *North Northumberland Coastal Plain* NCA is again sparsely populated, although intensively farmed. It is rich in cultural and natural heritage, making for a valuable landscape assemblage.
- 4.7. South of the River Coquet, the *South East Northumberland Coastal Plain* NCA also presents a low-lying, varied coastal landscape, but with a much greater human influence. This is the location of Northumberland's most densely populated areas, including the urban areas centred on Cramlington, Blyth and Ashington. It is also the most industrially developed section of the County. However, post-industrial landscape is not the whole picture; Druridge Bay has open sandy beaches and is part of the Northumberland Heritage Coast.

Diagram 4.1 The Landscape Classification

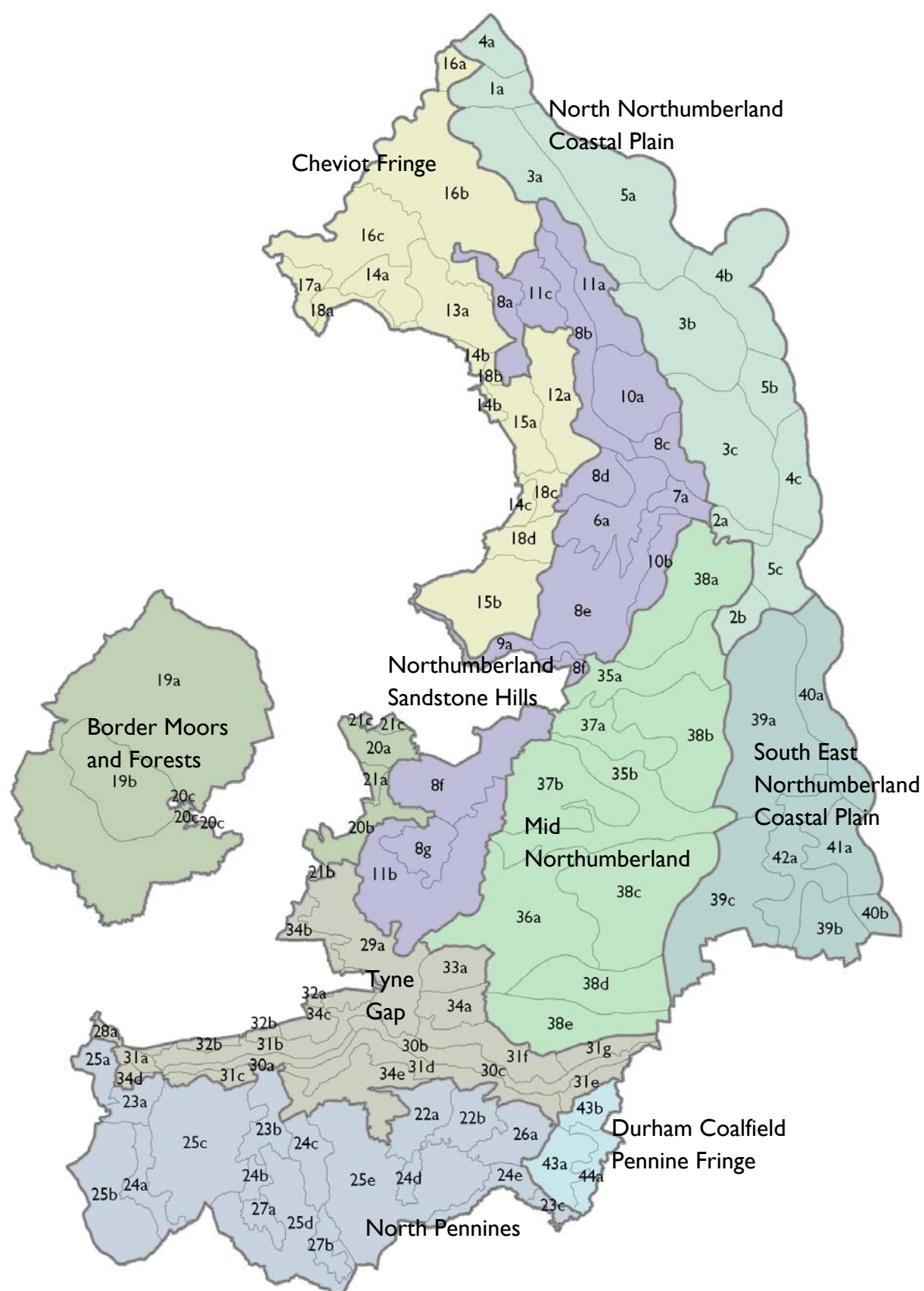


Table 4.1 The Landscape Classification

NCA1: North Northumberland Coastal Plain			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
1	Broad River Mouth	1a	Tweed River Mouth
2	Coastal Incised Valley	2a	Lower Aln
		2b	Lower Coquet
3	Farmed Coastal Plain	3a	Haggerston
		3b	Lucker
		3c	Rock
4	Rocky Coastline	4a	North Tweed Coast
		4b	Farne Islands Coast
		4c	Craster Coast
5	Sandy Coastline	5a	Holy Island Coast
		5b	Beadnell and Embleton Bays
		5c	Aln and Coquet Estuaries
NCA2: Northumberland Sandstone Hills			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
6	Broad Sandstone Valley	6a	Whittingham Vale
7	Estate Valley	7a	Hulne Park
8	Outcrop Hills and Escarpments	8a	Doddington Ridge
		8b	Kyloe and Chillingham Hills
		8c	Charlton Ridge
		8d	Beanley Moor
		8e	Rothbury Forest
		8f	Harwood Forest
		8g	Sweethope and Blackdown
9	Sandstone Upland Valleys	9a	Coquetdale
10	Smooth Moorland	10a	Rosebrough Moor
		10b	Alnwick Moor
11	Sandstone Fringe Farmland	11a	Belford Hills
		11b	Buteland and Colt Crag
		11c	Hetton

NCA3: Cheviot Fringe			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
12	Broad Farmed Vale	12a	Breamish Vale
13	Broad Floodplain Valley	13a	Till and Glen Valleys
14	Igneous Foothills	14a	Moneylaws and Coldside
		14b	Wooler Foothills
		14c	Old Fawdon
15	Upland Fringe Farmland	15a	Lilburn and Roddam
		15b	Upper Coquet
16	Open Rolling Farmland	16a	Halidon
		16b	Duddo and Lowick
		16c	East Learmouth
17	Upland Fringe Ridges	17a	Horse Rigg
18	Upland Fringe Valley	18a	Bowmont Valley
		18b	Wooler Vale
		18c	Upper Breamish
		18d	Upper Aln
NCA5: Border Moors and Forests			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
19	Moorland and Forest Mosaic	19a	Kielder and Redesdale Forests
		19b	Kielder Reservoir
20	Rolling Upland Valleys	20a	Otterburn and Elsdon Valley
		20b	Bellingham and Woodburn Valley
		20c	Upper North Tyne Valley
21	Rolling Uplands	21a	Corsenside Common
		21b	Ealingham Rigg
		21c	Otterburn Plateau
NCA10: North Pennines			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
22	Farmed River Valleys	22a	Devil's Water and Hinterland
		22b	Dipton Wood and Slaley
23	Lower Dale	23a	Lower South Tyne
		23b	Lower Allenheads
		23c	Lower Derwent

24	Middle Dale	24a	Middle South Tyne
		24b	Middle West Allen
		24c	Middle East Allen
		24d	Middle Devil's Water
		24e	Middle Derwent
25	Moorland Ridges	25a	Blenkinsopp Common
		25b	Hartleyburn and Knarsdale Commons
		25c	Whitfield Moor
		25d	Allen Common and Mohope/Acton Moors
		25e	Hexhamshire and Bulbeck Commons
26	Upland Farmland and Plantations	26a	Healey
27	Upper Dale	27a	Upper West Allen
		27b	Upper East Allen
NCA II: Tyne Gap			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
28	Basin Valley and Fringes	28a	River Irthing
29	Broad Wooded Valley	29a	North Tyne Valley
30	Glacial Trough Valley Floor	30a	Haltwhistle to Newbrough
		30b	Newbrough to Corbridge
		30c	Corbridge to Wylam
31	Glacial Trough Valley Sides	31a	Tipalt Burn
		31b	Haltwhistle to Bridge End
		31c	North Plenneller Common
		31d	Langley to Stocksfield
		31e	Stocksfield to Prudhoe
		31f	Acomb to Ovington
		31g	Ovington to Wylam
32	Parallel Ridges and Commons	32a	Howden Hill
		32b	Haltwhistle, Melkridge and Ridley Commons
33	Tributary Valley	33a	Erring Burn
34	Upland Commons and Farmland	34a	Acomb Ridge
		34b	Broadpool Common
		34c	Grindon Common
		34d	Featherstone Common
		34e	Lowes and Nubbock Fells

NCA12: Mid Northumberland			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
35	Broad Lowland Valleys	35a	Coquet Valley
		35b	Font and Wansbeck Valleys
36	Lowland Farmed Moor	36a	Ingoe Moor
37	Lowland Farmed Ridges	37a	Wingates Ridge
		37b	Longwitton Ridge
38	Lowland Rolling Farmland	38a	Longframlington
		38b	Longhorsley
		38c	Whalton and Belsay
		38d	Pont Valley
		38e	North Tyne Ridge
NCA13: South East Northumberland Coastal Plain			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
39	Coalfield Farmland	39a	Coastal Coalfields
		39b	Seaton Delaval
		39c	Stannington
40	Broad Bays and Dunes	40a	Druridge Bay
		40b	Seaton Dunes
41	Developed Coast	41a	Blyth and Wansbeck Estuaries
42	Urban and Urban Fringe	42a	Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington
NCA16: Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe			
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
43	Coalfield Upland Fringe	43a	Kiln Pit Hill Hinterland
		43b	Prudhoe Hinterland
44	Coalfield Valley	44a	Derwent Valley

NCA 1: NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND COASTAL PLAIN

- 4.8. This area occupies a broad band along the North Sea coast of the study area, stretching from the Anglo-Scottish border in the north, to the mouth of the River Coquet in the south. It takes in the Northumberland Coast AONB, which includes Holy Island and the Farne Islands, and also forms part of the Northumberland Heritage Coast. Large parts of the area are designated for nature conservation interests. Berwick-upon-Tweed is located in the north of the area, with Alnwick and Amble on the southern edges.



- 4.9. Key characteristics of the North Northumberland Coastal Plain, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.

- *Narrow, low lying, windswept coastal plain, with wide views east towards the sea and west to the Cheviots. Particularly striking views along the coast.*
- *Intensively farmed landscape of predominantly open, mixed, arable land with limited trees and woodland, with permanent pasture/semi-natural grassland typical of the valleys and coastal fringes.*
- *Diverse coastal scenery, with a 'hard' coast of high cliffs, off-shore islands, and rocky headlands, alternately contrasting with a 'soft' coast of wide, sweeping sandy bays backed by sand dunes, and also intertidal flats backed by saltmarsh to the south. Patches of coastal grazing marsh still remain.*
- *Rivers Aln, Coquet and Tweed, as well as numerous smaller watercourses, meander across the coastal plain to the sea.*
- *Coastal plain and offshore islands provide rich wildlife habitats, particularly for migratory and breeding sea birds.*
- *Distinctive historic heritage reflects importance of ecclesiastical influences and the strategic defence of the coast and English/Scottish border. Features include prominent medieval castles, fortifications and structures from both world wars and religious buildings.*
- *Whin Sill intrusions produce dramatic landscape features, including the coastal cliffs at Bamburgh and the Farne Islands. Inland, outcrops and escarpments form distinctive local landmarks and support rare, semi-natural, whinstone grasslands.*
- *Dispersed pattern of isolated farmsteads, small nucleated villages, fishing villages and small coastal resort towns.*

- Long history of mineral extraction, including whinstone quarrying and opencast coal-mining, to the south of Berwick-Upon-Tweed.

Landscape character types and areas

- 4.10. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains five landscape character types and 12 landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Landscape character types and areas in NCA I

Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
1	Broad River Mouth	1a	Tweed River Mouth
2	Coastal Incised Valley	2a	Lower Aln
		2b	Lower Coquet
3	Farmed Coastal Plain	3a	Haggerston
		3b	Lucker
		3c	Rock
4	Rocky Coastline	4a	North Tweed Coast
		4b	Farne Islands Coast
		4c	Craster Coast
5	Sandy Coastline	5a	Holy Island Coast
		5b	Beadnell and Embleton Bays
		5c	Aln and Coquet Estuaries

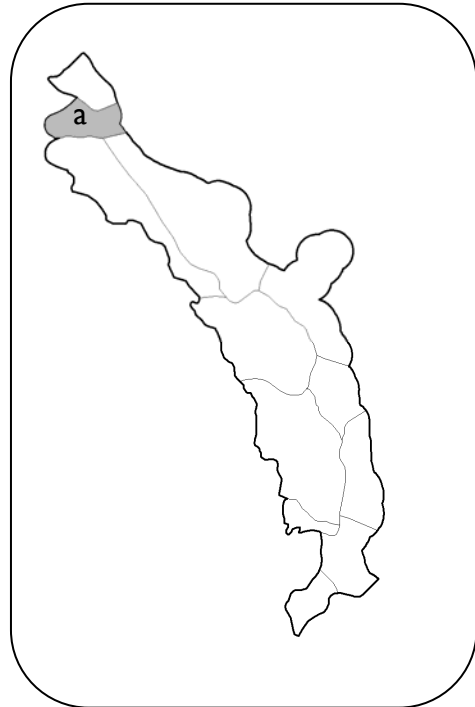
Landscape Character Type I: Broad River Mouth

Introduction

- 4.11. This is a lowland, coastal landscape forming the hinterland to Berwick-upon-Tweed as the River Tweed sweeps round to the coastal edge. The railway and road bridges form a distinctive landmark feature as they cross the river.
- 4.12. This LCT is represented by one character area:
Ia Tweed River Mouth.

Key Characteristics

- Sweeping river course, separating the historic core and outlying areas of Berwick, with mud banks and sandy beaches at the river mouth.
- Large-scale arable and pasture fields bounded by remnant hedgerows and occasional field trees. Woodland adjoins the river in places.
- Historic character, including the medieval core and medieval/post-medieval fortifications of Berwick on the north side of the River Tweed, and the historic bridges spanning the river.
- Peripheral development associated with Berwick extends over the valley slopes.
- Large-scale industrial buildings at Tweedmouth form a dominant feature within views from the north.
- The high arched railway bridge forms a distinctive landmark and this is complemented by the old road bridge into the historic core of Berwick.
- Views are typically focused on the bridges and towards the coast.



Description

- 4.13. The River Tweed sweeps around in a broad curve between low bluffs to north and south. The river cuts below steep slopes on the north bank, while the south bank slopes more gently. The river channel is characterised by mud banks, being tidal throughout the area, and increasingly estuarine. As the river broadens toward the sea, the bluffs fall away. The coast to the south of the river mouth comprises sandy beaches at Spittal.
- 4.14. Beyond the urban area the mixed farmland is predominantly arable, with large-scale fields. Hedgerows are typically incomplete, although some field trees and clusters of woodland are found in places. The low-lying marginal vegetation on the banks provides habitat value. The River Tweed is a designated SAC and provides important habitat for water crowfoot, salmon and otter. The estuary and adjacent coast are similarly protected, and Lindisfarne SPA and Ramsar site covers the Spittal shore.

- 4.15. The historic core of Berwick lies to the north of the river, and church towers provide a distinctive skyline. Peripheral development extends on the slopes to the west of the railway and over the low bluff and rising slopes at Tweedmouth. The railway bridge at Berwick provides a dramatic landmark with the tall arches standing high above the river, and the historic Berwick Bridge also provides a feature within the town setting. The ruins of Berwick Castle occupy a prominent position at the northern landfall of the railway bridge. Italianate artillery fortifications – of Elizabethan/Marian date – ring the core of the town and give a strong sense of Berwick’s turbulent history.
- 4.16. The settlement is largely contained within the gentle bowl of the landform at the river mouth, and the settlement edge is interspersed with large-scale open fields. Views within the valley are contained, but elevated locations provide more distant views to the surrounding countryside and Cheviot Hills to the west.
- 4.17. The area provides a number of recreational opportunities, with the attraction of the historic town, the Berwick Coast Path, sandy beaches, a network of footpaths, the National Cycle Network, and importance of the river for fishing.

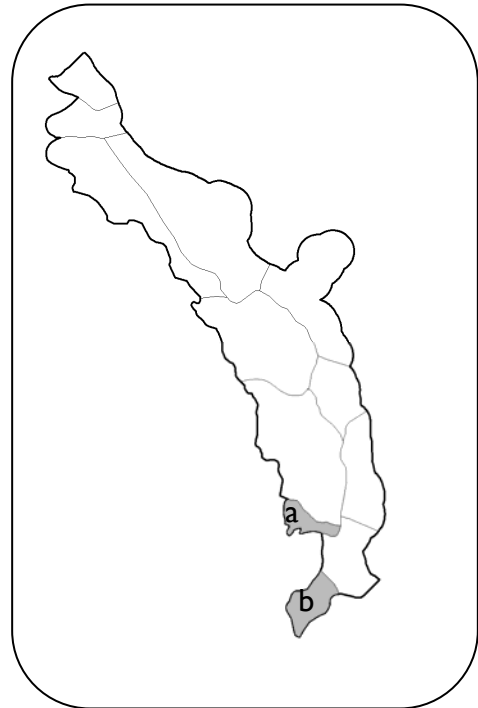
Landscape Character Type 2: Coastal Incised Valley

Introduction

- 4.18. This landscape comprises the lower sections of two river valleys, the Coquet and the Aln, as they flow through the coastal plain to the North Sea. The valleys are relatively shallow, but sharply incised in places, and emerge close together on the coast.
- 4.19. This LCT is represented by two character areas: *2a Lower Aln* and *2b Lower Coquet*.

Key Characteristics

- Shallow valleys cutting through the coastal plain, with meandering rivers.
- More sheltered than the surrounding coastal plain, with restricted views.
- Arable farming, with pasture and woodland in steeper areas.
- Villages and larger settlements, as well as farmsteads and cottages.
- Transport links and infrastructure, such as the East Coast Main Line, pass through.
- Long history of settlement, and good access links.



Description

- 4.20. Shallow, but often steep-sided incised valleys contain meandering rivers. The Aln and Coquet are of moderate size, the Coquet being slightly larger, over 50m across in places. Both rivers meander within a broader vale, and the surrounding floodplains are not particularly flat. Coastal influence is more limited than in the surrounding *Farmed Coastal Plain* (LCT 3), due to the lower elevations and undulating topography.
- 4.21. The landcover is predominantly arable farming, with open, rectilinear fields. There is pastoral farming on steeper areas. Boundaries are post and wire or post and rail, with areas of intact, relatively species-rich hedgerows. Estate influences, with mixed plantation woodland and iron fencing, occur in pockets. There are deciduous and coniferous plantations and shelterbelts, with native and semi-natural woodland along the rivers, particularly the Coquet. New hedgerow trees have been planted in some areas. The River Coquet is protected as a SSSI, as are the saltmarshes around Alnmouth.
- 4.22. Both valleys are well settled. The *Lower Aln* includes the eastern edge of Alnwick, and the villages of Lesbury and Hipsburn, while the *Lower Coquet* contains part of Warkworth, and the hamlet of Guyzance. Numerous farmsteads and cottages lie along the rivers, generally within the lower part of the valley and not prominent features. Traditional building materials are seen alongside more modern elements, such as the brick houses at Hipsburn, or the industrial buildings around Alnwick. The

masts of the RAF station above Lesbury are more prominent, as are the overhead wires associated with the East Coast Main Line railway, overhead power lines, and mobile phone masts.

- 4.23. The valley landscapes feel enclosed, particularly the lower incised valleys. Views are concentrated along the valley, often with the sea in the background when looking east. The surrounding coastal plain obscures many views, but there are occasional glimpses of distant features, such as Coquet Island and the aluminium works at Lynemouth.
- 4.24. The valleys show evidence of historic settlement dating back to prehistoric times. Visible features include the remains of a priory at Guyzance, the estates of Alnwick Castle and Warkworth Hermitage, partially cut into the cliffs above the River Coquet. There is an extensive footpath network, particularly in the Aln valley, though there is little open access land.

Landscape Character Areas

2a Lower Aln

- 4.25. This valley is relatively deep and broad, and is steep-sided in places, such as below Denwick. There are significant blocks of coniferous forestry at Bilton Wood and along the Cawledge Burn. The urban edge of Alnwick is often prominent in views, although the large industrial buildings adjacent to the A1 are well screened. The modern settlement of Hipsburn is also unobtrusive in the landscape. The A1 and A1068 create the impression of a busy landscape, which combined with the settlements offers little tranquillity. The disused railway is used as a footpath, although unofficially as there are plans to reopen the line. The Alnwick Castle Registered Park and Garden extends into the west of the area.

2b Lower Coquet

- 4.26. The Coquet flows within a narrow incised valley within a broader, shallower vale. The inner valley has extensive semi-natural woodland, with small-scale pasture in places. Views are more limited, and often picturesque, as in the estate-influenced area surrounding Guyzance. The river is also one of the most important game fisheries in the north of England, with large runs of sea trout and salmon. The upper vale is more open, and connected to the surrounding farmland. The river and the adjacent woodlands are designated SSSIs.

Landscape Character Type 3: Farmed Coastal Plain

Introduction

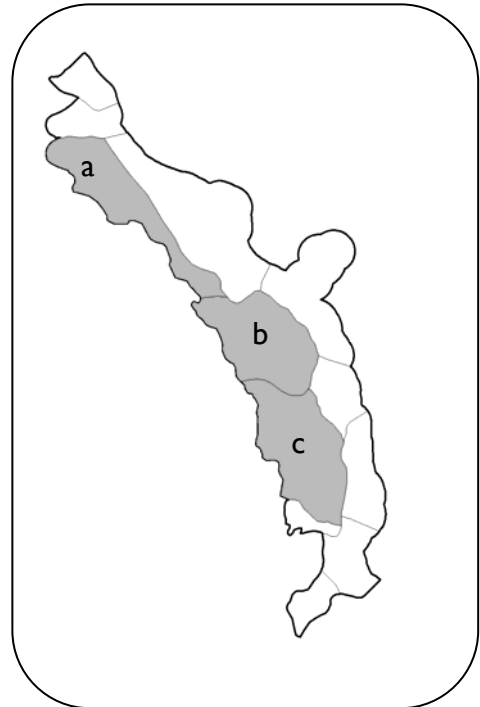
- 4.27. A band of farmland running along the north-east Northumberland coast, the *Farmed Coastal Plain* varies in width from the narrow strip between Haggerston and Belford, to the larger areas around Rock and Lucker. It is a gently rolling landscape of mainly arable farmland, well settled, and with a coastal influence. The Northumberland Coast AONB includes the eastern edge of this LCT.
- 4.28. This LCT is represented by three character areas: 3a Haggerston, 3b Lucker and 3c Rock.

Key Characteristics

- Open, coastal location, although sea views are not always possible.
- Gently rolling or almost flat farmland, dominated by large arable fields.
- Generally low-lying, with some small hills and raised plateaux.
- Intensive farmland, often with weak field boundary pattern.
- Occasional wooded estates.
- Large farmsteads comprising traditional and modern buildings.

Description

- 4.29. This is a generally low-lying landscape of gently rolling land, with some broad, flat areas. There are areas of higher ground, such as the small plateau-like hill at Billylaw, south of Berwick, and around Longhoughton. Small, rounded hills are common features. The area is drained by small burns, which run down from the hills to the west, and cut narrow, shallow gullies through the sandy soil. Rocky outcrops are rare, but occur at Belford Station, for example.
- 4.30. Arable farmland is the predominant land use, with pasture in more marginal areas, such as small fields next to the railway line, and on the occasional hills. Larger fields are more common, with some areas of very extensive enclosures. Hedgerows are frequent but often unmaintained, leading to gaps and replacement with post and wire fencing. Tree cover is greater in the south of the *Farmed Coastal Plain*, becoming sparser to the north. Coniferous forestry occurs in small blocks and shelterbelts, with some deciduous plantations or tree lines, as well as belts of pine. The few estates provide a locally more wooded character, with mixed plantations and better-maintained hedges. Newham Fen is a SAC and NNR, and there are SSSIs at Brada Hill, Bradford Kames, Spindleston Heughs, and Longhoughton Quarry.
- 4.31. The landscape is well settled, though with no larger settlements. Small linear villages such as Longhoughton or Ellingham comprise traditional stone buildings, often with



sympathetic infill as well as other buildings which reflect the local character less well. Farmsteads are generally traditional, in warm-coloured local sandstone, and sometimes with brick chimneys which are prominent features. Large, utilitarian buildings often sit adjacent to traditional buildings, and there are occasional agri-industrial installations, such as the silos at Belford Station. The East Coast Main Line passes through the area, with overhead wires and overbridges being prominent in low-lying areas

- 4.32. This is an open landscape, though with varying enclosure imparted by the changing levels of tree cover. Low hills along the coast, particularly in the Bamburgh and Seahouses area, obscure direct views of the sea, yet there is a perception of being in a coastal location. Views inland are similarly limited by the varying topography and tree cover, although the adjacent hills rise gradually and are not prominent when visible.
- 4.33. Tourist sites are concentrated within the adjacent coastal strip, and there are relatively few visitor attractions within this landscape, although it forms an important means of access to the AONB. The footpath network is fairly dense, and there are several cycle routes, although little open access land. There are caravan parks, including the large site at Haggerston Castle. Historical features include numerous towers, such as at Preston, and estate centres at Howick and Cheswick. There are Registered Parks and Gardens at Belford Hall, Howick Hall, and Ratcheugh Crag. Large country houses and their estates are therefore an important aspect of historic character, reflecting the wealth created by improved agriculture from the 18th century onwards. The dominant pattern of larger rectilinear fields indicates a relatively late date of enclosure. Intensive arable agriculture has therefore wiped away much of the earlier historic landscape. However, traces – such as the medieval villages of Ancroft, Tughall and North Charlton – survive within the modern field pattern. Some extensive areas of ridge-and-furrow cultivation survive, notably around Swinhoe. The World War II airfield at Brunton ties the character type in to a chain of such sites running down the eastern coastal plain of England.

Landscape Character Areas

3a Haggerston

- 4.34. This narrow strip of coastal plain is low-lying, and is backed by the Kyloe Hills to the south. In the north it merges westward into the *Open Rolling Farmland* (LCT 16), and rises up to Billylaw, overlooking Berwick. Small rounded drumlin hills are often topped by farmsteads, and enable broad views across Holy Island Sands to Lindisfarne, and inland to the Cheviot Hills. Haggerston Castle itself is a prominent landmark, although the caravan park which surrounds it is hidden by the former estate woodlands. Traditional farmsteads are of brick and stone, and several located to the north have substantial brick farm chimneys. The urban edge of Berwick has areas of scrub and occasional industrial buildings.

3b Lucker

- 4.35. South of Belford, the coastal plain broadens into an area of flat or gently rolling farmland, rising to a plateau near the coast which obscures most seaward views. Large arable fields are dominant, with little settlement, but prominent features such

as mobile phone masts, large agricultural buildings and silos. Post and wire fences are predominant, although stone walls occur near the quarry at Belford Station.

3c Rock

- 4.36. This area is similar to 3b, but is generally more wooded. The transition is gradual, but this area is characterised by coniferous shelterbelts and deciduous woodland strips. Hedgerows are more common, although their condition remains variable. Belts of Scots pine are a distinctive feature. Estate influences occur at Rock House and Howick Hall, resulting in a more intimate landscape experience.

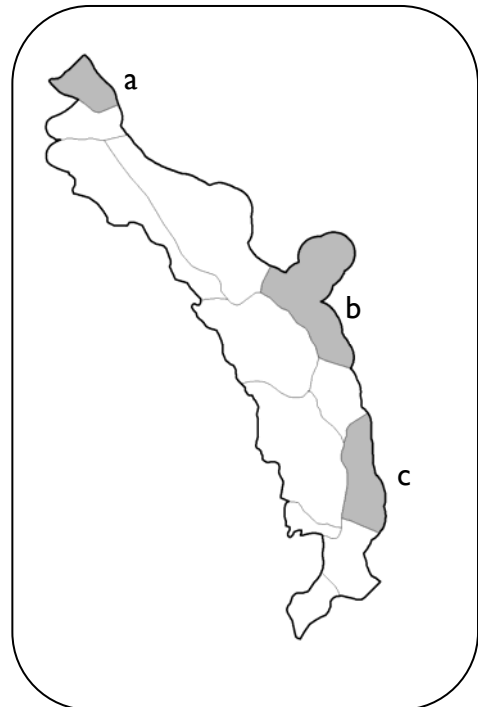
Landscape Character Type 4: Rocky Coastline

Introduction

- 4.37. The *Rocky Coastline* comprises the rocky sections of the coastal strip, including prominent headlands, cliffs, and the Farne Islands. It falls largely within the Northumberland Coast AONB.
- 4.38. This LCT is represented by three character areas: *4a North Tweed Coast*, *4b Farne Islands Coast* and *4c Craster Coast*.

Key Characteristics

- Rocky coast of cliffs and headlands.
- Dramatic shoreline with offshore rocks and islands.
- Prominent coastal landforms offering views.
- Small former fishing villages, now centres of tourism.
- Exposed coastal landscape of windblown hedges.
- Major historic features are popular tourist attractions.



Description

- 4.39. This landscape occurs where bands of hard rocks meet the coastline, resisting marine erosion and resulting in headlands, while the softer rocks are worn away, forming bays. The *Rocky Coastline* comprises rocky headlands divided by small bays, while the larger bays area classified as *Sandy Coastline* (LCT 5). Elevation ranges from the high cliffs north of Berwick, to the low lying headlands such as Castle Point near Craster. Bays and coves within this LCT are generally rocky, with limited sand beaches, though dune systems are prominent around Bamburgh. Stone reefs, offshore rocks, and wave-cut platforms, often called 'carrs' or 'steels', extend out from the foreshore. Prominent landforms occur, such as the Whin Sill outcrop on which Bamburgh Castle is built.
- 4.40. The narrow coastal strip is dominated by the shore, although the inland section is farmed, mostly for pasture due to the exposed nature of the terrain. Hedgerows are often gappy and windblown, with wire fences. Tree cover is generally sparse, although some small woodland blocks are present. Whin grassland, a distinctive plant community on Whin Sill derived soil, occurs around Bamburgh Castle. The coast is part of the Northumbria Coast SPA and Ramsar site, and the Farne islands are also a SPA. The coast is further protected as part of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast and North Northumberland Dunes SACs. The Farne Islands are a NNR, and there are several SSSIs along the coast.
- 4.41. Settlement is concentrated at small villages, often former fishing villages such as Craster, Beadnell, and Seahouses, which now cater more for tourist boat trips.

Seahouses, with neighbouring North Sunderland, is the largest of these settlements, and has substantial areas of post-war housing. Further north, the industrial northern edge of Berwick abuts the coastal strip. Estate artefacts and buildings around Howick, and military infrastructure at RAF Boulmer, exert a strong influence on the local landscape.

- 4.42. The influence of the sea imparts an exposed, maritime character to the area. Sea views are almost continuous, and often dramatic in nature. Views are available along the coast, particularly from vantage points such as Bamburgh Castle, and out to sea, particularly where the Farne Islands form a visual focus.
- 4.43. There are prominent historical features within this landscape, including Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh Castles, which are also major tourist draws. The registered battlefield at Halidon Hill (1333) further reflects the strategic importance of the coastal strip. Patterns of medieval open fields, in the form of upstanding ridge and furrow, are an important aspect of historic character. They survive around Bamburgh, Beadnell and Dunstanburgh in pastoral fields where the effects of mechanised agriculture have been less severe.
- 4.44. Coastal footpaths are extensive, including a section of the international North Sea Trail, linking Berwick and Cresswell. Access to the foreshore rocks and beaches is good, with access land along dune systems. Evidence of tourism is clear, with caravan parks, campsites, and golf courses.

Landscape Character Areas

4a North Tweed Coast

- 4.45. North of Berwick, the land rises onto a series of high cliffs, which drop sharply down to a rocky foreshore of wave-cut platforms. At the top of the cliffs is a mixed arable and pastoral area, crossed by the busy A1 dual carriageway, and the East Coast Main Line railway, which runs close to the cliff-edge, providing dramatic views of the coast. The northern edge of Berwick comprises industrial and commercial units, with post-war housing behind. Further south are holiday parks and golf courses. The Berwickshire Coastal Path runs north from Berwick to St Abbs in Scotland, following the cliff-top.

4b Farne Islands Coast

- 4.46. The western section of this area presents a transition from the *Sandy Coastline* (LCT 5) around Holy Island, but is punctuated by the eminence of Bamburgh Castle on its basalt outcrop. This feature dominates the low lying landscape, and the dune systems which stretch to Seahouses. Further south, the coast is more rocky, though still with some dunes. Seahouses and Beadnell are important local tourist centres. Offshore, the Farne Islands are two small groups of rocky islands, and are home to nationally important bird and marine mammal habitats.

4c Craster Coast

- 4.47. This straight section of coast has few bays and little sand, the exception being the natural harbour of Boulmer Haven. The coast is low-lying, with locally prominent ridges, known as 'heughs' around Craster. At the northern end of the area, Dunstanburgh Castle is the dominant feature, while to the south, the radar apparatus

at RAF Boulmer is widely visible. Few roads follow this section of coast, although there is an extensive footpath network.

Glossary

Wave-cut platform: a flat rocky platform, resulting from wave action at the high-tide line eroding a cliff, causing it to collapse and retreat.

Landscape Character Type 5: Sandy Coastline

Introduction

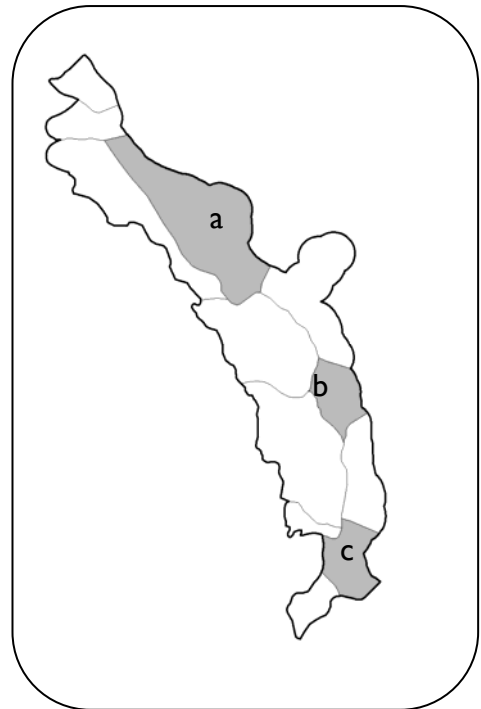
- 4.48. Occurring between areas of *Rocky Coastline* (LCT 4), the *Sandy Coastline* comprises a low-lying coastal strip, with sandy beaches and dunes, as well as extensive tidal sands and estuaries. This is a popular tourist area, and includes the historically significant Holy Island. It falls entirely within the Northumberland Coast AONB.
- 4.49. This LCT is represented by three character areas: *5a Holy Island Coast*, *5b Beadnell and Embleton Bays*, and *5c Aln and Coquet Estuaries*.

Key Characteristics

- Low-lying, exposed coastline.
- Broad sandy beaches and tidal sands.
- Dune systems.
- Isolated prominent built historic features, such as Lindisfarne Castle.
- Long views along the coast.
- Extensive historic associations.
- Tourist infrastructure.

Description

- 4.50. This landscape occurs between the rocky sections of coast, where sandstones and other softer rocks have offered little resistance to coastal erosion, forming wide sandy bays. Between Berwick and Bamburgh, a long stretch of broad sandy beach and tidal flats faces the low-lying Holy Island, which is held in place by the Whin Sill outcrop on which Lindisfarne Castle is built. Smaller bays occur at Beadnell and Embleton, and at Alnmouth, where they are associated with estuarine areas of the Coquet and Aln rivers. Landward, the terrain is low-lying, with extensive dune systems in places.
- 4.51. The coastal farmland is arable and pastoral, with varying field patterns across the area. Larger fields are more common in the north, while smaller-scale fields with irregular boundaries occur around High Newton. Tree cover is generally sparse, limited to small blocks, or associations with watercourses. Sand dune systems are extensive, often forming high ridges. Saltmarsh occurs in the tidal estuaries of the Aln and Coquet. This landscape includes the Lindisfarne and Northumbria Coast SPAs and Ramsar sites, and the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast and North Northumberland Dunes SACs. Lindisfarne is an NNR, and there are several SSSIs along the coast, covering dunes, saltmarsh and the Coquet estuary.
- 4.52. Warkworth and Alnmouth in the south are the largest settlements, and along with the villages of Longhoughton, Embleton and Holy Island are architecturally and



historically distinctive. The villages have developed to meet the demands of this popular tourist area, and tourist infrastructure is a part of the landscape. Also prominent are the overhead wires of the East Coast Main Line railway, and the buildings of RAF Boulmer.

- 4.53. The visual relationship with the sea is important to this landscape, as are the striking vistas to coastal landmarks, such as Lindisfarne and Warkworth Castles. Views along the coast are open and extensive, particularly around and across Holy Island Sands. The coast is exposed and windswept, although some of the smaller bays are more enclosed.
- 4.54. The major historic features of the area are also prominent landmarks, and are noted above. Holy Island has a long historic of monastic settlement stretching back to the 7th century. Ridge and furrow can be seen at High Newton by the Sea, where a typical medieval village plan survives. The impressive medieval castle at Warkworth, cutting off a promontory created by a meander in the River Coquet, is a major local landmark and evokes the power of the medieval Dukes of Northumberland. Relics of more recent history are also visible in the form of World War II anti-invasion defences, now being subsumed by dune systems, at Bamburgh, Beadnell Bay and Alnmouth Bay.
- 4.55. There is relatively good access to most parts of the area, with access land around Alnmouth. Symptoms of tourism pressure are evident, with, for example, urban style car parking restrictions on some rural village roads.

Landscape Character Areas

5a Holy Island Coast

- 4.56. This area is dominated by the broad, sweeping sands between Holy Island and the mainland. The tidal sands are crossed by the causeway linking the island, and by lines of wooden poles. The island itself is largely sand dunes and arable fields, with Lindisfarne Castle on a prominent outcrop. The village has a medieval abbey and is a popular tourist site, with a large car park. On the mainland, extensive dune systems line the coast, with open arable land behind. There is much tourist infrastructure, including a campsite at Goswick. World War II anti-tank defences line parts of the beach.

5b Beadnell and Embleton Bays

- 4.57. These two small bays have broad sandy beaches, backed by dune systems. The small villages of High Newton by the Sea and Embleton are set back from the coast, with Low Newton and Beadnell harbour associated with the beach. The low hill by Low Newton offers a dramatic view across the bay to Dunstanburgh Castle. There is a large caravan park at Beadnell, and a coastal footpath runs the length of the area.

5c Aln and Coquet Estuaries

- 4.58. This strip is bookended by the tidal estuaries of the Aln and Coquet. Sweeping sandy beaches are backed by well developed dune systems and rolling open arable fields. The dunes near Alnmouth have been developed as a 'links' golf course. Both estuaries feature well preserved dune and saltmarsh systems. Alnmouth is an important local centre for sailing. Expansive views over the landscape to the sea are

available from the busy A1068. Visitor pressure is concentrated in the settlements of Alnmouth and Warkworth

Glossary

Reversed-S field boundary: distinctive pattern of ridge and furrow, the result of use of the ox-drawn plough.

Ridge and furrow: broad linear undulations that were created by medieval cultivation practices.

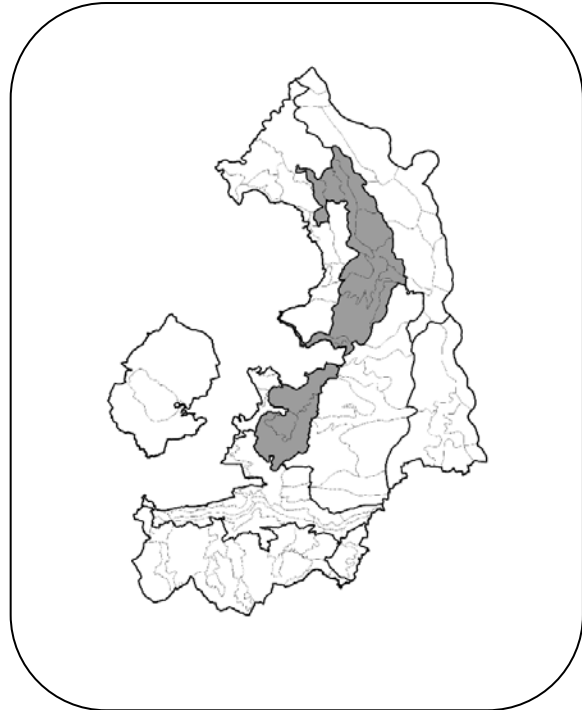
NCA 2: NORTHUMBERLAND SANDSTONE HILLS

4.59. The *Northumberland Sandstone Hills* extend in a wide north-south arc across Northumberland, separating the farmland of the *Cheviot Fringe* (NCA 3) and the uplands to the west, from the agricultural lowlands and coastal plain to the east. This is a plateau landscape, mainly comprising moorland and improved pasture, with several areas of distinctive rocky hills, which are often more prominent from the west due to their geological formation.

4.60. This NCA overlaps with the Northumberland National Park around the Simonside Hills and Harwood Forest, and part of it is therefore excluded from the present study.

4.61. Key characteristics of the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills*, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.

- *Sandstone hills forming distinctive skyline features characterised by generally level tops, north-west facing scarp slopes, and craggy outcrops. Exceptional views from the hills of the coast and across the lowland fringe to the Cheviots. Range of semi-natural habitats, with varied moorland communities dominated by heather and rough, acid grassland mosaics on the thin, sandy soils of the higher steeper slopes and broken ground, giving way to scrub, oak/birch woodland and then to improved farmland and parkland, on the lower slopes. Wet peaty flushes, mires, loughs and small reservoirs occur throughout the area.*
- *Rectilinear pattern of large, open fields bounded by dry stone walls, dating from the time of the parliamentary enclosures, and often broken up by blocks and belts of coniferous woodland.*
- *Extensive plantations of coniferous woodland. Broadleaved woodland associated with rivers and scarp slopes.*
- *Important prehistoric archaeological landscape, with 'cup and ring' marked rocks, Bronze Age burial cists, earthwork remains of later Iron Age hill fort systems, standing stones, enclosures and cairns.*
- *Parkland settings of the large country mansions, which fringe the lower fellside slopes, have distinctive 'landscaped' features and much semi-natural broadleaved woodland cover.*
- *Scattered pattern of individual isolated farmsteads and small hamlets, served by the market towns of Alnwick and Rothbury.*



Landscape character types and areas

- 4.62. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains six landscape character types and 16 landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Landscape character types and areas in NCA2

Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
6	Broad Sandstone Valley	6a	Whittingham Vale
7	Estate Valley	7a	Hulne Park
8	Outcrop Hills and Escarpments	8a	Doddington Ridge
		8b	Kyloe and Chillingham Hills
		8c	Charlton Ridge
		8d	Beanley Moor
		8e	Rothbury Forest
		8f	Harwood Forest
		8g	Sweethope and Blackdown
9	Sandstone Upland Valleys	9a	Coquetdale
10	Smooth Moorland	10a	Rosebrough Moor
		10b	Alnwick Moor
11	Sandstone Fringe Farmland	11a	Belford Hills
		11b	Buteland and Colt Crag
		11c	Hetton

Landscape Character Type 6: Broad Sandstone Valley

Introduction

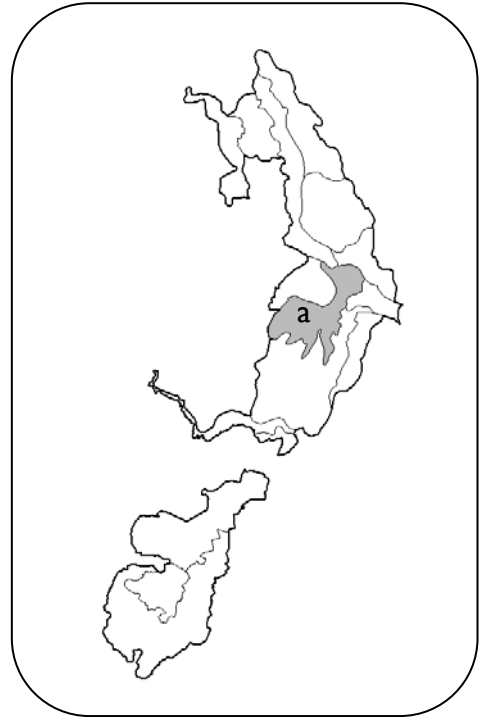
- 4.63. This landscape comprises the broad valley of the River Aln and tributaries, as it passes through the sandstone hills.
- 4.64. This LCT is represented by one character area:
6a Whittingham Vale.

Key Characteristics

- Broad undulating valley.
- Significant influence of glacial deposition.
- Strong enclosure pattern, albeit in decline in parts.

Description

- 4.65. The gently undulating valley landscape has extensive glacial deposition features. The bowl-like western part of the area leads into a narrow section of valley, which widens out briefly before merging into the *Estate Valley* (LCT 7). The River Aln follows a meandering course from west to east through the character area, and is augmented by the Eglington Burn from the north, and the Edlington Burn from the south. These tributaries flow in adjoining valleys which are smaller in scale but similar in character. The area forms a break in the chain of the sandstone hills, and is bounded by the higher ground of Beanley Moor to the north, and Rothbury Forest to the south.
- 4.66. Landcover is dominated by a patchwork of arable crops and pasture, but with localised parkland influences. Fields are generally enclosed by a strong pattern of hedgerows with hedgerow trees, although in many areas this is being eroded as hedgerows are removed or become dysfunctional. Small woodlands and blocky coniferous farm plantations are frequent. Estate woodlands surround small manors, such as Shawdon Hall. The surrounding uplands have larger coniferous plantations which appear on the horizon. The mainly coniferous Thrunton Wood to the south is particularly prominent from the valley.
- 4.67. The village of Whittingham is located at a fording point of the River Aln, and is a small village built around a medieval core, with modern extensions. Elsewhere, settlement is limited to small hamlets and farmsteads, though with a relatively dense local road network. The A697 crosses the valley, but is not a particularly busy or intrusive route. A disused railway line is present, marked by lines of trees.
- 4.68. The landscape is visually enclosed by the relatively steep valley sides to the north and south. Broad open views across the valley are available from these slopes, for example looking south from Glanton. The dome structure on Alnwick Moor is visible, although it is not within this LCT.



- 4.69. There are extensive areas of ridge and furrow, representing medieval field systems 'fossilised' within the modern enclosures. These are associated with settlements, particularly Whittingham, and the deserted villages of Barton and Abberwick. Public footpaths and permissive paths radiate from settlements, and there are small areas of access land. Edlingham Castle is an English Heritage property.

Glossary

Ridge and furrow: broad linear undulations that were created by medieval cultivation practices.

Landscape Character Type 7: Estate Valley

Introduction

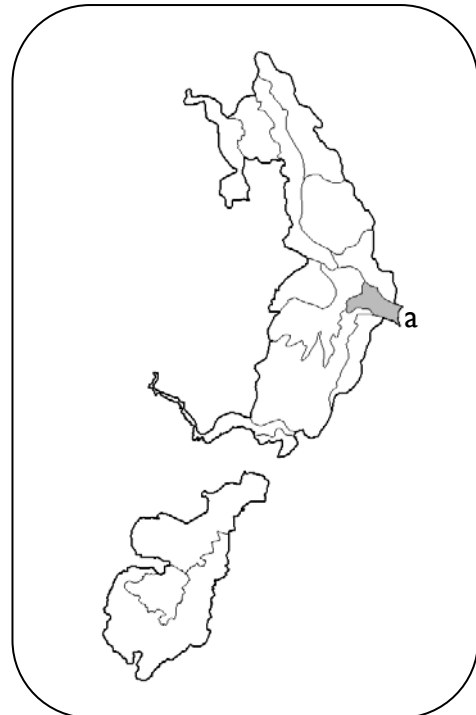
- 4.70. Incised valley, dominated by the extensive parkland in the ownership of the Duke of Northumberland, including Hulne Park, and the distinctive landscape around Alnwick Castle. The area broadly coincides with the Hulne Park Registered Park and Garden, although this extends beyond the area slightly to the south and west, and more extensively into the *Coastal Incised Valley* (LCT 2) to the east.
- 4.71. This LCT is represented by one character area: *7a Hulne Park*.

Key Characteristics

- Incised valley.
- Extensive designed parkland landscape.
- Historic architectural features, including extensive boundary walls.
- Estate woodlands.

Description

- 4.72. The River Aln meanders through this relatively narrow, steep sided valley, from its confluence with the Eglington Burn. The valley is at its narrowest here, as it passes between Alnwick Moor to the south, and Charlton Ridge to the north. The river meanders around smaller hills within the valley, such as Brizlee Hill (175m) and Cuthbert Heugh (129m). In places the river flows through floodplains, called haughs, and elsewhere is contained within a steep-sided gully.
- 4.73. Landcover reflects the estate influence of the Hulne Park designed landscape. Tree cover is extensive, generally comprising deciduous or mixed species. Some forestry plantations have been added. Arable and pastoral farmland exists within this woodland framework, but there are also areas of open parkland, such as Filbert Haugh, and the area north of the castle, with clumps of mature parkland trees. Tree cover extends along the river, and lines the steep valley sides. Heather moorland occurs at higher elevations.
- 4.74. The north-western edge of Alnwick is closely associated with Alnwick Castle. Traditional building forms comprise sandstone houses with slate roofs. High stone walls contribute to the estate influence. The castle itself is often hidden from view, though it stands over the Aln and is prominent from the road to the north. Within the park, settlement is limited to a few farmsteads and other estate buildings. Decorative buildings and historic ruins are sited within the park, complementing the natural landscape and estate woodland. The miles of tall stone walls enclosing the park are highly visible and define the extent of the parkland influence. The medieval origins of these extensive estates are highlighted by the presence of monastic remains



at Hulne Priory (Carmelite), Alnwick Abbey (Premonstratensian) and St. Leonard's Hospital on the road north out of Alnwick.

- 4.75. The main perceptual characteristic of this landscape is its picturesque quality, deliberate yet naturalistic, and designed in part by Capability Brown. Ornamental buildings, such as Brizlee Tower, have been purposefully added to the landscape to enhance its visual appeal. As noted above, Alnwick Castle is prominent in only a few views, but its importance is in its status as the seat around which the park was developed. Views are determined by the landscape design, in places being limited by woodland, and elsewhere being extensive; the viewing platform of Brizlee Tower taking advantage of the latter.
- 4.76. Much of this area is a Registered Park and Garden, and the landscape is a historic feature in itself. It also provides the setting for a number of important buildings and structures, including Alnwick Castle, the 13th century Hulne Priory, and the 18th century Brizlee Tower. Evidence of earlier occupation includes standing stones and earthworks. Alnwick Castle, along with the Alnwick Garden, is a popular tourist destination. Hulne Priory and Alnwick Abbey are publicly accessible, as is the surrounding park.

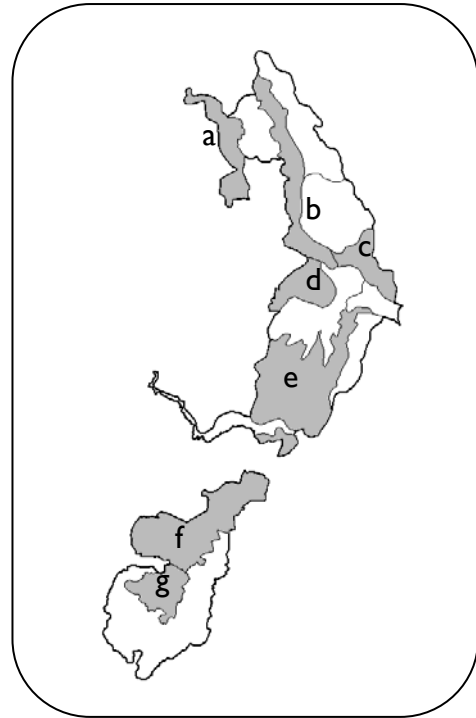
Glossary

Haugh: an area of floodplain meadow.

Landscape Character Type 8: Outcrop Hills and Escarpments

Introduction

- 4.77. These hills form a distinctive chain of rocky uplands, running the length of the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills*, from the *Kyloe Hills* in the north, to *Great Wanney Crag* in the south. Their distinctive form and rich semi-natural vegetation patterns contrast with the surrounding more intensively-farmed landscape.
- 4.78. This LCT is represented by seven character areas: 8a *Doddington Ridge*, 8b *Kyloe and Chillingham Hills*, 8c *Charlton Ridge*, 8d *Beanley Moor*, 8e *Rothbury Forest*, 8f *Harwood Forest* and 8g *Sweethope and Blackdown*.



Key Characteristics

- Flat-topped elongated ridges and rounded sandstone hills.
- Distinctive steep scarp faces forming stepped, often dark, skyline silhouettes.
- Open plateau and gentle dip slopes clothed in heather moorland, acidic grassland mosaic, coniferous forestry and peat bog/mires.
- Steeper slopes and craggy outcrops with bracken, heather and broadleaved woodland .
- Wet pastures and semi-improved pastures on lower slopes.
- Rich muted colours and textures.
- Little or no habitation but significant archaeological remains.
- Water bodies including natural loughs and reservoirs.

Description

- 4.79. The underlying geology of the area is sandstone which forms a sharp north- and west-facing scarp with craggy cliffs, scree slopes and upstanding rocky outcrops. The scarp face creates an indented stepped skyline which is distinctive in views over great distances. Beyond the scarp, the flat tops of the ridges form a broad plateau above the gentler, rounded dip slope to the south. In these latter areas there are fewer distinctive rocky outcrop features, although the vegetation continues to reflect the acidic nature of the underlying geology. The area is drained by a series of burns which cut incised courses through the moorland, and are often bordered by bracken, heather and broadleaved trees and flanked by wet pastures. Elsewhere in this character type there are natural loughs and mires (e.g. *Darden Lough* and *Little Lough* respectively) in areas of impeded drainage where peat has built up, as well as man-made reservoirs such as *Sweethope Lough* and *Fontburn Reservoir*.

- 4.80. Much of this area is covered by extensive semi-natural vegetation reflecting the underlying acidic soil conditions, and including heather and grass moorland, and, in areas of impeded drainage, peat bog. Rocky outcrops set within the heather moors, together with patches of bracken and gorse, add visual diversity. These areas of moorland are enclosed by stone walls and provide rough sheep grazing; they are managed for grouse. On lower slopes there is a medium-sized enclosure pattern of improved pastures within stone walls. These fringe areas have an intimate character due to their topography, stone walls and woodlands. There are some notable areas of ancient semi-natural woodland, particularly on steeper slopes below the scarp face, along incised burns and on the dip slopes where woodland often reflects the rounded topography of the area. Some of these woodlands are grazed and form important and distinctive areas of wood pasture. These contrast with the geometric shapes of the coniferous woodland (comprising pine, spruce and some larch) that have been planted on the open plateau and dip slopes such as Raylees Common, Harwood Forest and Aid Moss. In places the conifer plantations are edged with broadleaved species such as birch, giving a softer appearance. Elsewhere open glades have been created within plantations. Holburn Lake and Moss is a Ramsar site and SPA, and Ford Moss is a SAC. There are SSSIs at Colour Heugh & Bowden Doors, Fallowlees Flush and Hannah's Hill
- 4.81. There is little or no settlement in this landscape character type. In addition there are few roads accessing this landscape, although ancient hollow ways cross the area providing access by foot. Human features are limited to numerous communications masts, as well as a line of pylons across the Cartington Hills. Quarrying and mining has been an important aspect of this landscape. Former coal workings are scattered across the area, and several stone quarries continue to operate.
- 4.82. Due to their height above surrounding farmland, these hills form important backdrops to landscapes such as the Coquet valley as well as offering long distant views to other hills such as the Cheviot Hills. While not remote, the semi-natural vegetation and rocky outcrops, which are features of the hills, give a ruggedness and natural character to much of the area. The simple landform and complex semi-natural vegetation patterns provide a rich visual diversity of colours and textures.
- 4.83. The hills have a cultural importance, reflected in the high concentration of prehistoric sites such as burial cairns, standing stones, rock art and hill forts. There are several important concentrations of such features, such as at Doddington Moor, where a major prehistoric landscape is preserved. This comprises an extensive suite of Neolithic rock art, four later prehistoric enclosures and a fort. A number of other prehistoric fortified sites, including Bewick Hill, Beanley Moor, Jenny's Lantern and Old Rothbury, are preserved in rough grazing areas. Industrial remains from early mining also survive on Alnwick and Lyham Moors and in the Kyloe Hills. The designed landscapes of Chillingham Park and Craggside make important local contributions to historic character.
- 4.84. The hills are an important recreational resource, with extensive areas of open moorland designated as access land. Rock climbers regularly use several of the outcrops. Tourist centres such as Rothbury are close by, and sites such as Craggside, a National Trust property, are within this landscape.

Landscape Character Areas

8a Doddington Moor

- 4.85. This chain of low hills, rising no higher than 200m, forms a separate ridge to the west of the main chain of the Outcrop Hills and Escarpments, although retaining the same scarp and moorland characteristics. The scarp slope is prominent from the flat Till valley to the west, and is wooded around Fenton. Doddington Moor in particular presents a concentration of historic earthworks and cup and ring marks, and is now the site of a golf course and quarry. There are views across to the Cheviot Hills, and the southern section, at Weetwood Moor, forms part of the setting of Wooler.

8b Kyloe and Chillingham Hills

- 4.86. This long chain of hills has the characteristic outcrop escarpment on its western edge, forming relatively low but prominent hills including the Kyloe Hills (174m), Greensheen Hill (205m) and Ros Castle (315m). The latter is the site of a hill fort, and similar evidence of prehistoric use is scattered across the area. There are also the more modern remains of coal working. There are medium-scale forestry plantations, as well as estate woodland and parkland associated with Chillingham Castle, an important tourist destination. The Kyloe Hills are a popular rock climbing venue.

8c Charlton Ridge

- 4.87. A large tract of open upland landscape. Although plateau like, the landform is never flat. It is gently rolling at the north-west and becomes more dramatically undulating towards the south-east where there is an accompanying reduction in landscape scale. Predominant land use is extensive pasture grazed by sheep and cattle. Enclosure is infrequent and often consists only of wire fences. Consequently the landscape is very open, broken up only by numerous, relatively small and generally rectilinear conifer plantations. The area is crossed by a small number of single track roads and footpaths.

8d Beanley Moor

- 4.88. This undulating area shows the distinctive steep slope to the west at Titlington Pike, and has outcrops at Hunterheugh Crag. There is a greater abundance of farmland; a mixture of arable and pasture, divided by hedgerows, only giving way to heather or plantation forestry at the summits or where slopes are steep. Minor roads provide access to scattered farmsteads and to the village of Glanton on the south edge of the character area. There are views to the Cheviot Hills, and to Charlton Ridge and Alnwick Moor to the east. There is a small-scale parkland landscape at Hedgeley Hall.

8e Rothbury Forest

- 4.89. This character area forms a broad upland ridge north of Rothbury and the Coquet valley. Like other areas within this type, craggy cliffs (e.g. Corby's Crag and crags on Callaly Moor) form occasional prominent landmarks, and the land cover is extensive grass and heather moorland with substantial conifer plantations, the largest being Thrunton Forest. The moorland is extensively grazed, with infrequent wire fences, and the landscape scale is large, with long distance views. There is a wealth of prehistoric remains including cairn fields, cup and ring marks and remains of

settlements. Later historic interest includes evidence of small-scale coal mining at Alnwick Moor, as well as large country estates at Callaly Castle and Craggside, now managed by the National Trust. A prominent feature is the 'golf ball' radome of the Brizlee Wood Remote Radar Head, now a recognisable modern historical element.

8f Harwood Forest

- 4.90. This character area lies between Coquet Dale and the Lisles Burn, and is divided by the eastern 'arm' of the Northumberland National Park. The expansive upland is dominated by the large-scale, geometrically laid out, coniferous plantation of Harwood Forest, and the smaller, but still substantial, plantation at Raylees Common. Harwood Forest extends into the National Park, where the stepped ridge of the Simonside Hills forms a prominent landmark. To the south and east of the forest there are extensive tracts of semi-improved grassland, interrupted by small blocky plantations. In places heather moorland survives, and distinctive patterns resulting from controlled burning are evident. In damper areas there are mires supporting purple moor grass, bog myrtle and sphagnum moss. Dry stone walls are frequent enclosure elements, although many are no longer stock proof, and are supplemented with wire fences, which predominate elsewhere.

8g Sweethope and Blackdown

- 4.91. This character area forms the southern extremity of the outcrop hills and comprises the gentle dip slope which has less dramatic topographic features than areas further north, although there are still notable craggy outcrops such as Great Wanney and Little Wanney Craggs, used by rock climbers. It comprises extensive open areas of heather and grass moorland, and small blocky plantations. In places where heather moorland survives, the distinctive patterns resulting from controlled burning are evident. The area also includes Sweethope Lough which is important for fishing.

Glossary

Cup and ring marks: characteristic circular marks on rock outcroppings, of prehistoric date.

Radome: a geodesic dome structure protecting a radar installation, often referred to colloquially as a 'golf ball'.

Hollow way: a road which has over time fallen significantly lower than the land on either side, also referred to as a sunken lane.

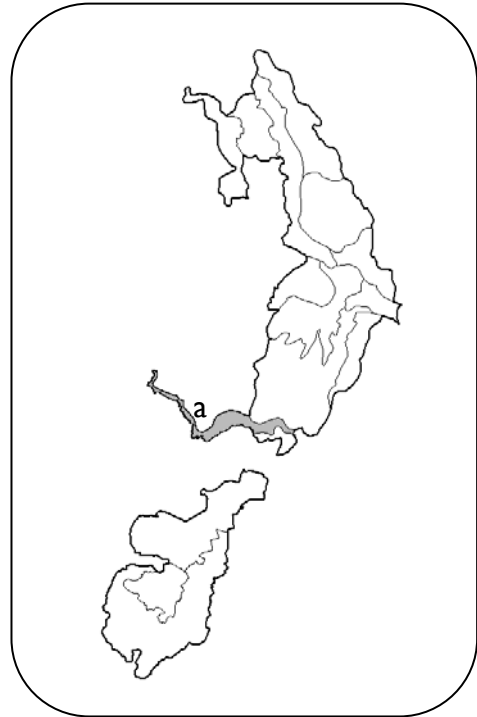
Landscape Character Type 9: Sandstone Upland Valleys

Introduction

- 4.92. This landscape character type comprises the valley of the River Coquet, as it flows alongside and through the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills*. The valley is strongly influenced by the sandstone context to the south and east, and by the lower-lying land of the *Upland Fringe Farmland* (LCT 15) to the north. This LCT extends into the Northumberland National Park.
- 4.93. This LCT is represented by one character area: *9a Coquetdale*.

Key Characteristics

- Sinuous shallow valley and narrower, incised tributaries set within the sandstone uplands.
- Valleys enclosed by distinctive, gently convex sandstone hills with acidic vegetation.
- Smooth floodplain meadows and pastures grazed by cattle, sheep and horses and occasional areas of arable farmland.
- Strong topographic, vegetation and land use patterns.
- Meandering rivers that are inconspicuous within the landscape, but lined with alders.
- Steep bluffs clothed in pine and other conifers flanking the valley floor.
- Shelterbelts and clumps of Scots pine and mixed woodland on lower slopes and valley floor.
- Sandstone-built historic villages on lower slopes.
- Rich archaeology including ridge and furrow, motte and bailey and fortified bastle houses.



Description

- 4.94. The valley has been heavily influenced by glaciation, which has left substantial superficial deposits resulting in some areas of undulating terrain, e.g. around Hepple, and extensive sand and gravel deposits as found at Castron. Consequently the soils are fertile, supporting a mix of pasture and arable cultivation. On the valley sides there is evidence of glacial meltwater erosion in the form of steep bluffs, which are often wooded with Scots pine and non-native conifers or covered in gorse scrub. The profile of much of the valley is asymmetrical, due to the fact that the south side is underlain by sandstone, and the north side by glacial deposits over Cementstones. On the sandstone valley sides the topography rises sharply and acidic soils prevail, while glacial deposits rise more gently, forming a rounded profile. The floodplain, or

'haugh' within the valley is well defined and of varying width. The meandering course of the river flows between shingle banks. In places oxbow lakes and former river channels can be picked out as wet patches and undulations within the valley floor pastures.

- 4.95. The acidic soils support distinctive vegetation, including heather moorland, birch woodland, and patches of gorse and bracken, while the glacial soils to the north support large-scale improved pastures and blocks of conifer shelterbelts. The valley floor pastures are semi-improved with patches of wet flush vegetation, most frequently divided by post and wire fencing; although in places outgrown hawthorn hedges extend up the valley sides. The field pattern is generally small-scale with grazing by cattle, sheep and horses. The surrounding woodlands give the valleys a sense of enclosure. This is most strongly felt in the tributary valleys where the watercourses are lined with alder trees and broadleaved woodland; and in the Upper Coquet valley where pine and conifer plantations extend onto the floodplain. Elsewhere, as at Warton and Rothbury, the valley floor is more open, although mature oak and ash trees are characteristic within the hedgerows on the lower valley sides. The River Coquet itself is a SSSI, as is Glebe Quarry.
- 4.96. The river valleys have a settled and sheltered character with a regular pattern of small historic villages occurring at the break in slope between the valley sides and floodplain. Settlements include Sharperton, Hepple, and Thropton villages, and the market town of Rothbury. These villages are of considerable antiquity, dating from the medieval period or possibly earlier, have a strong local vernacular character and are predominantly built of sandstone. The extraction of sands and gravels takes place around Castron, where gravel lakes and wetland carr are being created post-excavation. In the eastern part of the valley, there are developments associated with the edge of Rothbury, including a golf course, caravan park and housing along the valleys sides.
- 4.97. The upper part of the valley is narrow, sinuous and contained, although the valley broadens out in places. There are occasional framed glimpses down the valley to settlements beyond. Coniferous plantations on the valley slopes appear on the skyline. East of Hepple the valley becomes broader and less enclosed, as far as Rothbury, where the valley becomes deeply incised, forming a picturesque gorge.
- 4.98. Historical features include numerous tower houses and bastle houses on the valley sides, evidence of the conflicts of the 16th and 17th centuries, when the area was subject to the depredations of the 'Border Reivers'. On the southern side of the valley, just outside the character area and within the National Park, are the remains of Harbottle Castle, an English Heritage property. The sand and gravel terraces of the Coquet are highly dynamic as the river frequently changes course – palaeochannels and other fossilised river features are readily visible on aerial photographs of the area. Fragments of medieval field systems are visible where they have been spared the effects of the river and intensive agriculture. The early features that survive in the area are located above the floodplain on the upland edge, outside the character area.

Glossary

Tower house: a tall, narrow fortified house common to northern England and southern Scotland and dating from medieval times to the 17th century.

Bastle house: a type of defensive farmhouse common to northern England and southern Scotland in the 16th century.

Border Reivers: armed raiders common across the Anglo-Scottish border area, particularly in the 16th century.

Haugh: an area of floodplain meadow.

Oxbow lake: a U-shaped body of water formed when a wide river meander is cut off to create a lake.

Palaeochannel: deposits of unconsolidated sediments in ancient, currently inactive river and stream channel systems.

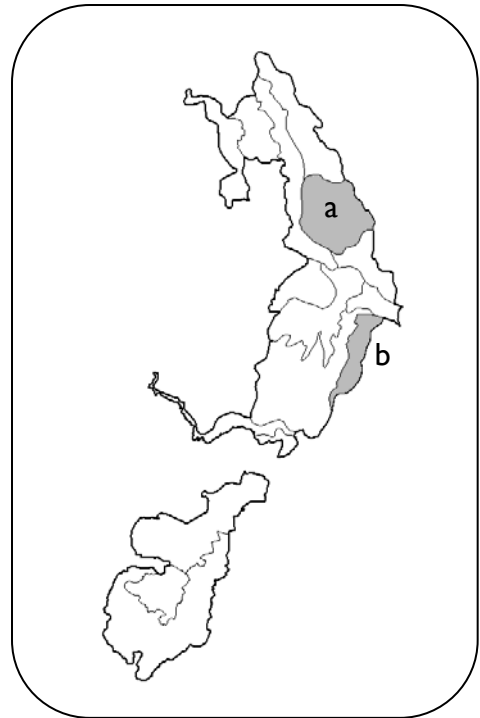
Landscape Character Type 10: Smooth Moorland

Introduction

- 4.99. This landscape occurs on the broad dip slope which lies to the east of the prominent scarp of the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills*. It is closely associated with the *Outcrop Hills and Escarpments* (LCT 8), which form the western edge of both areas of *Smooth Moorland*.
- 4.100. This LCT is represented by two character areas: *10a Rosebrough Moor* and *10b Alnwick Moor*.

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating moorland, without the significant rocky outcrops which characterise the *Outcrop Hills and Escarpments* (LCT 8).
- Simple landcover of heather moor, rough grassland and peat bog.
- Limited areas of coniferous plantation forest, giving an open character.
- Little woodland or tree cover, and very limited settlement.
- Uninterrupted views across the coastal plain towards the North Sea.
- Prominent masts and other infrastructure.



Description

- 4.101. The *Smooth Moorland* occurs on the gentle eastern dip slope of the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills*. The land rises from the coastal plain to a relatively level series of plateaux, before dropping sharply to the west at the scarp slope. The plateaux are flat or very gently undulating, with few prominent hills. Overall the land shelves to the east. Small burns drain the land, via a network of narrow gullies.
- 4.102. Heather moorland predominates across this landscape, with upland heath and blanket bog occupying large areas, giving the impression of an amorphous landscape of continuous heather coverage. Moorland grazing, with bracken and gorse and few field boundaries, covers the remaining upper areas. With decreasing elevation, boundaries become more frequent, with semi-improved grasslands on the lower slopes. Similarly, stone walls and post and wire fences give way to managed hedgerows at lower elevations. Coniferous plantations form the only significant woodland cover. There are a number of small-scale conifer plantations, as well as larger forests at Edlingham Woods and Ros Hill Wood. All are geometrical, and are prominent within the gently rolling landscape. There is a SSSI at Quarryhouse Moor Ponds.
- 4.103. There is very little settlement within this landscape, limited to a few scattered farmsteads, and isolated cottages. Farmsteads have traditional sandstone cottages, but with modern utilitarian structures added. It is also a relatively inaccessible

landscape, with few roads crossing it. Ruined farmsteads and a disused railway line hint at the abandonment of this marginal land, although there are signs of return, such as cottages undergoing restoration. Human influence appears in the form of several prominent communications masts, including the 150m Chatton television transmitter. On Alnwick Moor, a radar station and a communications mast are prominent landmarks.

- 4.104. Uninterrupted views across the coastal plain towards the North Sea, including the coast and the Farne Islands, are possible, due to the shelving gradient and the eastward slope, as well as the height of the plateaux above the coastal plain. Within the landscape views frequently comprise only heather moorland. Coniferous forests occasionally obstruct views, but the landscape generally is devoid of trees, and is open and exposed. This can be a bleak landscape, although when the heather is in flower, it can also be picturesque.
- 4.105. The relatively undisturbed nature of this upland landscape has contributed to the preservation of a range of historic remains. Extensive Bronze Age ritual and funerary landscapes in the form of cairn cemeteries and rock art survive. Early coal pits are visible on Quarryhouse Moor and around Hunterslaw and Commonflat. On the fringes of Alnwick Moor, the strictly regimented pattern of small rectilinear fields indicates the late date of enclosure and provides a stark contrast with the open moorland. Given the open landcover, much of this landscape is designated as access land, although there are few footpaths, and little to attract the tourist apart from the remote appearance of the landscape.

Landscape Character Areas

10a Rosebrough Moor

- 4.106. This is a broad area of moorlands to the east of the *Kyloe and Chillingham Hills* character area (8a). The central area around Middlemoor and Rosebrough Moor is almost flat. The northern section around Chatton and Sandyford Moors is more undulating, with small clumps of birch occurring in sheltered gullies. There are several prominent masts within the area, each with a cluster of small utilitarian buildings within a high-fenced compound. The uninterrupted heather moorland is most significant in the southern part of this area. The unfenced road across the area lends an upland, expansive feel.

10b Alnwick Moor

- 4.107. This area lies to the south-west of Alnwick. At the edge of Alnwick, urban fringe land uses are evident, including areas of equestrian paddocks. Alnwick Moor is crossed by the B6341, and was formerly traversed by a railway line, which has left a series of cuttings, embankments and scattered cottages. The northern part of this area extends into the Registered Park and Garden of Hulne Park. Heather burning leaves a distinctive pattern across the heather moorland, which will vary from year to year.

Glossary

Bell pit: a type of simple vertical mine shaft, resembling a bell in cross section.

Cairn cemetery: a group of cairns in close proximity which are predominantly funerary or ritual in nature.

Landscape Character Type 11: Sandstone Fringe Farmland

Introduction

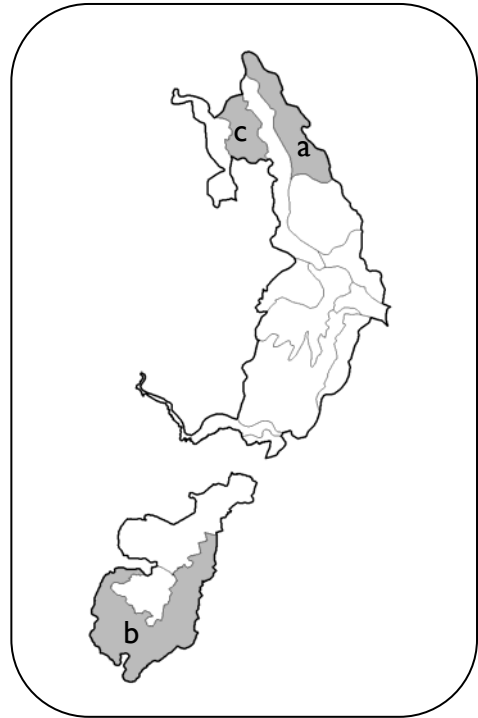
- 4.108. This landscape character type is associated with the *Outcrop Hills and Escarpments* (LCT 8), occurring at either end of the chain of the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills* (NCA 2). This is a transitional landscape between the sandstone hills and the more intensively farmed and settled lowland areas, and is a marginal area for farmland both economically and geographically.
- 4.109. This LCT is represented by three character areas: 11a Belford Hills, 11b Buteland and Colt Crag, and 11c Hetton.

Key Characteristics

- Open, expansive, marginal upland fringe farmland.
- Gently undulating topography drained by minor burns, with wet pastures in shallow hollows.
- Occasional Whin Sill and sandstone outcrops and crags with associated active and disused quarries.
- Association with neighbouring sandstone hills.
- Mainly rough and semi-improved pastures, with patches of open grass moorland on highest ground.
- Varied pattern of enclosure; medium- to large-scale and defined by a mixture of stone walls and wire fencing.
- Areas of geometric coniferous forest and mixed woodland plantation.
- Sparsely populated landscape, with occasional farmsteads connected by narrow lanes.
- Historic elements include evidence of past mining including coal shafts, and ancient ridge and furrow.

Description

- 4.110. Geologically this landscape character type comprises sandstone, shale, limestone and mudstone which are overlain with glacial drift, giving rise to a subtly undulating topography. Sandstone and whinstone outcrops occur and are quarried for building stone. The landscape shelves down from the higher sandstone hills, to the coastal plain, or to the mid-Northumberland farmland. Generally, this landscape has relatively limited topographical variation, although it is associated with the more distinct landforms of the *Outcrop Hills and Escarpments* (LCT 8), such as the Kyloe Hills above Hetton.



- 4.111. Land use is dominated by rough and semi-improved pastures, many of which are rushy, with patches of open grass moorland on the higher ground, for example around Coween, at about 240m. The enclosure pattern, where defined by stone walls, is visually strong, creating a rectilinear and regular pattern. This pattern is occasionally reinforced by angular blocks of coniferous and mixed woodland. Elsewhere, larger improved pastures and large arable fields are divided by post and wire fences. In some places broadleaved woodland occurs in the shallow depressions and incised ravines created by burns, notably along the slopes down to the North Tyne valley and the coastal plain. Rock outcrops are marked by associated acid-loving vegetation such as patches of bracken and gorse. There are SSSIs at Gunnerton Nick, Redesdale Ironstone Quarries and Bavington Crag.
- 4.112. This landscape has few built features, the most significant human features being the angular blocks of coniferous forest. There are isolated settlements, and occasional small villages or hamlets such as Holburn. Belford is a traditional market town centred on a market cross, and surrounded by wooded estate landscapes. In the south there are a number of man-made features such as masts and small reservoirs.
- 4.113. The scale of the landscape is medium to large, and it has a visual simplicity and uniformity. It has an important visual relationship with the low ridges of the *Outcrop Hills and Escarpments* (LCT 8), which contain some views. However the open character and the relatively high elevation means that there are often broader views across neighbouring areas, either east to the coast or west to the Cheviot Hills. The landscape has a degree of remoteness, resulting from its lack of settlement. Woodlands and shelterbelts provide some containment in an otherwise open landscape.
- 4.114. A number of cup and ring marked rocks provide evidence of prehistoric activity within the area. There is extensive evidence of past mining and iron-smelting activity, as disused quarries and former spoil heaps pepper the landscape. The simplicity of the landform and the uniformity of land use mean that archaeological earthworks and ridge and furrow are visually prominent. These create a rich pattern and add a sense of time-depth. The A68 cuts a straight swath through the landscape around Colt Crag, following the line of Dere Street – the main Roman road linking York and the lands beyond Hadrian's Wall. A Roman camp at Swine Hill marks the point that the modern and Roman roads diverge. Recreational opportunities within this landscape are generally limited.

Landscape Character Areas

11a Belford Hills

- 4.115. This area lies on the east dip slope of the Kyloe Hills section of the *Outcrop Hills and Escarpments* (LCT 8), and flanks the *Farmed Coastal Plain* (LCT 3) to the east. The market town of Belford lies at the eastern edge, and arable farmland with hedgerows occurs along this lower edge. Estate influences around Belford include folly buildings. Further up the slope, post and wire fencing predominates, defining large semi-improved pastures. At the highest points are areas of grazed moorland and gorse scrub, merging with the *Smooth Moorland* (LCT 10) to the south. Bamburgh Castle and the Farne Islands are prominent in views to the east.

11b Buteland and Colt Crag

- 4.116. The Whin Sill cuts across this area, from Barrasford Quarry to north of Kirkwhelpington. As a more resistant rock, it forms prominent outcrops of high commercial value that have been, and continue to be quarried, for example at Divethill and Swinburne. The A68 passes through this landscape, the 'hidden dips' and 'blind summits' on the road highlighting the undulating topography and the straightness of Dere Street, the Roman road which it follows. This area often has a rectilinear character of stone walls and shelterbelts. Patches of broadleaved woodland occur along minor burns and ravines, adding local interest and a more intimate character. This landscape has an expansive, empty and marginal feel, reinforced by the dispersed pattern of farmsteads.

11c Hetton

- 4.117. An upland fringe, expansive farmed landscape lying between the elevated landscapes of Doddington Moor and the Kyoie Hills. Gently sloping elevated farmland extends over a shallow valley between the more distinctive ridges of Doddington Moor to the west and the outcropping hills to the east. The shallow valley is drained to the south by the Hetton Burn. Large-scale arable fields are punctuated by geometric wooded blocks. The fields are bounded by a mixture of fences and hedgerows, and there has been some replacement planting of hedgerows and field trees. There is some woodland along the course of the streams and areas of rough grazing. Settlement density is low, with only a few dispersed farmsteads and houses. A network of local roads provide access through the area, including a road which follows the straight course of the 'Devil's Causeway' Roman road. This landscape is closely related to Doddington Moor and Greenshean Hill which often contain the landscape. The open character allows distant views to the Cheviot Hills to the west. The landscape is crossed by the St. Cuthbert's Way long distance route. The field pattern dates largely from the 18th-19th centuries, in the form of large rectilinear fields, with some later amalgamation of holdings reflecting 20th century intensification.

Glossary

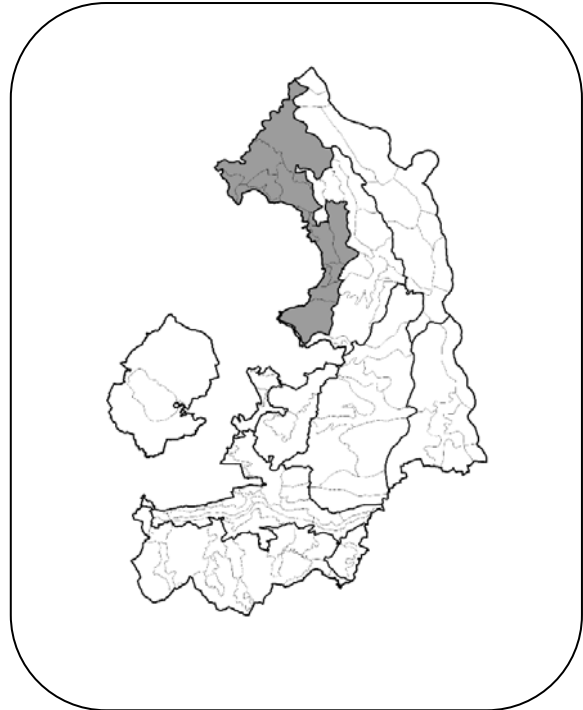
Henge: circular Bronze Age enclosure, marked out by an earth bank and an inner ditch.

NCA 3: CHEVIOT FRINGE

4.118. The Cheviot Fringe is a landscape of broad valleys and rolling farmland. It occupies a belt of lowland wrapping round the Cheviot Hills, and separating them from the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills* (NCA 2) to the east. Further north the area broadens out towards the coast, and merges with the drumlin farmland of the Scottish Merse across the River Tweed.

4.119. Key characteristics of the *Cheviot Fringe*, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.

- *Broad valley and plain landscape which forms a belt of lowland wrapping around the Cheviots and separating them from the Northumberland Sandstone Hills to the east.*
- *Many landscape features shaped by glaciation and deposition, including extensive clay and sand deposits on the Milfield Plain, drumlin fields within the Tweed valley lowlands, and distinctive hummocky kettle moraines, sinuous eskers and kames within the gently undulating vales.*
- *Tranquil, agricultural landscape of mixed farmland, combining pasture and meadows for livestock with arable.*
- *Strong pattern of hedgerows and many hedgerow trees within the undulating vales contrasts with flatter, more open, arable farmland to the north.*
- *Strong rectilinear pattern of small, coniferous, woodland blocks and shelterbelts.*
- *Many meandering rivers and streams, often flowing between raised terraces and flat, gravel benches.*
- *Small, traditional villages strategically sited at river bridging points and on the break of slope of the surrounding uplands and the flatter vale floor.*
- *Fortified castles, 'bastle houses', 'tower houses' and other defensive structures.*



Landscape character types and areas

- 4.120. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains seven landscape character types and 15 landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Landscape character types and areas in NCA3

Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
12	Broad Farmed Vale	12a	Breamish Vale
13	Broad Floodplain Valley	13a	Till and Glen Valleys
14	Igneous Foothills	14a	Moneylaws and Coldside
		14b	Wooler Foothills
		14c	Old Fawdon
15	Upland Fringe Farmland	15a	Lilburn and Roddam
		15b	Upper Coquet
16	Open Rolling Farmland	16a	Halidon
		16b	Duddo and Lowick
		16c	East Learmouth
17	Upland Fringe Ridges	17a	Horse Rigg
18	Upland Fringe Valley	18a	Bowmont Valley
		18b	Wooler Vale
		18c	Upper Breamish
		18d	Upper Aln

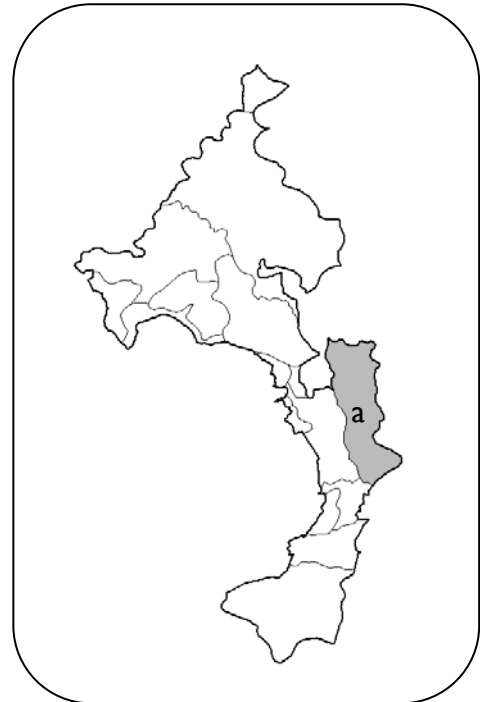
Landscape Character Type 12: Broad Farmed Vale

Introduction

- 4.121. This landscape is a broad area of gently rolling farmland, defined by higher ground at the margins. The River Breamish flows through, becoming the Till after it merges with the Lilburn Burn, although there is not a distinct valley landform.
- 4.122. This LCT is represented by one character area:
12a Breamish Vale.

Key Characteristics

- Meandering river and floodplain within broad valley landscape.
- Distinct break between the vale and the sandstone hills to the east.
- Rolling mixed farmland.
- Irregular pattern of woodlands.
- Views to the Cheviot Hills to the west.



Description

- 4.123. The landscape comprises the broad vale of the River Breamish, which lies between the foothill farmland to the west, and the sandstone hills to the east. The eastern edge is sharply defined by the scarp of the hills above Chillingham, although to the west the transition is more gradual. The vale is a depression within the wider 'cuesta' landscape of alternating scarps, formed by the sloping strata of limestones and sandstones beneath, rather than being an incised valley. The River Breamish meanders broadly across the vale, with tight meanders within the wider bends. Evidence of past river alignments is extensive, although the watercourse is not a prominent feature in itself. The river turns sharply to the east before flowing through a gap between Weetwood Moor and Doddington Moor. The river, however, is not a distinct feature within the landscape.
- 4.124. Land use is mostly medium-large arable fields, with significant areas of semi-improved pasture. Some older clusters of smaller, less regular fields remain. Field boundaries are commonly post and wire, with some remnant hedgerows. Hedgerow trees are occasional features. There are clumps of broadleaf woodland, some associated with farmsteads, and some with the river, although these are infrequent. Coniferous shelterbelts are more frequent to the south. More significant woodland is associated with parkland landscapes, particularly the Registered Park and Garden of Chillingham Castle, which dates from the mid 18th century. These include avenues, and estate woodlands on the hills to the east. The river is part of the River Tweed SAC.
- 4.125. The village of Chatton is the most substantial settlement in the area. The village has a mix of traditional and more modern buildings. Chillingham is an estate village

associated with Chillingham Castle. Elsewhere are a number of large farmsteads, with traditional farmhouses often overshadowed by large utilitarian buildings. The busy A697 runs along the south-west side of the area, where a large sawmill is a prominent feature seen from the road. There is evidence of historic and ongoing sand and gravel extraction in the valley floor.

- 4.126. Views west take in the Cheviot Hills, although views east are often more dramatic, looking up to the scarp. Bewick Hill and Ros Castle are particularly prominent landforms. The lack of broadleaf woodland and hedgerows, and the large farmsteads, gives this area a utilitarian feel. It is less intensively farmed than the area to the north, and contains some topographic variation. Estate woodlands provide a welcome change from the open farmland.
- 4.127. Evidence of ancient occupation of this area is less extensive than on the surrounding hilltops, although there are standing stones and earthworks. The 'Devil's Causeway' Roman road runs north-south through the landscape. There are signs of medieval ridge and furrow, particularly around Chatton – which also retains its characteristically medieval form. Chillingham Castle dates from the 14th century, and has been altered many times since. It is a popular visitor attraction, as is the parkland, which is in separate ownership, and is home to the Chillingham white cattle.

Glossary

Cuesta: a ridge formed by erosion of tilted sedimentary rock strata, where hard rocks remain as a scarp on one side, with softer rocks forming a gentle slope on the other.

Ridge and furrow: broad linear undulations that were created by medieval cultivation practices.

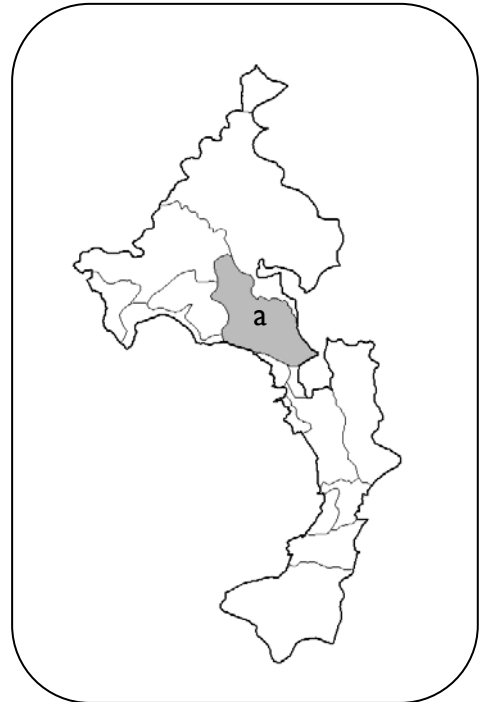
Landscape Character Type 13: Broad Floodplain Valley

Introduction

- 4.128. Broad, open valleys, defined by higher ground at the margins, and a flat alluvial floodplain with meandering rivers.
- 4.129. This LCT is represented by one character area:
13a Till and Glen Valleys.

Key Characteristics

- Broad valley with flat floodplain and meandering river course.
- Intensively farmed agricultural landscape, with geometric woodland blocks.
- Settlement and farms clustered at the edge of the valley floor.
- Expansive landscape with views to the Cheviot Hills.
- Historic villages and farm buildings.



Description

- 4.130. This is a gently undulating to flat broad floodplain landscape. The Milfield plain represents the sediments of a glacial meltwater lake, where thick accumulations of sands and clays were deposited. The Wooler Water enters the broad valley floor to the north of Wooler, joining with the River Till and the broad valley of the River Glen which enters from the west. The River Till meanders across the valley floor to the north.
- 4.131. This is an intensively farmed landscape, with large-scale predominantly arable fields, and areas of pasture. The fields are bounded by hedgerows in places, and there are some field trees, particularly closer to the valley sides. A strong pattern of geometric woodland blocks and coniferous plantations is found in the northern and western part of the landscape character area. The rivers are part of the River Tweed SAC, and there is a SSSI along the Till Riverbanks.
- 4.132. Settlement is typically located at the valley edge, above the floodplain. This includes a number of small villages, hamlets and large farmsteads. A high voltage pylon line follows the course of the River Till from Wooler, before turning west near Milfield. A network of minor roads and the A697 follow the higher land at the edge of the valley floor. There are extensive areas of sand and gravel extraction close to Woodbridge.
- 4.133. The large-scale open character of the valley provides a dramatic contrast with the surrounding hills, which rise steeply from the valley floor. The rounded summits of the Cheviot Hills are a feature in views, rising well above the vertical features of the pylons and trees within the valley.

- 4.134. The villages, hamlets and farms include built features of historical interest within the landscape. The Milfield Basin contains some of the most significant prehistoric landscapes in the country, including evidence of Mesolithic settlement, a number of henges and later prehistoric occupation, in addition to the Anglo-Saxon 'palace' site of Maelmin. However, much of this archaeology has been truncated by ploughing and is not visible on the surface. The landscape includes a network of local footpaths providing some recreational value. Other features include settlement sites, enclosures and Roman camps and the estate landscape of Ewart Park.

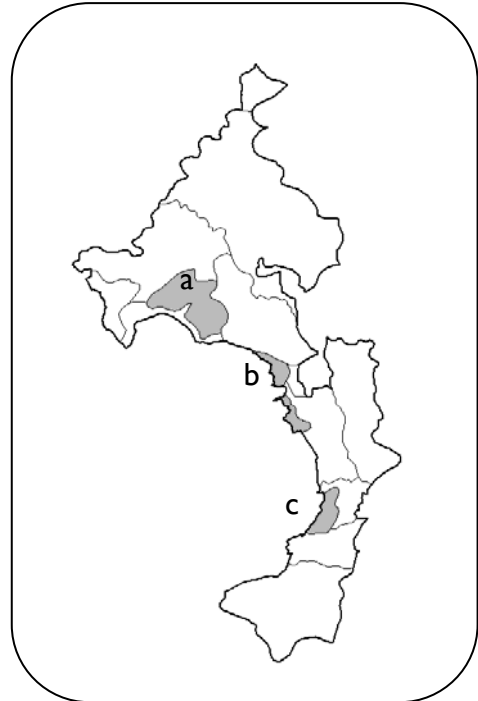
Landscape Character Type 14: Igneous Foothills

Introduction

- 4.135. Rounded, outlying foothills of the Cheviot Hills, with a mix of upland and lowland land uses and characteristics.
- 4.136. This LCT is represented by three character areas: *14a Moneylaws and Coldside*, *14b Wooler Foothills* and *14c Old Fawdon*.

Key Characteristics

- Rounded hills cut by steep valleys.
- Association with the Cheviot Hills, either directly or separated by narrow valleys.
- Generally smooth hills with some rocky outcrops.
- A mix of upland land uses, including forestry and rough grazing, with some areas of pasture and arable farming.
- Little or no settlement, only a few farmsteads.
- Frequent signs of historical activity such as settlements.
- Network of footpaths and access land.



Description

- 4.137. These landscapes form the outlying edges of the Cheviot massif. They are formed from the Andesite lava which underlies the majority of the Cheviot Hills, and drop away sharply at the interface with the softer sedimentary rocks of the surrounding lowland. Physically the hills are similar to the Cheviot Hills, although on a smaller scale, with summits between 200m and 315m, the highest peak being Old Fawdon. The hills are drained by small upland streams, which often flow in deeply cut valleys. Steep-sided valleys formed by larger watercourses divide the area into small groups or individual hills.
- 4.138. Land cover represents a mix of upland and lowland land uses, with some hills used for rough grazing, with scattered gorse, while other areas have extensive improved pasture. Arable farmland appears on lower slopes, particularly towards the rolling farmland and valleys to the north and east. Tree cover is limited to small coniferous blocks and shelterbelts. Hedgerow trees are fairly common in some locations, forming a distinctive pattern of pasture and trees across the lower slopes. Field boundaries are usually hedges, often untrimmed, giving way to post and wire and drystone walls at higher levels. The tributary streams are part of the River Tweed SAC, and the juniper woods in Lilburn valley are protected as a SSSI.
- 4.139. Settlement is very sparse across most of this area, although the western edge of the town of Wooler extends up on to the slopes of the foothills. The edge of the

settlement comprises mostly post-war housing, which is in contrast to the more traditional character of the High Street, located on the lower slopes. Elsewhere, isolated farmsteads and cottages of traditional materials are sparsely scattered.

- 4.140. The foothills are a visually important part of the Cheviot landscape, forming the outliers of the massif, and they are key to the setting of the higher hills. The transition between the farmed lower foothills, and the open moorland of the higher summits behind, can clearly be seen. These outlying foothills also play a role in views from the Northumberland National Park, where they form a transitional foreground to the farmed lowlands.
- 4.141. Despite the dearth of modern settlement, there is much evidence of historical settlement, including hill forts on some summits. There are monuments within the areas, recording past landowners and events, including the Battle of Homildon Hill (1402). Some of these are signposted and have good access. A number of later prehistoric hilltop enclosures are well-preserved and are easily accessed, most notably those at 'The Kettles' to the south of Wooler. As well as a network of public footpaths across these areas, some parts are also open access land.

Landscape Character Areas

14a Moneylaws and Coldside

- 4.142. These two large, rounded hills are separated from the Cheviot Hills by the incised valley of the Bowmont Water. Moneylaws Hill supports improved pasture and arable farming, particularly on the more gentle eastern slopes. The steeper Coldside Hill, by contrast, is used for rough grazing, with small blocks of forestry and areas of gorse scrub. Lines of hedgerow trees and shelterbelts run uphill, forming a distinctive pattern on the lower slopes. A few farmsteads are located on the lower slopes. These outlying foothills play a role in views along the Bowmont Water. There are several historical settlement sites, and a monument on Lanton Hill. Most significantly the site of the Battle of Flodden (1513) is located on the north slope of Moneylaws Hill, extending down into the *Open Rolling Farmland* (LCT 16). Footpaths cross both hills, while Coldside has some areas of access land.

14b Wooler Hills

- 4.143. This area flanks the Northumberland National Park to the west and south of Wooler, comprising mostly lower slopes, with some summits, separated by deep, wooded denes such as Happy Valley. To the west, pasture and arable land are divided by woodland belts. To the south the hills are more open with rough grazing and a coniferous plantation at Kenterdale Hill, the centre of a large area of access land. The post-war fringe of Wooler extends on to the slope, while traces of historical settlement are located higher up. Footpaths follow the denes, giving access to the National Park.

14c Old Fawdon

- 4.144. This area comprises the highest foothills, up to 315m. The hills are rounded, and almost exclusively given over to rough grazing, with frequent areas of gorse scrub. Small coniferous plantations are the only woodland. There are no settlements, only

one farmstead within the area. Recreational routes and signs of historical settlement are both extensive.

Glossary

Dene: narrow, steep-sided valley.

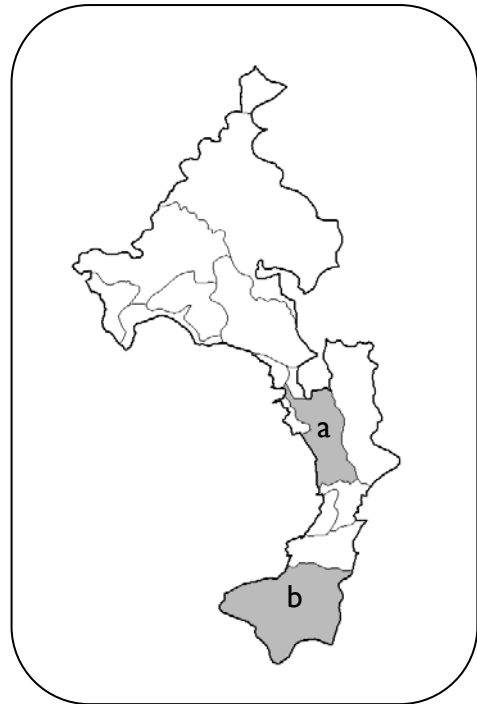
Landscape Character Type 15: Upland Fringe Farmland

Introduction

- 4.145. Undulating farmland at the fringes of the higher ground of the Cheviot Hills, and characterised by dispersed woodland and plantations, and sparse settlement.
- 4.146. This LCT is represented by two character areas: *15a Lilburn and Roddam* and *15b Upper Coquet*.

Key Characteristics

- Medium-scale, undulating landform with minor watercourses feeding into the nearby river valleys.
- Mixture of arable and improved pasture, with frequent woodland blocks.
- Dispersed pattern of settlement with small villages and scattered farmsteads.
- Medium-scale landscape with views to the Cheviot Hills.
- Historic villages, landmark buildings and estate woodland.



Description

- 4.147. This is a gently undulating landscape, lying between the river valleys carved by the Coquet, Breamish and Till. Numerous small watercourses drain the area, flowing into the adjacent river valleys.
- 4.148. The landscape is characterised by regular medium sized fields of improved pasture and arable cropping. The fields are typically bounded by hedgerows with frequent field trees and shelterbelts, particularly in the north. There are frequent small coniferous plantation blocks creating a mosaic within the landscape and woodland contributing biodiversity value. Broadleaf woodland occurs along watercourses, and there are mixed shelterbelts. The Lilburn Burn is part of the River Tweed SAC, and the Netherton Burn is part of the River Coquet SSSI. There is another SSSI at Roddam Dene.
- 4.149. Settlement is typically dispersed, with small villages, hamlets and farmsteads. There are a number of listed buildings with notable examples at Ilderton and Roddam. The landscape is crossed by a number of minor roads, and the main route of the A697 cuts through the landscape in the north. The high voltage electricity transmission line runs from north to south from Wooler to Whittingham.
- 4.150. The undulating landform limits distant views, however the more intimate valleys, particularly in the north contain views, and focus on the historic buildings, parkland and estate woodland. Further south the landscape is more open in character, and views are more expansive.

- 4.151. Historic buildings, parkland and estate woodland are significant influences on landscape character, particularly around Lilburn Tower and Roddam Hall. Heddon Hill bears clear evidence of cultivation terraces of possible Anglian date and extensive medieval open field systems. Villages with medieval origins, such as Netherton, are a characteristic feature, along with the remains of attendant ridge and furrow field systems.
- 4.152. A network of local footpaths, National Cycle Route 68 and the quiet nature of the rural roads provide recreational opportunities throughout this landscape character type. The proximity to the Northumberland National Park, and visitor attractions such as Chillingham Castle further increase the profile of the area.

Landscape Character Areas

15a Lilburn and Roddam

- 4.153. Rolling farmland with extensive estate influences, which are particularly important around Lilburn. The predominantly pastoral farmland is bounded by hedgerows, with occasional stone walls and post and wire fencing. The combination of extensive estate influences, with evidence of maintenance and management of the woodland features, complements the historic buildings as landmarks within the landscape. Clusters of buildings at Ilderton, Roddam and Lilburn are of particular significance in contributing to the historic character of the area.

15b Upper Coquet

- 4.154. This is an attractive farmed upland fringe landscape consisting of a mosaic of different arable crops and pasture fields overlying undulating landform. Small-scale woodlands are frequent. A strong pattern of enclosure is evident, although field boundary hedgerows are frequently in very poor condition or have been lost entirely and replaced with wire fences. Few uncultivated or unimproved areas remain within what is evidently good quality farmland. Views to upland are available in all directions, and the contrast with these simpler, less tamed landscapes is clearly visible.

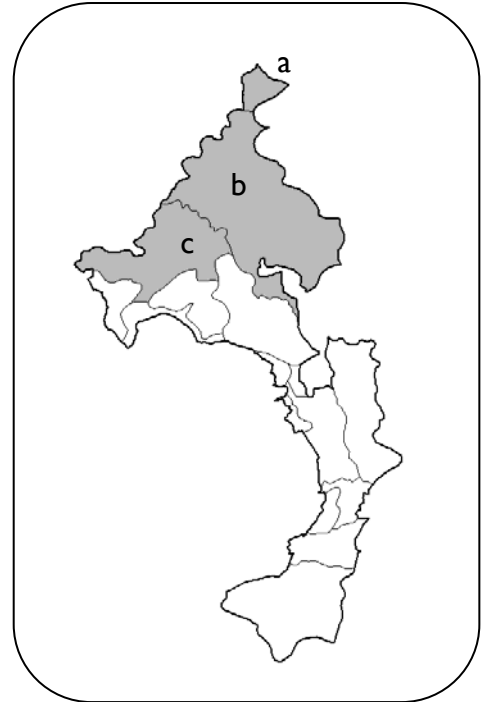
Landscape Character Type 16: Open Rolling Farmland

Introduction

- 4.155. These landscapes are areas of gently rolling arable farmland, with scattered villages and occasional estates.
- 4.156. This LCT is represented by three character areas: *16a Halidon, 16b Duddo and Lowick and 16c East Learmouth.*

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating farmland lying above the valleys of the River Tweed and River Till.
- Arable cultivation dominates the farmland with a strong pattern of enclosure and regular, medium sized fields.
- Scattered farmsteads, hamlets and small villages are dispersed throughout the landscape.
- Local influences of estates and planned villages such as Ford and Etal.
- The landscape has an open character and the regular landform and medium sized fields contribute a consistency across the area.
- Influences from a number of periods of history are evident from the route of the A697 along the Roman road, the Battle of Flodden Field, the planned villages of Ford and Etal, and estate landscapes such as Tillmouth Park.



Description

- 4.157. This is a medium- to large-scale landscape of low elevation, heavily influenced by glaciation and deposition. The effects of glaciation have resulted in a smoothing of the landform resulting from the deposition of rock debris as a thick layer of glacial till, some of which has been shaped into drumlins. Glacial meltwater has locally cut channels into the underlying rock, as characterised by the incised River Till.
- 4.158. The valley landscapes of the Tweed and Till are varied. The course of the River Tweed extends in places into a broader valley floodplain, and in others is more narrowly constrained between steep valley sides. Arable cultivation dominates the farmland with a strong pattern of enclosure and regular, medium sized fields. Deciduous woodland is frequently found in the valleys cut by the rivers and streams, and coniferous and mixed woodland blocks and shelterbelts are found across the landscape type. The Tweed and Till are protected as part of the River Tweed SAC, and Ford Moss is also an SAC. There are SSSIs at Campfield Kettle Hole and Barelees Pond.
- 4.159. The landscape is rural in character, with scattered farmsteads, hamlets and small villages. The villages reflect the general pattern of settlement, established from Anglo-Saxon times, of small nucleated villages separated by a wide area of surrounding land

within which farm hamlets are located. The estates have exerted a strong influence on the landscape through the influence of woodland and estate villages such as Ford and Etal.

- 4.160. Views to the rivers are limited to those areas in close proximity to the river valleys. The typically open, large-scale farmed landscape, regular landform and cultivation provide a sense of consistency and coherence to the landscape. The subtleties of the landform effectively restrict views in many locations, with extensive views to the Cheviot Hills possible from more elevated and open situations.
- 4.161. The proximity to the Scottish border has a strong influence on the historical significance of this area. The Battle of Flodden Field took place in 1513 close to the village of Branxton. It was during this battle that James IV was killed, and the battlefield is now marked by tall stone cross. The course of the A697 was originally a Roman road and an important military route. Medieval villages, such as Norham, Lowick, Cornhill on Tweed and Wark are an important aspect of historic character, particularly where they are associated with fortifications.
- 4.162. The area is important for informal recreation; National Cycle Network Routes 1 and 68 pass through this landscape, providing links from Berwick into Scotland. There is an extensive network of footpaths, including alongside the River Till and on the disused railways south of Cornhill on Tweed.

Landscape Character Areas

16a Halidon

- 4.163. Sloping arable farmed fields situated above the Whiteadder Water and River Tweed. The area forms part of a low ridge which extends from the north-west to the coast. The landscape is characterised by medium sized arable and pasture fields, defined by hedgerows with occasional field trees. Some stone walls are found close to the Tweed valley. Trees are often found associated with the dispersed farmsteads within the landscape. Halidon Hill itself is defined by two masts located near the hill summit. The landscape provides a dramatic viewpoint to Berwick and in particular the view of the railway bridge as it crosses the Tweed. Halidon Hill has historical significance as the location of the Battle of Halidon Hill which took place in 1333 between the English and Scots.

16b Duddo and Lowick

- 4.164. This large area rises steadily from the Tweed towards the sandstone hills. The topography is relatively varied. Around Duddo a more undulating landform predominates, with occasional rock outcrops. To the south, the land drops down to Ford, where the influence of the Ford Estate is clear. Ford Castle and the surrounding village are key historic attractions in the area. Other significant features include the stone circle at Duddo, and Barmoor Castle with its associated caravan park. An extension of the area forms the fringe of the Till valley. Around Lowick, the landform is flatter, with large, arable fields.

16c East Learmouth

- 4.165. Undulating predominantly arable farmland, characterised by woodland blocks and shelterbelts. This character area lies between the courses of the River Till and River Tweed. Parts of the area are influenced by the floodplain of the River Tweed, where it is not confined within a narrow valley. The River Till follows a twisting course, frequently flanked by woodland. It passes through an incised gorge before converging with the River Tweed. In places the field pattern complements the undulations of the landform, accentuating slopes and rises. This is a varied landscape, with large-scale areas contrasting with areas of more intimate character resulting from parkland, river valleys, small hamlets and historic villages such as Etal. The area also has historic importance, lying close to the Scottish border, and was the site of the Battle of Flodden Field in 1513.

Landscape Character Type 17: Upland Fringe Ridges

Introduction

- 4.166. Long, farmed parallel ridges, running south-west to north-east, extending across the Scottish border. Large-scale, open landscape, with some woodland belts and shelterbelts. It occurs in a single area in the north-west of the study area.
- 4.167. This LCT is represented by one character area:
17a Horse Rigg.

Key Characteristics

- Series of long, narrow parallel ridges, aligned from the south-west to north-east.
- Occasional rock outcrops.
- Ground rises towards the south-west, towards Scotland.
- Views north-east towards Coldstream and the Tweed valley.
- Large fields and shelterbelts.
- Steep south-eastern edge facing the Cheviot Hills.
- Upland fringe character.



Description

- 4.168. This series of ridges forms part of a more extensive feature which extends into Scotland, occupying the area south of Kelso. It is underlain by Andesite and other igneous rocks, carved into parallel ridges by glacial action. The south-west to north-east direction is typical of glacial formations across the Merse. The land rises to summits of 200m and 221m, although it continues to rise into Scotland. There are occasional rocky outcrops, but the landform is generally smooth, dropping more sharply into the Bowmont Water valley.
- 4.169. The large-scale landscape is emphasised by large fields, often with hedges, although many are in poor condition. Despite the elevation, a large proportion of the landcover is arable farming, although mixed with improved pasture. Small and medium-sized coniferous plantations occur in a distinctive pattern, often appearing on the horizon. Deciduous tree belts are also present, as well as clusters of trees around farmsteads. New woodland planting has been carried out in certain areas.
- 4.170. Settlement is limited to farmsteads, several of which are large, with bulky utilitarian buildings, and which are sometimes located on hilltops. A limited number of isolated cottages are scattered across the area. Traditional materials include local stone and slate roofs, with some buildings whitewashed. Small-scale quarrying operations are located in the area.

- 4.171. Views are limited by the lie of the land, and look to the lower-lying farmland to the north-east. Coldstream and the Tweed valley form a visual focus. The landscape is large-scale, with upland fringe characteristics, despite the presence of arable farmland. The area is also visually linked with the Cheviot Hills, and forms an important landform in views along the flat Bowmont Water valley which separates the two.
- 4.172. There is little recreational use of this landscape, besides public footpaths on the lower slopes. The large, relatively late, rectilinear enclosures create a formal historic structure to the landscape, albeit with few characteristic structures.

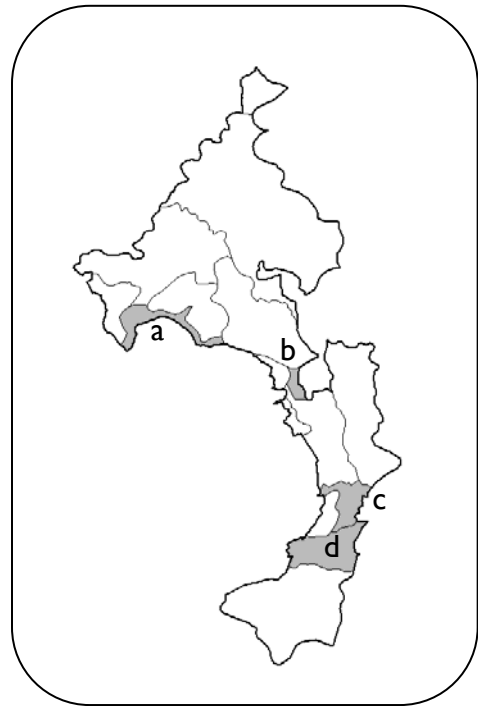
Landscape Character Type 18: Upland Fringe Valley

Introduction

- 4.173. Valley landscapes lying at the periphery of the Cheviot Hills, and representing a transition between the incised upland valleys and broad lowland valleys. The valleys are typically rural in character, with limited urban influence.
- 4.174. This LCT is represented by four character areas: *18a Bowmont Valley*, *18b Wooler Vale*, *18c Upper Breamish* and *18d Upper Aln*.

Key Characteristics

- Shallow, glaciated valleys with gravel river beds, often delineated by woodland.
- Mixed arable farmland and pasture.
- Scattered settlement concentrated within small villages, hamlets and farmsteads.
- Strong visual relationship with the uplands.



Description

- 4.175. Strongly influenced by glaciation, the river valleys contain significant sand and gravel resources. This is evidenced through sand and gravel extraction and the sometimes conspicuous gravel banks within a river course. The rivers drain from the uplands, and their courses vary from floodplains with broad meanders to straighter, more contained sections.
- 4.176. The farmland is a mixture of both arable and improved pasture, with frequent evidence of drainage activities. The river courses are frequently lined with deciduous woodland which delineates them within the flat valley floor. Field boundaries are predominantly hedgerows with some post and wire fencing. There are some geometric coniferous woodland blocks and shelterbelts, particularly in the south. The watercourses, except for the Aln, are part of the River Tweed SAC.
- 4.177. Settlement is sparse within the landscape, with small villages, hamlets and farmsteads, although with a greater concentration of built features within the Wooler valley to the north which also includes the A697, a caravan park and high voltage pylon line. The location of the valleys on the fringe of the uplands restricts their role as transport corridors and the valleys are served by a network of minor roads.
- 4.178. These landscapes have an important visual relationship with the uplands of the Cheviot Hills providing dramatic contrast with the rising slopes and transition from lowland farmland to upland grazing.
- 4.179. This is a transitional landscape with strong associations with the uplands, which dominate the views, contrasting with the lowland character of the agricultural landscape. The area has important historical sites ranging from evidence of medieval

cultivation and settlement, to small gardens and designed landscapes. These include the Anglo-Saxon palace complex of Ad Gefrin on the northern slopes of Yeavering Bell, Alnham medieval village and a number of bastle and tower houses. These landscapes form a gateway to the Northumberland National Park. There are also networks of local footpaths and cycle routes within these areas.

Landscape Character Areas

18a Bowmont Valley

- 4.180. Narrow, flat bottomed valley which lies between the edge of the Cheviot foothills and the rounded slopes of Moneylaws. The Bowmont Water meanders along the valley floor. The land is a mixture of arable farmland and pasture with occasional small woodland blocks, and some deciduous woodland associated with the river course. There is some small-scale sand and gravel extraction, as well as dispersed farms and mill buildings within the landscape. Areas of embankment and woodland delineate the route of the disused railway which runs along the valley floor. Views are dominated by the surrounding hills, which contrast dramatically with the flat valley landscape.

18b Wooler Vale

- 4.181. Gentle slopes and flat bottomed valley containing the route of the Wooler Water as it flows north towards the town of Wooler. The river follows a fairly straight course, and includes a succession of weirs to the south of Haugh Head. There are extensive gravel banks within the river bed. The farmland is a mixture of arable and pastoral, and there are areas of deciduous woodland associated with the river. The valley contains the route of the A697 and a number of industrial uses are located along the approach to Wooler from the south. There is a large caravan park alongside the river to the south of Wooler. Although well screened by woodland it covers an extensive area and, in combination with the high voltage pylons and other industrial land uses, contributes to a settlement-fringe character.

18c Upper Breamish

- 4.182. In this character area the River Breamish emerges from the Cheviot Hills and broadens out into a wider floodplain. The valleys sides comprise outlier hills such as Heddon Hill and East Hill which are low and receding. On the valley sides and outlying hills evidence of ridge and furrow is clearly discernible. On the valley floor there is little woodland cover, most of the area being open grassland with gorse scrub along river banks.

18d Upper Aln

- 4.183. In the broad undulating valley of the River Aln, features such as moraines, kames and eskers can be readily identified. The rich glacial soils support mixed farming, giving a pattern of arable and pasture. There is a strong medium- to large-scale pattern of hedged enclosure. A sheltered character is created by the number of mature hedgerow trees and small copses. Minor roads provide access to scattered farmsteads and small nucleated villages comprising traditional stone buildings, for example at Alnham. Associated with these settlements there is evidence of medieval

open-field systems which have been fossilised within the present day enclosure pattern. This agricultural landscape has a visual unity, and consistency of land use and settlement pattern. There are notable views to the more elevated landscapes of the Cheviot Hills to the west, and sandstone hills to the east.

Glossary

Kame: a short ridge of sand and gravel deposited by sub-glacial streams issuing from the front of a stationary or retreating glacier.

Esker: low, parallel winding ridges of sand and gravel deposited within sub-glacial channels, found running along the floor of glacial valleys.

NCA 5: BORDER MOORS AND FORESTS

- 4.184. This extensive upland plateau, dominated by coniferous forest, is located in the Anglo-Scottish border country and is centred on the artificial Kielder Water. To the south-west it drops down towards Cumbria and the Solway Basin, and to the south it is defined by the Whin Sill scarps running along the Tyne Gap (NCA 11). To the east are the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills* (NCA 2). Much of the eastern part of this NCA lies in Northumberland National Park and is excluded from this study. The western part forms the isolated western segment of the study area, while the NCA extends further westwards into Cumbria.



- 4.185. Key characteristics of the *Border Moors and Forests*, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.
- *Large-scale landscape of high, rolling or undulating plateau with expanses of sweeping moorland, extensive coniferous woodlands and large reservoirs, sparsely populated and with no major settlements.*
 - *Exposed moorland areas heavily grazed by sheep and characterised by mixed heather and unimproved grassland, on broad hills which offer extensive, long-distance views.*
 - *Extensive plantations mainly consisting of a patchwork of felled areas and different age classes of non-native conifers.*
 - *Few broadleaved trees, mainly restricted to small woodland blocks, hedgerows and remnant semi-natural woodland in the more sheltered valleys.*
 - *Network of small rivers in narrow gorges, streams, loughs and mires, with sandstone crags.*
 - *Farmland of semi-improved pasture or rough grazing land in large, rectangular, windswept fields, often poorly drained, and subdivided by wire fences and dry stone walls; in-bye of semi-improved and improved pastures in sheltered valleys.*
 - *Archaeological landscapes with evidence of settlements, tracks, field systems, shielings, burial areas, Roman forts and marching camps.*
 - *Military training establishments in part of Spadeadam Forest and at Otterburn, affecting perceptions of remoteness and solitude.*

Landscape character types and areas

- 4.186. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains three landscape character types and eight landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Landscape character types and areas in NCA5

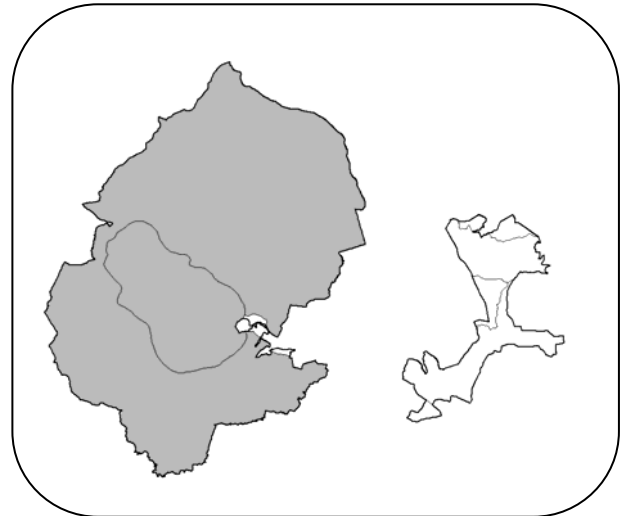
Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
19	Moorland and Forest Mosaic	19a	Kielder and Redesdale Forests
		19b	Kielder Reservoir
20	Rolling Upland Valleys	20a	Otterburn and Elsdon Valley
		20b	Bellingham and Woodburn Valley
		20c	Upper North Tyne Valley
21	Rolling Uplands	21a	Corsenside Common
		21b	Ealingham Rigg
		21c	Otterburn Plateau

Landscape Character Type 19: Moorland and Forest Mosaic

Introduction

4.187. This landscape character type covers most of the isolated western part of the study area, to the west of the Northumberland National Park. It extends into the National Park, and also beyond the border into Scotland, forming one of the largest areas of forest in Britain. Within the study area, this landscape includes Kielder Forest and Reservoir, and much of Redesdale Forest.

4.188. This LCT is represented by two character areas: *19a Kielder and Redesdale Forests* and *19b Kielder Reservoir*.



Key Characteristics

- Simple, expansive upland landscape, generally over 250m.
- Gently rolling topography incised by burns that are often concealed by plantations.
- Mosaic of large-scale coniferous plantations, open grass, heather moorlands and mires, with limited areas of in-bye pasture.
- Enclosed landscape with limited outward views.
- A dynamic landscape with significant areas of ongoing felling and restocking.
- Some broadleaved woodlands and woodland edges that soften the plantation character.
- A generally uninhabited landscape, with only occasional farmsteads and forestry settlements.
- Reservoirs that offer expansive views across open water, in contrast to the enclosed character of surrounding forest.

Description

4.189. Geologically this landscape consists of sandstones and shales, with occasional limestones and coal seams. Horizontal layering, uplift and glacial erosion have created a characteristic topography of high rolling or undulating plateaux, the harder sandstones forming ridges separated by softer eroded shales. In post-glacial times meltwater accumulated in the upland troughs, initiating the development of peat and creating the areas of raised and blanket bog that can be seen today, for example at Kielder Moor where heather, cotton grass, deer grass and sphagnum moss occur on blanket peat. In the north of the area, the undulating ridges are less common. Here flat tabular hills such as at Peel Fell and Carter Fell are more common.

- 4.190. The extensive forest cover is largely Sitka spruce with a proportion of pine, larch and broadleaf species, the latter confined mainly to the lower hill slopes, river courses and forest edges. Sitka was chosen as a suitable species to cope with the poor soil and climatic conditions of the area, and planting of Kielder Forest started in 1926. Over half of the coniferous forests were planted between 1945 and 1960, with a second wave of planting during the 1960s and 70s. As a result, many of the plantations are of even age and a number are now second rotation. Since the introduction of the Forest Design Plans in the 1990s felling to restructure and diversify the forests in terms of age, species composition and physical form is ongoing, creating a patchwork of felled, replanted and regenerating areas, and where recent felling has taken place, a temporarily disturbed character. In Redesdale and around Kielder Reservoir more forest is managed as 'long term retention' because of its visual prominence and sensitivity. In some areas geometric lines and edges of plantations are still apparent although much less obvious than in the past. Although the higher sandstone tops occasionally protrude above the trees, and some steeper burn courses or cleughs are unplanted, the hills and valleys are generally covered by forest, and this tends to mask the landform. The unforested parts of this LCT are typically covered by coarse grass and heather moorland, grazed by sheep and roe deer. The grassland is mainly rough grazing with rushy pasture in areas of poor drainage. The Border Mires SAC is within this area, as are the Kielderhead and Emblehope Moors and Kielder Mires SSSIs, and the Whitelee Moor and Kielderhead NNRs.
- 4.191. This is a very sparsely populated landscape with a dispersed pattern of farmsteads and a number of characteristic settlements built for forest workers, including Kielder and Byrness. Associated with the farmsteads are small areas of in-bye pasture enclosed by stone walls and post and wire fencing. Some pastures show signs of improvement or drainage through gripping, their green fields contrasting with surrounding rough moorland. Damp pastures along burns support diverse meadow grasslands. Roads through the area are few, although forest tracks (comprising loose rough stone) and rides are numerous.
- 4.192. The expanses of forest that cover most of this landscape appear dark and imposing when viewed from adjacent landscape character types, and in some areas the straight forest edges contrast with the curving, more natural lines of the surrounding hills, grassland and moorland. Outward views are often contained by trees, although the high open moorland tops and the reservoirs of Kielder Water and Catcleugh allow some extensive views. Within the forest, short range views to features such as narrow burn valleys, gorges, mires and sandstone crags are characteristic. The landscape often feels remote, but seldom tranquil because it is a working forest, and planting and felling operations give it a dynamic character. Where the roads pass through plantations, the landscape has a confined feel that at times can be disorientating and even claustrophobic. This sense of confinement is relieved in the open areas, where the character is more exposed and views are possible.
- 4.193. Although there are relatively large numbers of historic sites and monuments within the type, many have lost their connection to the landscape due to blanket afforestation. These include groups of Neolithic and Bronze Age cairns, later prehistoric and Romano-British settlements and medieval sites such as bastles, peel

towers and tower-houses. However, significant numbers of cairns do survive in the open ground of the Cheviot Hills beyond the limits of the forests. The reservoirs themselves are important aspects of the historic environment. Catcleugh is representative of the major 19th century effort to improve public health in the industrial cities of the north, connecting Newcastle and Gateshead with secure drinking water supplies. Kielder Water, planned in the late 1960s to satisfy booming industrial production in North East England, was constructed between 1975 and 1982 just as the UK's manufacturing industries were failing.

- 4.194. Kielder Reservoir is a popular tourist destination with a number of visitor facilities. Although forest walks and drives allow access within the forest, their extent is fairly limited, and large areas of forest remain relatively little visited. Virtually the whole area is designated access land. The Pennine Way runs north-south along the eastern edge of this area, on the edge of Northumberland National Park.

Landscape Character Areas

19a Kielder and Redesdale Forests

- 4.195. This character area comprises the large expanses of plantation and moorland that occupy most of the western part of the study area. The Kielder and Redesdale Forests have benefited from the new 'restructuring' approach to plantation forestry, whereby diversity of age and species is a priority. In these areas broadleaved trees have been planted along burns, mixed planting has replaced dense Sitka forest, and some groups of trees such as Scots pine have been retained or selectively thinned. The edges of the forests have been adjusted to reflect local topography. The Kielder Forest Drive runs through Kielder and Redesdale Forests and provides vehicular access to areas of remote upland in the summer months. In the north of this area is the Catcleugh Reservoir. This is much smaller than Kielder and is not utilised for recreation in the same way; it is therefore considered part of the wider area.

19b Kielder Reservoir

- 4.196. This character area comprises the open water of Kielder Reservoir, and the surrounding valley sides which are cloaked in mixed coniferous and broadleaf plantations. The reservoir was completed in the early 1980s and flooded the upper valley of the River North Tyne. It is now a popular tourist destination. The area (particularly the southern edge and shores) has a strong focus on recreation, reflected in signage, car parks, viewpoints, visitor centres, water sports (including boating, sailing, fishing and jet skiing), and chalets. Although man-made the reservoir has naturalistic edges, narrow inlets of water, and peninsulas of land. Some waterside areas remain as open moorland, and tree felling and selective thinning have been undertaken to open up views across the water. These management approaches, along with the planting of native species such as birch along the woodland edges and the burns that feed the reservoir, create a varied woodland character. This is a colourful landscape due to the combination of coniferous forest with native woodland, water, white grass moorland, patches of heather moor, bracken and gorse.

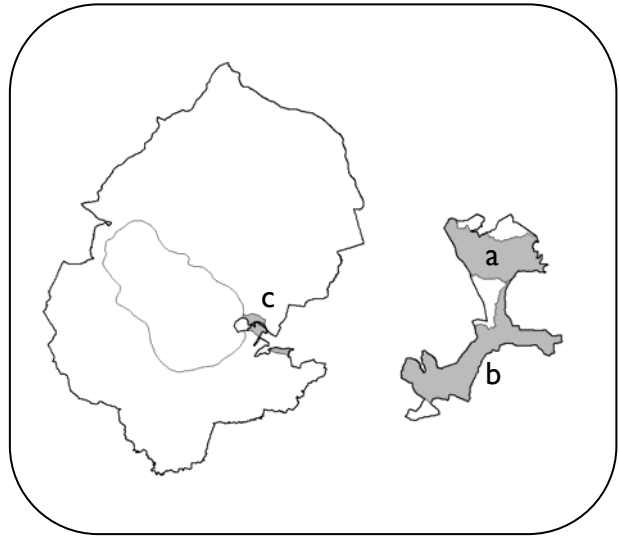
Glossary

Cleugh: a narrow gorge or chasm with high rocky sides.

Landscape Character Type 20: Rolling Upland Valleys

Introduction

- 4.197. The *Rolling Upland Valleys* comprise broad valleys which carve through larger blocks of upland landscape. The valleys contrast strongly with the neighbouring upland LCTs. This landscape includes the valleys of the Rivers Rede and North Tyne and their tributaries, although parts of these valleys extend into the Northumberland National Park, and are therefore outside the study area.
- 4.198. This LCT is represented by three character areas: *20a Otterburn and Elsdon Valley*, *20b Bellingham and Woodburn Valley*, and *20c Upper North Tyne Valley*.



Key Characteristics

- Broad valleys with gently convex valley sides.
- Tributary burns, often well-wooded, carving incised valleys into the hillsides.
- Clearly defined floodplain and mixed farmland on valley floors.
- Consistent pattern of textured rough pastures divided by stone walls on valley sides, with open moorland above.
- Meandering rivers are sometimes marked by alders, but are not generally prominent landscape features.
- Steep, wooded bluffs flanking edges of the floodplain.
- Shelterbelts and clumps of Scots pine or mixed woodland on lower slopes and occasionally on valley floors.
- Historic sandstone villages and dispersed farmsteads on lower slopes.
- Rich archaeology including ridge and furrow and fortified bastle houses.

Description

- 4.199. The underlying solid geology dates from the Carboniferous period, and is overlain with glacial drift and alluvial deposits. Glacial influences are apparent in the profile of the valleys which, although narrower in their upper reaches, have been broadened and deepened by glacial meltwater. Meltwater activity has also left tell-tale signs such as the steep-sided bluffs characteristically found on the edges of the floodplain. Valley floors are composed of glacial drift of boulder clay, sand and shingle, along with river alluvium. On the upper valley sides the shallower drift deposits quickly give way to outcrops of sandstone and shale. Tributary valleys flow over horizontal banding in the Carboniferous rocks and give rise to waterfalls, for example along Hareshaw Burn, which flows over exposed rock.

- 4.200. Valley floors have floodplain meadows and pastures, and in some places patches of arable land, all divided by post and wire fencing and occasional hedgerows. On the valley slopes pasture changes to rough grazing and open moorland with gorse, bracken and rushes, and stone walls are more common. Narrower tributary valleys have woods of oak and ash. Generally semi-natural woodland occurs most frequently along the river courses (where alder and birch are common) and on the steep bluffs on the lower valleys sides (where oak, birch, ash and beech can be found). In places mixed woodland also occurs, often containing conifers in the form of shelterbelts (the latter found particularly around Otterburn and south of West Woodburn). Hareshaw Dene is a SSSI.
- 4.201. The *Rolling Upland Valleys* have been well-settled landscapes since prehistoric times and have long been important routes for communication. Roman remains include Dere Street and its attendant forts at Blakehope and Habitancum at Risingham. In addition, the site of the Battle of Otterburn (1388) underlines the importance of the route through Redesdale as a link to Scotland. Within the valley floor and on the lower slopes there is evidence of prehistoric and medieval settlement, including the later prehistoric defended settlement at Camp Hill, and Romano-British enclosures at Woodhill. On the valley sides extensive ridge and furrow field systems are preserved, indicating the limits of medieval cultivation. The current settlement pattern is one of small historic villages, such as Falstone and East Woodburn, located on the lower valley slopes at primary river crossing points and confluences. In some places more recent landscape elements are noticeable, for example telegraph poles which criss-cross the valleys and settlement expansion at Bellingham.
- 4.202. A sense of enclosure is felt most keenly in the smaller, narrower tributary valleys, where linear semi-natural broadleaved woodlands flank the watercourses, for example along Tarsset, Hareshaw and Lises Burns. By contrast, the valleys around Otterburn, Elsdon and north of Bellingham are shallow, medium- to large-scale valleys with relatively little woodland on valley floors or sides. Although the valleys are not remote and are clearly settled, they have a very distinctive, unspoilt and historic character and are strongly influenced by the wider upland setting.
- 4.203. Many of the settlements have a strong vernacular tradition of sandstone cottages with slate roofs; they are connected via narrow rural lanes lined by hedges or stone walls. There are also remains of medieval towers, peels and bastles (fortified farmhouses) across the landscape, a legacy of the Border Reivers. In addition there is evidence of past industrial activity including coal mining, iron smelting, and disused railways. Recreational facilities in this landscape include developments such as caravan parks and golf courses. There is a good network of rights of way, and small areas of access land.

Landscape Character Areas

20a Otterburn and Elsdon Valley

- 4.204. This character area comprises the area around Otterburn which is excluded from the National Park, and contains the River Rede and the tributary Elsdon Burn. The rivers merge in a broad basin where landform sweeps gradually up to smooth rounded slopes. This gives rise to an expansive openness, with a strong horizontal emphasis

and often an empty feel. The Rede is not a substantial landscape feature within this expansive valley context and meanders freely. Within the valley there is a predominance of improved or rushy pastures divided by post and wire fencing. There are also occasional coniferous and deciduous shelterbelts with Scots pine being a feature. In places telegraph poles cross the valley floor creating visual clutter. The historic settlement of Otterburn, as well as Roman sites and peel towers, are located in this area. The medieval landscape of open field systems of ridge and furrow cultivation is easily appreciated within the modern field pattern and adds to the historic character of the area. The medieval origins of Otterburn itself are still apparent in its linear core and the preserved perpendicular open field systems running from its main axis.

20b Bellingham and Woodburn Valley

- 4.205. In this character area the River Rede merges first with Lisles Burn and then with the North Tyne near Bellingham. The incised watercourses (for example at Hareshaw Burn), the contrasting broad open hillsides, and the strong evidence of past industrial activity all distinguish this area from the other *Rolling Upland Valleys*. The valley floor pastures are lined by mature oak and ash trees and post and wire fencing, but the area is generally open and unwooded, particularly between Bellingham and West Woodburn. The proximity of the *Rolling Uplands* (LCT 21) lends an empty, upland feel to the landscape. In the Lisles valley the burn is lined with alder trees, coppiced in the past, and on the valley sides there are mature trees and patches of mixed woodland, often following shallow tributary valleys. Pastures are unimproved and wet, and combined with extensive ridge and furrow earthworks, this gives a textured feel to the valley sides, where fields are enclosed by stone walls forming a strong visual pattern, particularly around West Woodburn. Mining of coal seams and iron ore smelting in the 18th and 19th centuries has left disturbed ground and earthworks. Bastle houses are also features within the valley. Bellingham is the largest settlement and is focused on the River North Tyne. The town also has a strong association with the disused railways and quarries of the surrounding area. Today it has an important tourist role. The Pennine Way national trail passes through Bellingham.

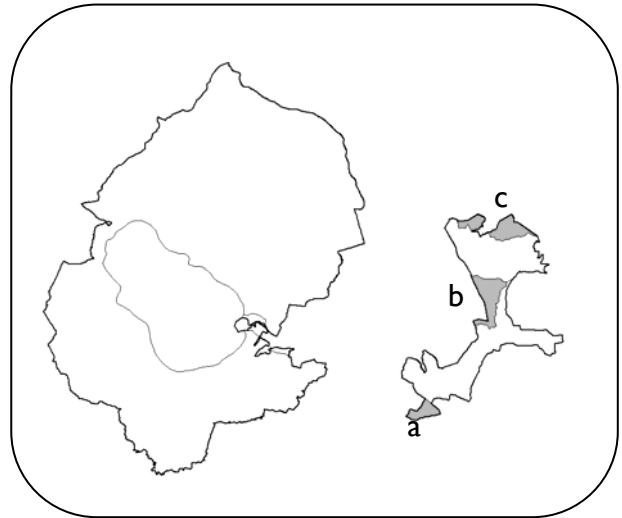
20c Upper North Tyne Valley

- 4.206. This character area includes the upper reaches of the North Tyne valley from the Kielder Reservoir in the west to the edge of Bellingham in the east, although only a small area around Falstone is within the study area. From the base of the Kielder dam, the river meanders through a defined floodplain, often lined with alder. On the valley floor and lower valley sides there is a mixture of arable and species rich hay meadows in medium sized fields defined by post and wire fencing and some hedgerows.

Landscape Character Type 21: Rolling Uplands

Introduction

- 4.207. This upland landscape occurs in large areas of the eastern part of the *Border Moors and Forests*, although much of it is located within the Northumberland National Park, and is therefore outside the present study area. However, three small areas of this landscape extend outside the National Park, where they are associated with the *Rolling Upland Valleys* (LCT 20).
- 4.208. This LCT is represented by three character areas: 21a *Ealingham Rigg*, 21b *Corsenside Common* and 21c *Otterburn Plateau*.



Key Characteristics

- Broad, open, large-scale, rolling moorland plateau.
- Simple, smooth flowing landform, often featureless with high degree of uniformity.
- Extensive areas of semi-natural vegetation including a matrix of heather, mat-grass moorland, raised bogs or mires and patches of bracken.
- Sparse settlement including isolated farmsteads and Victorian hunting lodges.
- Drained by a network of burns that have eroded deep but not visually prominent ravines.
- Sparse tree cover – occasional coniferous shelterbelts and clumps, with limited areas of semi-natural woodland along burns.
- Uniformity of land cover broken in places by in-bye pastures associated with farmsteads.
- Military training use over a significant part of the area.

Description

- 4.209. Geologically the landscape comprises a succession of sandstones and limestones which have been overlain with a thick glacial deposit of boulder clay, giving a smooth, simple appearance to the topography. Where the underlying sandstone breaks the surface, contrasting craggy outcrops add visual interest. In the east, sandy soils are well drained by a network of burns which carve deep ravines but are not a major feature of the landscape as a whole.
- 4.210. In areas where the glacial deposits are deep, land cover is dominated by matt grass moorland, peat bog and mosses. Better-drained soils support more heather moorland, providing grazing for sheep, although extensive areas are also managed as grouse moor. Where post and wire fencing divides areas, the effects of differential

grazing regimes are sometimes evident. Tree cover is sparse although there are geometric shelterbelts, for instance at Leighton Hill.

- 4.211. There is little settlement, only occasional farmsteads, generally accessed via minor unenclosed roads. Small areas of in-bye pasture surround the farmsteads, enclosed by dry stone walls. Occasional modern man-made features include telephone masts, telegraph poles, and metal sheep pens. A number of human interventions are related to the extensive military training grounds north of Otterburn.
- 4.212. This is an empty landscape; the absence of settlement or development of any sort is striking in some areas, although within the study area the settled valley is always in proximity. The landscape is simple, open and remote, although military training activity impinges upon the sense of tranquillity. Eastward views are open and extensive from some locations.
- 4.213. Evidence of past human activity in this landscape includes the Roman Dere Street, signs of prehistoric and later medieval cultivation (sod-cast dykes and ridge and furrow), bastle houses, lime kilns associated with local extraction and agricultural improvement, ground disturbance due to former mining activity, and disused railway routes. There are several footpaths and access land within this area, although public access is dependent on military training activity.

Landscape Character Areas

21a Corsenside Common

- 4.214. This character area forms the eastern edge of a much larger expanse of upland plateau. It lies on the west side of Redesdale, and is bordered by the A68, which here follows Dere Street, on its west side. Open semi-improved and rough pasture forms the dominant landcover, with small blocky plantations, and native woodland along the Brigg Burn. Ridge and furrow is visible over large parts of the area. The isolated Corsenside church dates in part from the 12th century.

21b Ealingham Rigg

- 4.215. This area comprises the east end of a relatively narrow ridge between Kielder Forest and the upper North Tyne valley. It offers extensive views northwards across the valley and eastwards towards the Simonside Hills. Rocky crags are characteristic where the underlying sandstone outcrops, for example at Shitlington Crags. There are few farmsteads in this area and little road access. The most obvious human feature is the telephone mast on Ealingham Rigg. The Pennine Way passes over the ridge.

21c Otterburn Plateau

- 4.216. This area comprises two small sections of moorland above Otterburn, on the fringes of the Otterburn Training Area, and has an exposed, open character. Military infrastructure and activity is characteristic. Some of the roads through the area have been widened, and tracks concreted over, to allow better access for army vehicles. The coniferous plantations on the southern slopes of this area are also used for military training. This area contains archaeological features including prehistoric,

Roman-British and post-medieval settlement and field systems, and the remains of a bastle above Shittleheugh.

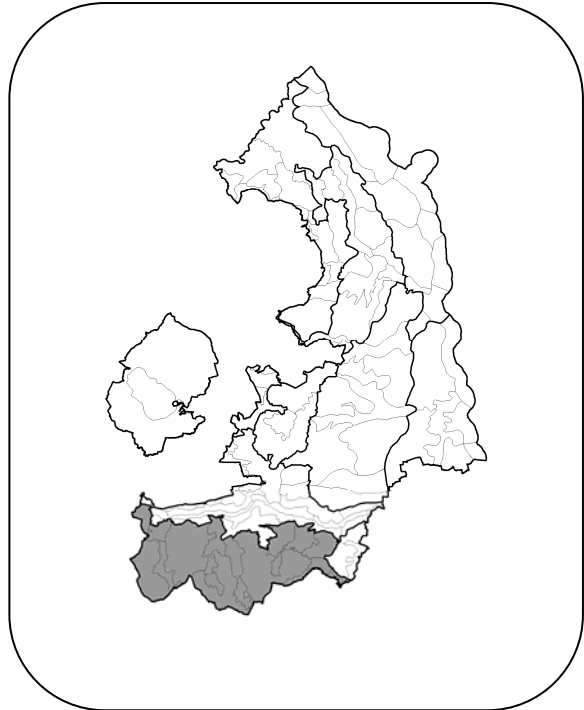
Glossary

Mat-grass: *Nardus stricta*, a common moorland grass which thrives on poor soils.

Bastle house: a type of defensive farmhouse common to northern England and southern Scotland in the 16th century.

NCA 10: NORTH PENNINES

4.217. The *North Pennines* NCA is located towards the northern end of the Pennine chain and forms a separate and distinct area of upland moor and dale south of the *Tyne Gap* (NCA 11), characterised by some of the highest and wildest moorland summits in England, and dissected by dales radiating north and east. Nearly all of this NCA is part of the North Pennines AONB, and it extends west into Cumbria and south into County Durham.



4.218. Key characteristics of the *North Pennines* NCA, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.

- *An upland landscape of high moorland ridges divided by broad pastoral dales.*
- *Remote moorland summits and high plateaux of blanket bog with a severe climate of high rainfall, cold winters and short summers and a unique wilderness quality.*
- *Broad ridges of heather moorland and acid grassland managed for sheep and grouse.*
- *Sheltered dales of pastures and hay meadows bounded by dry stone walls and hedgerows with small stone-built villages and scattered farmsteads of a strong vernacular character.*
- *Alternating limestones, sandstones and shales of the Yoredale series with a stepped profile to hills and dalesides. Millstone Grits cap the higher fells and form distinctive flat topped summits.*
- *The high summit ridge in the west falling in a dramatic escarpment to the Eden Valley.*
- *Igneous intrusions of the Great Whin Sill forming dramatic outcrops and waterfalls.*
- *A heavily scarred landscape of mineral extraction, with many active and abandoned quarries and the relics of widespread lead workings.*
- *Sparse tree cover with woodlands restricted to river gorges, gills and streamsides and larger coniferous plantations in the moorland fringes.*
- *Reservoirs scattered throughout the dales and moorland margins.*
- *A landscape of slow change and cultural continuity.*

Landscape character types and areas

4.219. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains six landscape character types and 18 landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.6.

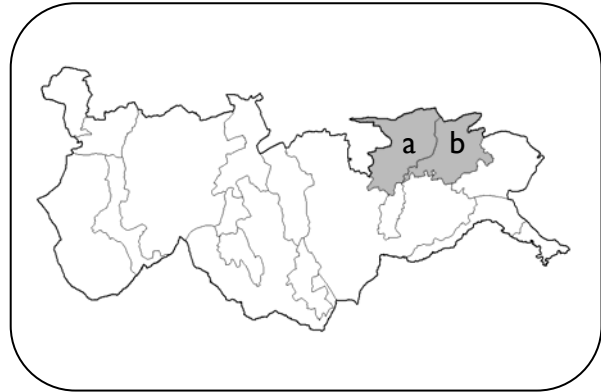
Table 4.6 Landscape character types and areas in NCA10

Landscape character type		Character area	
22	Farmed River Valleys	22a	Devil's Water and Hinterland
		22b	Dipton Wood and Slaley
23	Lower Dale	23a	Lower South Tyne
		23b	Lower Allenheads
		23c	Lower Derwent
24	Middle Dale	24a	Middle South Tyne
		24b	Middle West Allen
		24c	Middle East Allen
		24d	Middle Devil's Water
		24e	Middle Derwent
25	Moorland Ridges	25a	Blenkinsopp Common
		25b	Hartleyburn and Knarsdale Commons
		25c	Whitfield Moor
		25d	Allen Common and Mohope/Acton Moors
		25e	Hexhamshire and Bulbeck Commons
26	Upland Farmland and Plantations	26a	Healey
27	Upper Dale	27a	Upper West Allen
		27b	Upper East Allen

Landscape Character Type 22: Farmed River Valleys

Introduction

- 4.220. This landscape character type forms an upland fringe farmland landscape between the North Tyne and Derwentdale which has been dissected by deeply incised burn valleys.
- 4.221. This LCT is represented by two character areas: *22a Devil's Water and Hinterland* and *22b Dipton Wood and Slaley*.



Key Characteristics

- East-west ridges supporting upland fringe mixed farmland.
- Dissected and drained by incised burns running along deep clefts or denes.
- Rocky ledges, waterfalls and narrow haughs within denes mark the proximity of bedrock to the surface.
- Semi-natural ancient woodland within denes and coniferous plantations in wider hinterland.
- Varied field patterns – irregular and sinuous close to settlements, rectilinear and planned on upper slopes.
- Mixed farming – arable and sheep or horse pasture (improved and some wet).
- Mixture of field boundaries, including hedges with hedgerow trees, post and wire fencing, and stone walls particularly around settlements.
- Settlement comprises small villages and dispersed farmsteads, country houses and halls, and mill villages.

Description

- 4.222. The drainage pattern created by the burns reflects the banding and faulting within the underlying east-west axis of sandstone rock strata. This is reinforced topographically by the series of east-west rounded stepped terraces which descends gradually into the Tyne valley to the north. This landscape is very varied, although unified by its strong topographic and drainage patterns. The soils are a mosaic of heavy, seasonally waterlogged clays and more fertile and free-draining brown earths.
- 4.223. Agricultural land use reflects the underlying variety of soils, with a mixture of improved pasture and arable cropping. There is a strong pastoral emphasis on the higher ground that borders moorland landscapes. Field boundaries are largely hedgerows, with occasional dry stone walls, particularly close to settlements. Hedges tend to be dominated by hawthorn, with some blackthorn and holly, trimmed in arable areas but often leggy and overgrown in pastoral areas. The pattern and visual prominence of the field enclosures varies, although hedgerow trees (typically ash, oak and sycamore), avenue and estate plantings reinforce the pattern in some areas. Within the deep clefts of the denes, ancient semi-natural woodland is concentrated,

creating secretive and intimate landscapes. On the valley sides rock is often exposed as horizontal ledges of sandstone over which the burns flow and waterfalls are characteristic at these points. The incised nature of the valleys means that there is sometimes no floodplain; where haughs occur they are often narrow. The woodland in the valleys comprises mostly oak, ash and hazel, and in places has been inter-planted with coniferous species such as Scots pine or larch. It creates a strong visual pattern.

- 4.224. The landscape has a rural character and is populated by a dispersed pattern of small villages and farms, often hidden in woodland. Buildings are generally small-scale and of traditional stone construction. An intricate network of minor roads relates to the rolling landform and crosses the incised burns via narrow bridges or fords. There are few large-scale modern built or industrial features.
- 4.225. This is not a remote landscape although it has a strong visual relationship with the less inhabited uplands to the north and west. The landscape is modified by farming and commercial forestry, but the presence of extensive native woodlands, estate plantings and stone buildings gives the type a rural, naturalistic, and traditionally managed character. Although relatively elevated and close to the Tyne valley, views from this area mainly look southward to the fringes of the moorland.
- 4.226. The historical dimension of this landscape is represented by the Saxon and medieval villages of Juniper, Whitley Chapel and Slaley. Field enclosure patterns range from relicts of medieval cultivation in the form of ridge and furrow and lynchets (common in areas of older, less improved, pastures); to semi-regular 16th and 17th century enclosures of common fields around villages (as seen at Juniper); to small areas of more regular 'surveyor enclosed' field systems on upper slopes, dating from the enclosure of manorial wastes in the 18th century. There is a network of rights of way, but little tourist infrastructure.

Landscape Character Areas

22a Devil's Water and Hinterland

- 4.227. This area includes the wooded dene of Devil's Water and its tributaries (West Dipton Burn, Ham Burn and Rowley Burn) which flow in an east-west direction along the grain of the underlying geology. In the areas between the wooded incised denes, the landscape is characterised by mixed farming with a medium-scale field pattern. There are views to the higher moorland to the south and west which lends context. The western part of this area is within the North Pennines AONB.

22b Dipton Wood and Slaley

- 4.228. This area is located between the upper slopes of the Tyne valley and Slaley Forest and has a simpler pattern than that of the *Devil's Water and Hinterland* character area. It comprises a number of contrasting landscapes including the commercial forestry of Dipton Wood, more open mixed farmland to the south around Slaley, and characteristic incised and wooded denes carrying Dipton Burn and March Burn. The commercial forestry of Dipton Wood disguises the incised course of Dipton Burn which runs along its northern edge. Around Slaley the landscape is open comprising

mixed farming within well-trimmed hedgerows and overlapping lines of hedgerow trees. The village of Slaley stands out along a local ridgeline.

Glossary

Lynchets: shallow terrace or bank caused by ploughing of sloping sites.

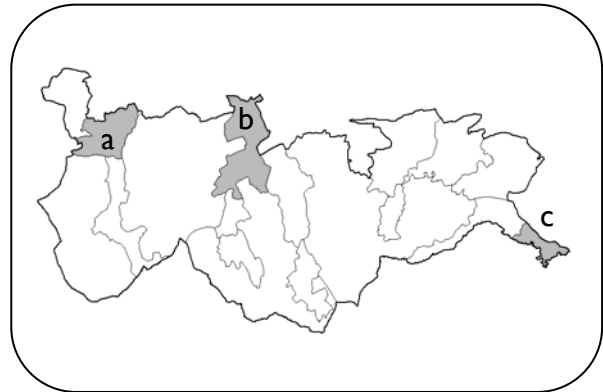
Dene: narrow, steep-sided valley.

Haugh: an area of low-lying floodplain.

Landscape Character Type 23: Lower Dale

Introduction

4.229. This landscape comprises the lower sections of the dales which run north and east out of the North Pennines. Although the typical dale has characteristic 'upper', 'middle' and 'lower' sections, not all *Lower Dale* areas are associated with corresponding *Middle Dale* (LCT 24) and *Upper Dale* (LCT 27) areas.



4.230. This LCT is represented by three character areas: 23a Lower South Tyne, 23b Lower Allenheads and 23c Lower Derwent. Areas 23b and 23c are within the North Pennines AONB.

Key Characteristics

- Broad dales with narrow floodplains or gorges.
- Winding, often shallow and rocky rivers, with peaty brown fast-flowing water.
- Limestones, sandstones and shales that outcrop occasionally in gorges and dale-side quarries.
- Tree-lined watercourses, with ancient ash and oak woods in gorges and denes.
- Frequent hedgerow oak, ash, sycamore and wych elm and untrimmed hedgerows.
- Pastoral landscape comprising improved and semi-improved pastures and hay meadows.
- Old field systems with sub-regular or linear patterns of hedges and walls.
- Relicts of ridge and furrow and cultivation terraces.
- Old villages of vernacular sandstone buildings on the dale floor.
- Scattered stone farmsteads and field barns.
- Intimate and visually enclosed character contrasting with high moorland ridgelines.

Description

4.231. This landscape comprises broad upland valleys with a fairly shallow and even sloping landform. It is dissected by small tributary valleys running into the main river of the dale. Alternating strata of Carboniferous limestones, sandstones and softer shales and mudstones give a gently stepped profile to the dale sides in places, and outcrop occasionally in gorges and quarries. On lower slopes these strata are masked by glacial boulder clays or sands and gravels, and these deposits are marked by undulating terrain. Rivers and becks are fast-flowing over rocky beds through steep-sided gorges, or meander across floodplains of river terrace gravels and alluvium. Soils are heavy, often waterlogged clays, with more fertile brown earths and alluvial soils on the dale floor.

- 4.232. The lower dales are pastoral landscapes with mosaics of improved and semi-improved pasture and occasional flower-rich hay meadows. The more intensively managed grasslands tend to be found on the flatter, low-lying land of the valley floor. The upper, more undulating slopes are traditionally less improved, with pasture and rushy grazing on the rougher and wetter land. This creates a logical pattern of land use and vegetation cover related to landform, drainage and exposure. Field systems are sub-regular or linear in pattern and have their origins in the enclosure of common town fields surrounding the dales villages that took place mostly in the 17th century. Field boundaries are a mixture of hedgerows and stone walls. Walls are made of locally quarried stone or rounder boulders from river beds and field clearances. Hedgerows are often tall and bushy and rich in trees, with frequent ash, oak, sycamore and wych elm. Regular parliamentary enclosures are found on more recently enclosed land on the higher dale sides. Ancient ash and oak woodlands flank rivers and streams in gills and gorges. Plantations of pine and larch are found across the dale sides. Woodland cover is not frequent, but the numerous small woodlands, hedgerows and field trees, and tree-lined watercourses give the landscape a well-wooded feel. The area contains part of the North Pennine Moors SPA, and the Tyne & Allen River Gravels SAC. There are several SSSIs covering moorland, woodland and watercourses, and an NNR at Derwent Gorge and Muggleswick Woods.
- 4.233. Small- and medium-sized villages lie on the dale floor, connected by winding roads. Most villages are of medieval origins and some still retain a central village green. Others were enlarged in the 18th and 19th centuries with housing for workers in the quarrying, lead mining and steel working industries. Farms and field barns are scattered across the dale side or strung out along minor roads. Buildings are of local stone with roofs of stone flag or slate and have a strong vernacular character and are often associated with small groups of shelter trees of ash and sycamore. Active and abandoned quarries are prominent on the dale side in places, following outcrops of limestone.
- 4.234. The landscape is relatively broad in scale, defined by moorland ridgelines, but locally it is visually enclosed by woodlands, trees and hedgerows, giving it a more intimate scale. This is a settled and largely tranquil upland fringe landscape that, with its vernacular buildings, old villages and pastoral land use, has a strong sense of both visual unity and cultural continuity.
- 4.235. Relicts of ancient agriculture – ridge and furrow, lynchets and cultivation terraces – are widespread. Historical quarrying has also shaped the landscape. Country houses such as Whitfield Hall have associated estate villages. In addition to contributing to the historic character of the area, the estate around Featherstone Castle also served as a prisoner-of-war camp during World War II, and the footings of numerous buildings are still clearly visible. Footpath networks include Isaac's Tea Trail, a long-distance walk inspired by a local lead miner and tea trader. The lower dales form important access routes into the North Pennines AONB.

Landscape Character Areas

23a Lower South Tyne

- 4.236. The River South Tyne and its tributaries – Harley Burn and Park Burn – dissect this character area, flowing through steep, incised gills. Rocky outcrops and waterfalls are characteristic, for example Bishop's Linn. Semi-natural woodland hugs the course of the burns and river, beyond which is a more open pastoral dale. Small hamlets dot the landscape including Coanwood, Kellah and Halton-le-Gate. There is strong evidence of past mining activity in the form of disused shafts and quarries, but the most visible remnant is the disused railway which forms an important recreational route.

23b Lower Allenheads

- 4.237. This character area contains the River Allen which in its lower reaches flows through a relatively narrow dale and is deeply incised. The dale is richly wooded, semi-natural vegetation extending from the main river up the dale sides and along tributary burns. Further south the dale broadens at the confluence of the two main tributaries, the Rivers East and West Allen. Here, the landscape becomes more open, although the watercourses remain well-wooded and the pattern of stone wall field enclosures and open pastures becomes dominant and defining.

23c Lower Derwent

- 4.238. The River Derwent lies in a deep winding gorge fed by tributaries in steep-sided denes. The gorge and denes are heavily wooded, containing ancient oak and ash woodlands and conifer plantations. The surrounding valley sides are pastoral with improved or rushy pastures, irregular patterns of old hedges and walls, and frequent hedgerow and field trees. The valley is sparsely settled with scattered farms in its lower reaches. The village of Edmundbyers and the hamlet of Muggleswick lie on gentle valley slopes in the west.

Glossary

Lynchet: shallow terrace or bank caused by ploughing of sloping sites.

Ridge and furrow: broad linear undulations that were created by medieval cultivation practices.

Cultivation terrace: level surface of ground created during prehistoric times so that crops can be grown.

Toft: individual building plot in a medieval village or town.

Garth: a small enclosure that adjoins a house.

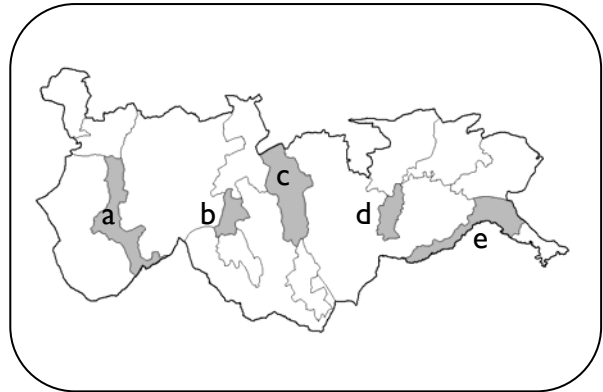
Dene: narrow, steep-sided valley.

Gill: a deep rocky cleft or wooded ravine.

Landscape Character Type 24: Middle Dale

Introduction

4.239. This landscape comprises the intermediate sections of the dales that run east and north from the North Pennines. Although the typical dale has characteristic 'upper', 'middle' and 'lower' sections, not all *Middle Dale* areas are associated with corresponding *Lower Dale* (LCT 23) and *Upper Dale* (LCT 27) areas. This LCT occurs wholly within the North Pennines AONB.



4.240. This LCT is represented by five character areas: 24a *Middle South Tyne*, 24b *Middle West Allen*, 24c *Middle East Allen*, 24d *Middle Devil's Water* and 24e *Middle Derwent*.

Key Characteristics

- Broad upland valleys with moderately sloping, often gently stepped, valley sides, incised by narrow steep-sided gills.
- Rocky rivers and becks, with fast-flowing peaty brown water, within narrow floodplains.
- Improved and semi-improved pastures and flower-rich upland hay meadows.
- Strong regular or sub-regular patterns of dry stone walls with occasional ash, oak and sycamore field trees.
- Woodland occurs as narrow ash and oak-birch woodlands along rivers, streams and dale-side gills, and scattered plantations of Scots pine, larch or spruce.
- Small villages, hamlets and farm clusters following valley floor roads, with scattered farms and field barns on dale sides.
- Active and abandoned limestone and whinstone quarries and relicts of the lead mining industry.
- Visually open but enclosed by adjacent moorland ridgelines.
- Settled tranquil upland landscape with a strong sense of cultural continuity.

Description

4.241. The underlying geology of alternating Carboniferous limestones, sandstones and softer shales and mudstone strata gives rise to a gently stepped profile on the upper dale side. On lower slopes these strata are overlain by boulder clays. Rocky, fast-flowing rivers and streams with peaty brown water and braided boulder-strewn channels run through narrow floodplains of alluvium or glacial sands and gravels. Hard igneous dolerites with a vertical columnar pattern of jointing outcrop locally in prominent scars and within the gills can give rise to spectacular waterfalls. Soils are heavy, often waterlogged clays with more fertile brown earths on the valley floors.

- 4.242. Improved and semi-improved pastures, occasionally rushy, and flower-rich upland hay meadows cover the valley floor and dale sides. Field systems are regular or sub-regular in pattern and date largely from 18th and 19th century enclosures. Strong patterns of dry stone walls are prominent features of the dale sides. Walls are of locally quarried sandstones, limestones and whinstone, or rounder boulders from river beds and field clearances. Tree cover is generally sparse with scattered field and shelter trees of ash, oak and sycamore. The *Middle Dale* is generally sparsely wooded, with narrow ash, alder or oak-birch woodlands along rivers and streams, in dale-side gills or on steeper slopes. Plantations of pine, larch or spruce are scattered across the dale sides, with localised concentrations creating well-wooded landscapes in parts. The area contains part of the North Pennine Moors SPA, and the Tyne & Allen River Gravels and North Pennine Dales Meadows SACs. There are numerous SSSIs covering meadows, woodlands, watercourses and moorland. Past mineral extraction sites often support highly specialised plant communities.
- 4.243. Small villages, hamlets and farm clusters follow valley floor roads. Many of these have their origins in the lead mining industry, as do many of the small farms that line the dale sides, often close to the moor wall, at the limits of agriculture. Buildings are of local stone with roofs of stone flag or slate and have a strong vernacular character. Active and abandoned quarries are prominent on the dale side, following outcrops of the Great Limestone and the Great Whin Sill.
- 4.244. The landscape is visually open but enclosed by adjacent moorland ridgelines. It is a settled and largely tranquil upland landscape that, with its vernacular buildings, field boundaries and traditionally managed meadows and pastures, has a strong sense of both visual unity and cultural continuity.
- 4.245. The importance of the dales as routes of communication is underlined by the presence of the Maiden Way Roman Road and the exceptional auxiliary fort at Whitley Castle, an elaborate construction, with the most extensive system of defensive ditches of any known fort in the Roman world and a highly unusual shape. Legacies of the lead mining industry include mine buildings, waste heaps, smelter flues, reservoirs and deep hushes which scar the dale side. The best examples of the remains of this industrial episode are found in Allendale. Although much of the smelt mill has been levelled, significant remains dating back to at least the 17th century are readily visible. The most impressive remains are the openings of the 19th century ground-level flue network which runs around 4km to the south-west into the moors, in the *Moorland Ridges* (LCT25). The remains of Blanchland Abbey, towers, and several country houses, reflect other historical aspects of the landscape. There is a good network of public rights of way, and the dales provide important access into the North Pennines AONB, as well as hosting visitor facilities.

Landscape Character Areas

24a Mid South Tyne

- 4.246. This character area comprises a relatively narrow and incised section of the South Tyne valley which contains a complex mix of woodland and in-bye pastures with a dispersed pattern of hamlets and farms. Small v-shaped gills such as Knar Burn extend off the surrounding open moorland tops and are wooded and secluded in character. The disused South Tyne railway winds and cuts its way through the lower slopes of the dale.

24b Middle West Allen

- 4.247. In this area the River West Allen has narrow banks with only a scattering of broadleaved trees and woodland and relatively steep dale sides, on which there is a strong pattern of stone walls around improved pastures. Trees along stone walls, in conjunction with areas of broadleaved and mixed woodland flanking tributary burns such as Dryburn Cleugh, give rise to a well-wooded appearance overall. Settlement consists of farmsteads and barns but generally the area feels remote and unpopulated.

24c Middle East Allen

- 4.248. This area consists of a broad shallow valley, steepening and becoming more defined further to the south. It is an open pastoral landscape with a strong field boundary pattern of stone walls and hedges and has a domesticated character derived from the relatively high population particularly around Allendale Town but also from the dispersed pattern of barns and farmsteads on the dale sides. In places there are mixed shelterbelts on the middle slopes, and within the valley floor the main river is flanked by broadleaved woodland. Upper slopes have a rougher, wilder and textured appearance. Here the enclosure pattern remains strong but the pastures become less improved and are often rushy.

24b Middle Devil's Water

- 4.249. This is a shallow valley containing the upper reaches of Devil's Water, which takes an incised course through this landscape and in the southern part of the dale is characterised by mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodland. The dale sides have a strong pattern of stone walls, interspersed with occasional blocks of coniferous (generally Scots pine) woodland, some of which show signs of over maturity and wind throw. Tributary burns are also incised lined with gorse and bracken.

24e Middle Derwent

- 4.250. This is a broad, shallow, and heavily wooded dale. In the east the large Derwent Reservoir occupies much of the dale floor. Parkland and estate landscapes around Ruffside Hall are well wooded, with large blocky conifer plantations, separated by improved pasture. Estate buildings have steeply pitched roofs and gabled upper storeys. The settlement of Blanchland indicates the significance of the church in this landscape in the medieval period and is the site of a former monastery. In the west the River Derwent flows in a steep-sided wooded ravine with a narrow, flat floor between regular walled enclosures of improved pasture on the gently sloping dale sides above. Isolated farms are scattered along the valley roads.

Glossary

Brown earth: type of soil rich in organic humus.

Gill: a deep rocky cleft or wooded ravine.

Toft: individual building plot in a medieval village or town.

Garth: a small enclosure that adjoins a house.

Landscape Character Type 25: Moorland Ridges

Introduction

4.251. This landscape character type is found within the North Pennine uplands south of the Tyne Gap and forms an important visual backdrop to the lower lying dales which dissect it. This upland landscape, ranging from around 450m to 600m, is culturally linked to the dales below. Their interface is marked by narrow bands of transitional landscapes, where semi-improved pasture and coniferous shelterbelts meet the broad pattern of fences and stone walls. Most of this landscape is within the North Pennines AONB.



4.252. This LCT is represented by five character areas: 25a Blenkinsopp Common, 25b Hartleyburn and Knarsdale Commons, 25c Whitfield Moor, 25d Allen Common and Mohope/Acton Moors and 25e Hexhamshire and Bulbeck Commons.

Key Characteristics

- Broad ridges and flat-topped hill summits.
- High moorland with sparse tree cover.
- Dissected by steep, rocky, burns with stands of juniper.
- Extensive tracts of blanket bog with, cotton grass, sphagnum moss and heather moorland.
- Extensive grazing by sheep.
- Few man-made features apart from occasional fences, grouse butts, cairns and sheepfolds.
- Unfenced roads marked by snow poles with gates or cattle grids.
- Evidence of past mining activity.
- Remote and elemental landscape with a high degree of relative wildness.

Description

4.253. This LCT is heavily influenced the underlying geology which comprises alternating strata of Carboniferous limestones, sandstones (with thin coal seams) and softer shales which give a stepped profile to slopes, a strong horizontal grain to the topography and a smoothly flowing landform. Gritstones and limestones outcrop locally in low grey crags and bands, while elsewhere hard igneous dolerites (such as the Whin Sill) outcrop as larger crags with scree slopes, forming notable features in an otherwise uniform and simple landscape. This geology is strongly reflected in the topography, which comprises broad gently undulating ridges or elongated flat-topped summits. These upland areas are drained by rocky, quick flowing becks which form steep gullies or gills.

- 4.254. Thick layers of peat cover much of the terrain, with dark eroding edges or hags visible in places. The highest ground is occupied by extensive tracts of blanket bog with cotton grass and sphagnum moss, which on drier ground progresses to heather and bilberry, or acid grassland on peaty gley or podzolic soils. Stands of juniper woods occur along ravines. The heather moors are managed for grouse shooting, the burning of heather creating seasonal patterns and a patchwork of older and younger heather. The moorland is also used for extensive grazing by sheep (breeds such as Swaledale are common), and where heavy grazing occurs land cover is often dominated by mat-grass moorland. The majority of the North Pennine Moors SPA and SAC falls into this landscape, with numerous SSSIs covering the moorland. Past mineral extraction sites often support highly specialised plant communities.
- 4.255. This landscape is sparsely populated, since settlement is concentrated in the dales below. Nevertheless there are occasional man-made features in this landscape, including scattered industrial features, quarries, masts, grouse butts or sheepfolds. Although generally unenclosed, this landscape does contain occasional stone walls which increase in number at its edges and reflect late 18th century enclosure of common ground.
- 4.256. There is a visual simplicity and uniformity to this landscape and an open, exposed character with a strong sense of wildness or solitude. This is reduced towards the edges, where the landscape gradually descends into adjoining dales. Panoramic views are available across the more settled lowland areas and over unbroken moorland.
- 4.257. Some areas show scarring or isolated spoil heaps, or evidence of past peat cutting. Industrial archaeology is therefore an important feature of this LCT, with extensive remains of former lead mines on Wellhope Moor, and the extensive flue network from the Allen smelt mill at Dryburn Moor. Although rich in prehistoric archaeology, much is buried or comprises subtle features which are masked by vegetation, for example stone circles, cairn fields or burial mounds. Although few footpaths cross this remote area, the majority is designated open access land.

Landscape Character Areas

25a Blenkinsopp Common

- 4.258. This area, which extends west into Cumbria, is a low, broad ridge between the River Irthing to the north, the South Tyne to the east, and the Hartley Burn to the south. It is crossed by the A69 trunk road, and contains remnants of Roman forts associated with Hadrian's Wall. It forms an important backdrop to the Tyne Gap, offering views east and west along the line of the World Heritage Site.

25b Hartleyburn and Knarsdale Commons

- 4.259. This area, which extends west into Cumbria, comprises a broad upland ridge to the west of the South Tyne valley, and south of the Hartley Burn. It is heavily dissected by small burns which flow into the South Tyne, leaving elevated hills and ridges between. There is evidence of past mining activity on Knarsdale Common and a coniferous plantation on Byers Fell. This landscape forms an important backdrop to the South Tyne valley.

25c Whitfield Moor

- 4.260. This area is a broad plateau between West Allendale and the South Tyne valley. In the northern part there is evidence of past mining activity, and dispersed farmsteads are accessed by narrow lanes and tracks. To the south, the landscape is less accessible, comprising extensive areas of heather moorland and peat, with a strong sense of remoteness and solitude. Wallace Crag to the west, and Whitfield Lough which is centrally located, form notable features in an otherwise relatively uniform area.

25d Allen Common and Mohope/Acton Moors

- 4.261. This area comprises a relatively narrow ridge between the Allendales and dales to the south and provides important upland setting. The mining chimney at Dryburn Moor is a local landmark while disused mines on Hesleywell Moor are notable features. Footpaths and lanes cross this ridge of higher land connecting the dales. The crags at Brownley Hill are a notable landscape feature.

25e Hexhamshire and Bulbeck Commons

- 4.262. This area is a broad plateau between East Allendale and Derwentdale and is dissected by the headwaters of Devil's Water. There are numerous footpaths and tracks, some being boggy. On the fringes are rectilinear coniferous shelterbelts, and Slaley Wood which masks the transition from open moorland to enclosed farmland. The majority of the area comprises heather moorland managed for grouse and sheep. Ancient farming and mining routes cross the area, while in the narrow gullies that drain the commons there are patches of bracken and occasional waterfalls.

Glossary

Gley: a wet clay soil, greenish-blue-grey in colour and low in oxygen.

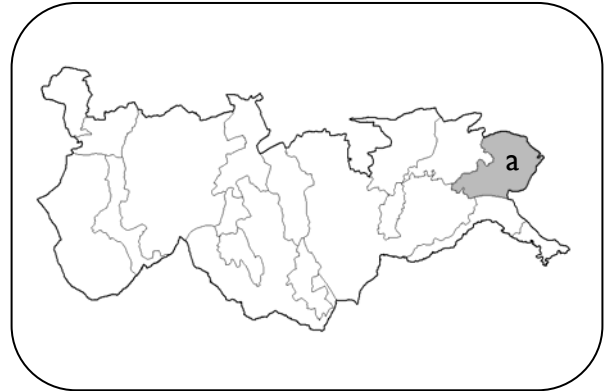
Podzol: soil type common to cold wet areas, waterlogged with few minerals.

Gill: a deep rocky cleft or wooded ravine.

Landscape Character Type 26: Upland Farmland and Plantations

Introduction

- 4.263. This landscape forms a transitional area between the North Pennine dales and the Tyne Gap.
- 4.264. This LCT is represented by one character area: *26a Hedley*.



Key Characteristics

- Transitional landscape between the North Pennine dales and the Tyne Gap.
- Series of rounded terraces descending northwards into the Tyne valley.
- Forested landscape with medium to large rectilinear blocks of coniferous plantation.
- Regular medium to large-scale field pattern defined by hedges with hedgerow trees and areas of stone walls.
- Mixture of arable and pasture (sheep grazing).
- Drainage pattern is not strong, consisting of minor shallow burns.
- Sparse settlement confined to former country houses now used for various purposes.

Description

- 4.265. The geology of this landscape comprises bands of sandstone interspersed with mudstones and siltstones. The sandstone banding of the bedrock is reflected in the rounded terraces which descend northwards into the Tyne valley and are readily discernable when travelling through the landscape. The soils comprise a mosaic of heavy, seasonally waterlogged clays and more fertile and free-draining brown earths on the sandstone. Overall this landscape does not have a strong drainage pattern. Land is drained by shallow burns that are generally not visually significant.
- 4.266. Land use and land cover reflect the underlying variety of soils, and particularly the acidic nature of the sandy soils, with coniferous plantations and patches of gorse and bracken in verges and hedgerows. The larger coniferous plantations such as Broomleyfell Plantation and Low and High Kellas Plantations date from before 1860, comprising a mixture of species including Scots pine and larch, whereas other smaller blocks of forest are 20th-century additions. These are often in the form of shelterbelts along roads. Some plantations are fringed with broadleaved species such as beech and birch. The relatively extensive areas of forest combined with the predominance of surveyed enclosure (dating from the enclosure of manorial wastes in the 18th century) which typically has straight boundaries and a medium-scaled geometric pattern, give this landscape a well-ordered and 'blocky' character. Field boundaries comprise a mix of hedgerows (predominantly blackthorn with some holly with occasional hedgerow trees) and stone walls. They enclose a mixture of arable

and improved pasture, although to the south this gives way to a more pastoral landscape, some areas of which are rushy and show signs of poor drainage.

- 4.267. The settlement pattern comprises dispersed farmsteads, with estate buildings and scattered cottages. There are no substantial settlements. Linear features include the A68 and a line of pylons.
- 4.268. Although this landscape shares similar geology and topography to land to the west its land use pattern and lack of a strong drainage network distinguish it from the *Farmed River Valleys* (LCT 22). The relatively high forest cover and gentle topography mean that this is an inward looking landscape with few long distant views.
- 4.269. There are a number of country houses with associated parkland and estate landscape features. Many of these estates are now used for different purposes. For example, Slaley Hall is a hotel and golf course, while Ministeracres is a monastery.

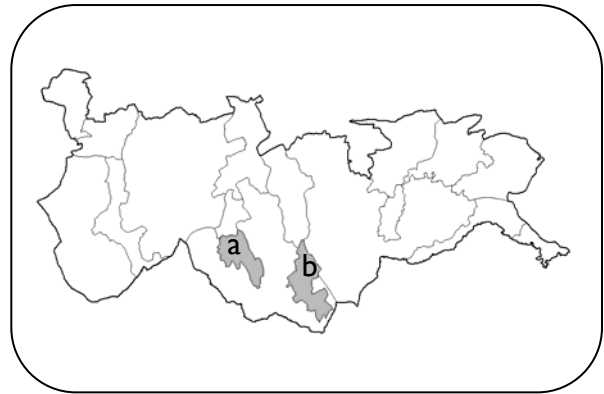
Glossary

Brown earth: type of soil rich in organic humus.

Landscape Character Type 27: Upper Dale

Introduction

- 4.270. This landscape character type comprises a pastoral landscape in the upper reaches of the North Pennine dales.
- 4.271. This LCT comprises two character areas: 27a Upper West Allen and 27b Upper East Allen.



Key Characteristics

- Upper reaches of the North Pennine dales consisting of varied valley topography.
- Fast-flowing rocky streams with peaty brown water.
- Wet rushy pastures, upland hay meadows and rough grazing on moorland fringes.
- Regular field patterns of dry stone walls with scattered field barns.
- Few trees or woodlands except for occasional conifer plantations.
- Scattered small farms with occasional farm clusters and hamlets.
- Relicts of the lead mining industry, including mine buildings, waste heaps, smelter flues, reservoirs and hushes, often with specialised biodiversity.
- Visually open but enclosed by adjacent moorland ridgelines.
- Remote and tranquil landscapes on the margins of settled and agricultural land.

Description

- 4.272. The topography of the dale floor in the upper dales is varied. Most upper dales are relatively shallow and broad but incised by narrow gullies – gills or sikes – cut by rocky, fast flowing streams. The underlying Carboniferous sandstones, shales and limestones are generally masked by glacial boulder clay and morainic drift. Soils are heavy waterlogged or peaty gleys.
- 4.273. This is a pastoral landscape of wet, rushy pastures, upland hay meadows and rough grazing enclosed from the moor. Field patterns tend to be regular and date from enclosure and agricultural improvements from the late 18th century onwards. Fields are generally large and bounded by low dry stone walls or wire fences, often in a poor state of repair. The diversity of grasslands, grazed by hardy upland sheep and beef cattle, creates a patchwork of muted and brighter greens reflecting varying degrees of improvement by drainage, liming, and fertilising. There are scattered stone field barns and sheepfolds. Most upper dales are open or sparsely wooded with occasional small streamside woods, sparse lines of alder trees and willow scrub following watercourses, or isolated conifer plantations or shelterbelts. In places, land at the dale head has been afforested with large regular blocks of spruce. Part of the North Pennine Moors SPA and North Pennine Dales SAC are within this landscape,

as well as several SSSIs including Hartley Cleugh and White Ridge Meadow. Past mineral extraction sites often support highly specialised plant communities.

- 4.274. Small farms and farm clusters are scattered across the dale floor and onto the dale sides, occasionally marked by wind-blown groups of sycamore or Scots pine. Many farms date from the expansion of the lead mining industry which brought miner-smallholders to the limits of agriculture.
- 4.275. The landscape is visually open and exposed and defined by the adjacent moorland skyline. It is a remote and tranquil landscape on the margins of settlement and agriculture, often with a rather bleak and neglected quality.
- 4.276. Relicts of the lead mining industry include derelict mine buildings, waste heaps, smelter flues, reservoirs and hushes.

Landscape Character Areas

27a Upper West Allen

- 4.277. This character area comprises the upper reaches of the River West Allen and its main tributary the Mohope Burn. The dale in this section is asymmetrical; the eastern slopes are much steeper and imposing than those on the west. Rough pastures on the valley sides and the presence of open moorland in the dale give this area a remote and wild character. This is enhanced by the general lack of woodland and settlement, with the exception of Carrshield, and the strong remnants of past mining and industrial activity, which can be seen throughout the area.

27b Upper East Allen

- 4.278. Here the dale has a distinctive v-shaped profile, the river being defined by its incised and rocky course lined by occasional trees. This area has enclosed pastures, many of which are rough and unimproved, and the open moorland tops extend down into the dale. The settlement of Allenheads is located at the head of the dale and is enclosed by steeper landform and a mix of in-bye and coniferous plantations. The tributary becks flow in deep gullies on the valley sides. Dispersed farmsteads and barns give rise to a relatively populated character, and evidence of past mining activity is widespread including disused quarries, mine shafts and lime kilns. Small reservoirs are also characteristic of this area.

Glossary

Gill: a narrow ravine or stream.

Sike: a small gully or stream, which may be dry in summer.

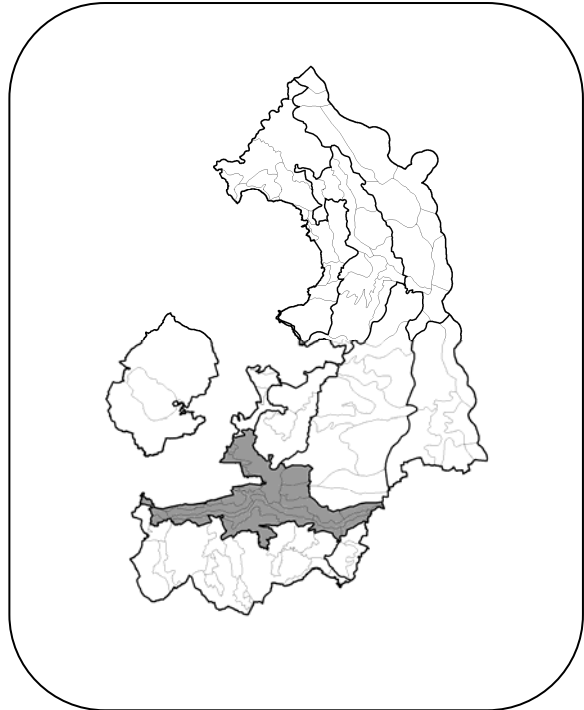
Morainic: relating to moraine, a bank of glacial deposit marking the extent of an ice sheet or glacier.

Gley: a wet clay soil, greenish-blue-grey in colour and low in oxygen.

Hush: an ancient method of mineral extraction, whereby water is repeatedly dammed and released, washing away topsoil to reveal underlying material.

NCA 11: TYNE GAP

4.279. This narrow but distinctive lowland corridor, centred on the river Tyne, separates the North Pennines from the Border country. To the west lie the pastoral landscapes of the Solway Basin; to the east are the more densely populated Tyne and Wear Lowlands. Most of this NCA is within the study area, although it extends some way into the Northumberland National Park in the north-west. Much of Hadrian's Wall, for example, falls outside the study area.



4.280. Key characteristics of the *Tyne Gap*, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.

- *A narrow but distinct corridor running east-west through a low-lying gap between the uplands of the Pennines visible to north and south.*
- *Farmland, pastoral in the west, merging to mixed and arable in the east, along the Tyne valley, with broadleaved woodland and conifer plantations on side slopes, contained to the north by the parallel scarps of the Whin Sill.*
- *Rough grazing on elevated land, loughs and rushy pastures north of the Whin Sill, contrasting with the more fertile floodplains of the South Tyne, and the intimate wooded valley of the North Tyne.*
- *Very evident remains of the Roman Wall, forts and associated archaeological features on the Whin Sill scarp running along the north side of the Tyne Valley.*
- *Significant transport route linking east and west through the Pennines followed by the Military Road, the Carlisle to Newcastle railway, the A69 trunk road and overhead lines.*
- *Main settlements located strategically along the valley with scattered large farmsteads and, also, castles and fortified structures, including bastles and pele towers.*

Landscape character types and areas

- 4.281. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains seven landscape character types and 20 landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.7.

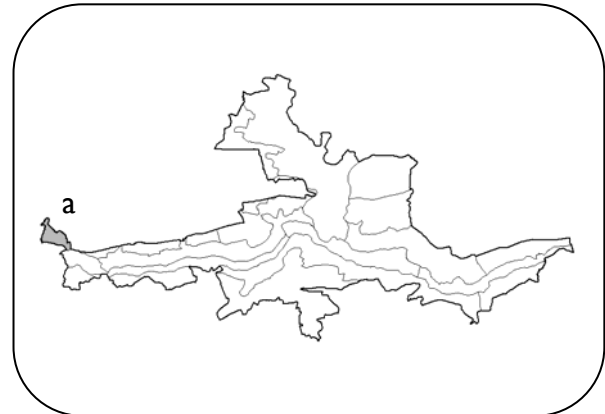
Table 4.7 Landscape character types and areas in NCA11

Landscape character type		Character area	
28	Basin Valley and Fringes	28a	River Irthing
29	Broad Wooded Valley	29a	North Tyne Valley
31	Glacial Trough Valley Floor	30a	Haltwhistle to Newbrough
		30b	Newbrough to Corbridge
		30c	Corbridge to Wylam
31	Glacial Trough Valley Sides	31a	Tipalt Burn
		31b	Haltwhistle to Bridge End
		31c	North Plenmeller Common
		31d	Langley to Stocksfield
		31e	Stocksfield to Prudhoe
		31f	Acomb to Ovington
		31g	Ovington to Wylam
32	Parallel Ridges and Commons	32a	Howden Hill
		32b	Haltwhistle, Melkridge and Ridley Commons
33	Tributary Valley	33a	Erring Burn
34	Upland Commons and Farmland	34a	Acomb Ridge
		34b	Broadpool Common
		34c	Grindon Common
		34d	Featherstone Common
		34e	Lowes and Nubbock Fells

Landscape Character Type 28: Basin Valley and Fringes

Introduction

- 4.282. This landscape lies at the far west of the study area and includes the watershed between the River Irthing, which flows west into Cumbria, and the Tipalt Burn, which flows east to the South Tyne. This landscape continues west along the Irthing valley, beyond the study area.
- 4.283. This LCT is represented by one character area: *28a River Irthing*.



Key Characteristics

- Transitional landscape on the watershed between the South Tyne valley to the east and the Carlisle Basin to the west.
- Narrow, deep valley and gorge carved by the River Irthing.
- Predominance of pasture, scrub and rough grazing.
- Well wooded character – semi-natural woodland along river and tributary burns, and mature trees associated with settlement.
- Field pattern defined by stone walls and hedgerows.
- Significant historic sites reflecting area's importance as a defensive frontier over the centuries.

Description

- 4.284. The sinuous course of the river has cut a steep-sided valley or gorge, the northern slopes being steepest and historically providing a naturally defensive location for Hadrian's Wall which runs along their crest. The lands to the east, and the southern slopes of the valley, are gentler, extending onto Denton Fell and Blenkinsopp Common, which form part of the *Moorland Ridges* (LCT 25).
- 4.285. The Irthing valley is heavily wooded both within the valley floor and extending onto the valley sides in the form of hedgerows with hedgerow trees and woodland copses and scrub or 'hanging' woods on steeper bluff slopes. Elsewhere on the valley floor are wet pastures and patches of gorse along the course of the rocky burn. The combination of woodland, trees and valley floor pastures gives rise to a mature and sheltered character. Further east the land has a transitional character and rises to form the watershed between the two valley systems, where it becomes less wooded and more open, with areas of in-bye pastures and rough grazing defined by a mixture of stone walls and hedges. SSSI designation covers the Tipalt Burn, the River Irthing, and the Irthing Gorge.
- 4.286. Settlement consists of dispersed farmsteads located on the middle slopes, with easy access to the upland areas and nucleated villages of Longbyre and Gilsland, both of which have grown since the construction of the railway in the 19th century. Gilsland

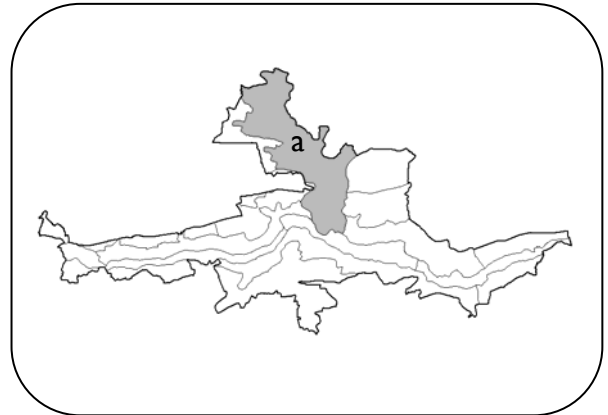
Spa to the north is situated on the site of a sulphurous spring and has been a popular resort since the 18th century.

- 4.287. This landscape has a rugged upland character despite the relatively high concentration of woodland associated with the river valley and settlements. Views are limited by the valley sides and woodlands.
- 4.288. Historic features include the alignment of Hadrian's Wall and the Stanegate Roman road which ran alongside it. The strong visual presence of the castle at Thirlwall is a reminder of the valley's importance as a defensible frontier over the centuries. The Hadrian's Wall Path and National Cycle Route 72 pass through this landscape.

Landscape Character Type 29: Broad Wooded Valley

Introduction

4.289. This landscape character type comprises the broad wooded valley that contains the River North Tyne in its middle reaches and main tributary valleys. It is flanked by *Sandstone Fringe Farmland* (LCT 11) to the east and *Upland Commons and Farmland* (LCT 34) to the west, the rounded upper valley slopes showing a gradual transition into these landscape character types. It stretches from Redesmouth in the north to the confluence with the River South Tyne east of Bridge End.



4.290. This LCT is represented by one character area: *29a North Tyne Valley*.

Key Characteristics

- Broad valley with central meandering river and floodplain of varying width.
- Gently sloping and undulating valley sides dissected by a repeating pattern of tributary streams.
- High concentration of woodland – including native copses, mixed and coniferous woodlands, and hedgerow, avenue and parkland trees.
- Semi-natural woodland (including hazel, wych elm and ash) along river edges and in tributary valleys.
- Mixture of arable, pasture and valley floor meadows.
- Field pattern of medium scale defined by hawthorn hedges.
- Small stone bridges across tributary streams and disused railway; stone walls surrounding parkland estates.
- Villages located on lower valley sides, lending a settled character.
- Managed landscape with large country houses and associated parklands.

Description

4.291. Geologically this landscape is underpinned by sandstone, siltstone, mudstones and shales and overlain by glacial drift and alluvium. Below Redesmouth, the River North Tyne drops into a marked trough, in places a gorge, deeply cut into the floor of the valley. Cut-off meanders, terraces and other features are evidence of the changing course of the river within the often broad haughs. Tributary valleys cut down into the valley sides to join the main river and indicate that glacial overdeepening of the valley may have occurred. The North Tyne valley has a complex topography due to the incised nature of the river, the variable width of the floodplain, the gentle, undulating character of the valley side drift deposits, and dissection of the valley sides by tributary watercourses. On the western flanks of the valley, the tributary valleys of Houxy, Wark, Gofton and Crook Burns show a distinct, repeating pattern of ridges

and wooded valleys. A similar but less distinct pattern also occurs to the north of the valley between Wark and Gunnerton. Elsewhere there are pronounced terraces on the lower valley slopes, affording views across the valley within which the main river and floodplain are hidden, for example around Chipchase Castle and south of Birtley.

- 4.292. Land use within the valley comprises a mixture of pasture and arable land, enclosed by a strong pattern of hedgerows, and in the north-west by post and wire fencing. In some places pastures are grazed by horses and ponies, particularly around Gunnerton and on the valley floor where there are managed hay meadows. Woodland cover comprises dense ancient and semi-natural broadleaved woodland within the tributary valleys and along the main valley sides. Species such as alder, ash, oak, wych elm and hazel are typical – the latter often showing signs of coppicing. Many of the trees are covered in mosses and lichens. Elsewhere mixed woodland plantations and copses are associated with the numerous parkland and estate landscapes found on the lower valley sides, including Chester, Brunton House, Houghton Castle, Nunwick, and Chipchase Castle. Mature avenues of oak, ash, beech and lime along lanes in the vicinity of these estates are characteristic of this landscape character type, as are parkland trees. There are small SSSIs at Warks Burn Woodland, The Scroggs, Tyne Watersmeet and Brunton Bank Quarry.
- 4.293. This is a well-settled landscape with small historic villages on the valley sides, located at key crossing points, for example, Wark and Humshaugh. The settlement pattern in the wider area is characterised by dispersed farmsteads and large estate houses. Small stone bridges cross the main valley, tributary streams and the disused railway which runs along the eastern flanks of the valley. Stone walls marking the outer limits of estate parkland are also characteristic.
- 4.294. Despite the relatively high density of settlement, the valley retains a distinctly rural, sheltered and tranquil character. Narrow, winding roads and lanes and lined with hedgerows and small woodlands reinforce this natural but managed character. The consistent topographic, land cover, field and settlement patterns create a complex yet unified visual composition.
- 4.295. Hadrian's Wall crosses the valley at Chesters, where a major fort is preserved as a visitor attraction. Although the wall itself is less visible here, there are reflections of the wall in place names and road alignments. This area is a popular tourist destination, with not only the Roman wall, but also gardens at Chipchase Castle, caravan sites, and other recreational infrastructure, linked by a network of rights of way.

Glossary

Haugh: an area of floodplain meadow.

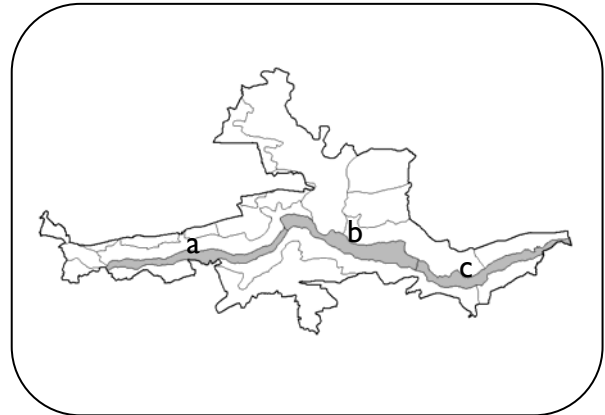
Glacial overdeepening: carving out of a valley bottom by moving ice.

Poached soil: soil in which the structure has been destroyed by trampling by animals, also called puddled soil.

Landscape Character Type 30: Glacial Trough Valley Floor

Introduction

- 4.296. This landscape character type comprises the flat floodplain and lower valley slopes above the River Tyne. For the most part the lower valley slopes blend gently into the extensive floodplain; they are distinguished from the *Glacial Trough Valley Sides* (LCT 31) by changes in topography, land use and settlement. In places the meandering course of the river has cut into the valley sides creating steep sided bluffs and narrow gorges.



- 4.297. This LCT is represented by three character areas: 30a Haltwhistle to Newbrough, 30b Newbrough to Corbridge and 30c Corbridge to Wylam.

Key Characteristics

- Valley floor and shallow lower slopes of a glacial trough between the North Pennines and the Northumberland uplands.
- Flat, well defined, and sheltered valley floor containing a meandering river.
- Medium- to large-scale fields with mixed farming, defined by hedgerows and post and wire fencing.
- Generally open character – tree cover concentrated along river or steep bluffs.
- Nucleated settlements of early date on lower slopes, often bridging the river.
- Major transport communication route – A69 and Carlisle to Newcastle railway.
- Gravel extraction on the valley floor in some places.
- Some areas of industry and settlement expansion.

Description

- 4.298. This area comprises a glacial trough created by an ice stream that moved eastwards to the coast, carving through the bedrock which consists of mudstone, sandstone and limestone, with coal seams also occurring to the east between Stocksfield and Wylam. These underlying rocks have been covered by meltwater deposits of sand and gravels, creating in some areas a moundy topography of kames, eskers and intervening hollows, notably west of Hexham. The valley floor is also covered by rich alluvial deposits that are highly fertile and well drained, supporting a mix of arable land use and riverside pastures used for cattle grazing. In places the gravel deposits have been exploited.
- 4.299. The floodplain and lower slopes have a medium- to large-scale rectilinear field pattern. Fields are enclosed by well-trimmed, sometimes gappy, hawthorn hedges with occasional hedgerow trees. Woodland and tree cover is not extensive and is confined to alder trees along the edge of the river and woodlands along the lower slopes particularly where the land is steep (oak, ash, hazel and some Scots pine).

There are more extensive areas of woodland within estate landscapes such as those of Ridley Hall, Bellister Castle and Bywell and Stocksfield Halls, woodland commonly occurring where the steep-sided tributary valleys join the main valley. These estate landscapes developed in the 18th century when there were more settled conditions and growing industrial wealth within the Tyne valley. They are particularly common east of Hexham, where their parkland, avenues and woodland plantations have a strong influence on the character of the valley. There are SSSIs at Beltingham River Shingle, Tyne Watersmeet, Wharmley Riverside, Close House Riverside, and the River Tyne at Ovingham.

- 4.300. Historically the lower slopes have been important for settlement since Roman times and the towns and villages of Haltwhistle, Bardon Mill, Newbrough, Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Corbridge, Riding Mill, Wylam reflect this repetitive pattern along the valley corridor. Many of the settlements are located at important river crossings and the historic stone bridges of Haydon Bridge and Corbridge along with their place names reinforce this landscape association. Relatively recent growth of settlements has resulted in the extension of built development onto the floodplain in places, particularly industry at Haydon Bridge, Hexham and Prudhoe and a number of the settlements have seen residential growth as a result of an increase in residents who choose to commute to Newcastle.
- 4.301. The river valley is also an important corridor for communication, housing the Newcastle to Carlisle railway, which was built in the 19th century. The A69 follows the valley, while the A68 cuts across it. The railway transported raw materials, such as coal which was mined particularly in the area around Prudhoe, and also brought in materials such as Welsh slate which can be seen on the roofs of many buildings in the area. Despite the use of slate becoming common, there are a few examples of the use of the traditional heather thatch in buildings at Bardon Mill, as well as more numerous examples of stone flag roofs.
- 4.302. The river valley takes a sinuous course and hence is mainly seen in glimpsed views along the valley floor, and across to the river to the valley sides, and at junctions with tributary valleys. These changing views can be disorientating. This is a sheltered and inhabited landscape whose qualities contrast with the wilder qualities of adjacent higher land. Despite its role as a transport corridor, it retains a strongly rural and unspoilt character through much of its length.
- 4.303. The railway and surrounding mining activity had a significant influence on the vernacular architecture of a number of the valley settlements resulting in characteristic Victorian terrace cottages particularly in Haltwhistle and Haydon Bridge. Historic features include medieval castles and estate landscapes such as Ridley Hall and Bywell. Some evidence of Roman activity is also found. National Cycle Route 72 passes through parts of this landscape, although there is no continuous recreational route along the river.

Landscape Character Areas

30a Haltwhistle to Newbrough

- 4.304. This part of the valley is predominantly pastoral, with a relatively narrow and yet well-defined valley floor. Between Haltwhistle and Haydon Bridge the valley floor

narrows further, cutting into the bedrock to form a wooded gorge. The settlement of Haltwhistle was strongly influenced in the 18th to early 20th centuries by local industries including mining, farming, woollen mills, breweries, brickworks and lime kilns, and typically has streets comprising Victorian terraced houses.

30b Newbrough to Corbridge

- 4.305. In this section of the river valley the valley floor or haugh widens and the river assumes larger meanders. The valley floor and sides also support a mix of arable and dairy farming. Areas of built development and industry are prominent at Bridge End and Hexham. The Egger chipboard factory is a local landmark, the plume from the chimney being visible for considerable distances up and down the valley. Both Corbridge and Hexham retain their historic cores. Corbridge originally grew from the Roman town of Corstopitum, a supply town for the troops on Hadrian's Wall. Corstopitum provided much of the building stone used in the construction of many of the town's buildings, including the church, Vicar's Pele and nearby castles.

30c Corbridge to Wylam

- 4.306. East of Corbridge the river broadens and becomes shallower, flowing over a rocky course with notable shingle bars. The valley floor also becomes more wooded, with patches of willow scrub and birch woodland regenerating on areas of former mining spoil. This increased woodland cover makes the valley feel more enclosed. Like areas further upstream, the valley floor and lower valley sides support mixed farming and industry, and there is subtle evidence of former industrial activity. For example, a coke works existed at Silver Lonnen and coal was supplied from Mickley Colliery to the south. At Stocksfield, iron ore smelting occurred utilising the local resources of ironstone, limestone and birch charcoal. At Prudhoe, the steep banks along the River Tyne known as 'The Spetchells' are made up of chalk waste from industrial activity, which was formerly dumped along the river and now supports a unique calcareous habitat as well as screening the sizable industrial development to the south.

Glossary

Haugh: an area of floodplain meadow.

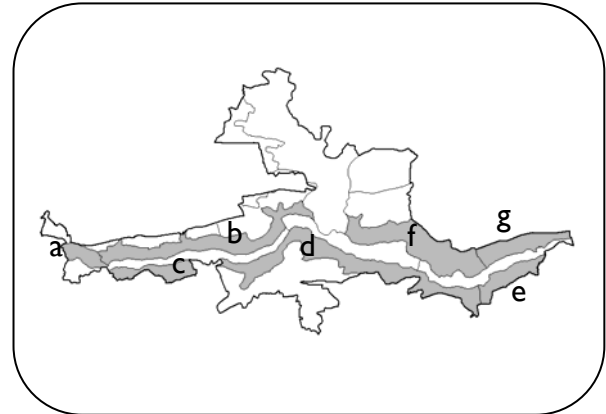
Kame: a short ridge of sand and gravel deposited by sub-glacial streams issuing from the front of a stationary or retreating glacier.

Esker: low, parallel winding ridges of sand and gravel deposited within sub-glacial channels, found running along the floor of glacial valleys.

Landscape Character Type 31: Glacial Trough Valley Sides

Introduction

- 4.307. This landscape character type comprises the valley sides of the glacial trough which carries the Rivers South Tyne and Tyne. These valley sides have been identified as distinct from the *Glacial Trough Valley Floor* (LCT 30) both in terms of topography and land use patterns. In places the landscape of the surrounding uplands occurs on the upper valley sides, and may influence the character of the valley slopes below.



- 4.308. This LCT is represented by seven character areas: 31a *Tipalt Burn*, 31b *Haltwhistle to Bridge End*, 31c *North Plenmeller Common*, 31d *Langley to Stocksfield*, 31e *Stocksfield to Prudhoe*, 31f *Acomb to Ovington* and 31g *Ovington to Wylam*.

Key Characteristics

- Valley sides of a glacial trough between the North Pennines and the Northumberland uplands.
- Mixed-scale field pattern defined by hedges, post and wire fencing and stone walls on upper slopes.
- Mainly pasture land to west, with increasing arable component in east on shallower slopes.
- Ancient semi-natural woodland associated with natural springs and incised tributary valleys.
- Characteristic waterfalls along tributary burns, particularly on north-facing slopes.
- Areas of coniferous plantation and shelterbelts in places.
- Historic houses, estates and castles, and significant areas of ridge and furrow.
- Nucleated settlement and areas of urban expansion.
- Narrow lanes running up and down valley sides.
- Well-settled and sheltered enclosed landscape.

Description

- 4.309. This landscape is a glacial trough created by an ice stream which moved eastwards carving through the bedrock. This erosional deepening subsequently encouraged tributary burns to cut down and form deeply incised gullies in the valley sides. Geologically the valley sides consist of mudstones, sandstones and limestones, with coal seams occurring to the east between Stocksfield and Wylam. As a result of the geology and glacial erosion, the valleys sides are generally steep and show a strongly stepped profile in places, becoming gentler to the east. Where tributary valleys cut into bedrock on the valley sides, waterfalls are characteristic. Some of the tributary

valleys are fed by many further smaller tributaries. Locally this creates a complex topography of incised wooded valleys separated by rounded knolls of land.

- 4.310. The hill slopes are reasonably well wooded with small- to medium-sized broadleaf and coniferous woods joining to provide a network of tree cover. Many of the woods on the northern slopes are associated with large houses and estates, and their parkland trees and shelterbelts extend into the surrounding farmland. On the more shaded southern valley slopes large coniferous forests (such as High Wood and Cock Wood near Hexham) are more common. The deep tributary valleys are wooded, mainly with semi-natural and ancient woodland. There are SSSIs at Settlingstones Mine, Stonecroft Mine, Corbridge Limestone Quarry, Fallowfield Mine and Plenmeller Common.
- 4.311. Enclosures on the middle and upper hill slopes tend to be medium sized, although field amalgamation has created some prominent, larger fields. Steeper slopes tend to be given over to improved pasture, while on shallower slopes arable land is more prevalent; it is here that most field enlargement has occurred. Former field boundaries are sometimes visible in the lines of relict infield trees. Enclosure is mainly by hawthorn hedges but on the many country estates, shelterbelt plantings are also an important form of enclosure. On the upper slopes hedges give way to stone walls.
- 4.312. As elsewhere in the Tyne corridor, the landscape supports considerable settlement, comprising small nucleated settlements such as Haltwhistle, Acomb and Corbridge as well as more sizeable towns such as Prudhoe. In some places, for example Riding Mill, the valley floor settlements have expanded up the valleys sides; while in other areas there is evidence of settlement growth or the conversion of farm buildings to office use, for example at Horsley. Narrow rural lanes run up and down valley sides connecting the main transport corridor, and principal settlements, with land to the north and south. Larger roads are few, although the A68 cuts across the slopes. Other development includes the power lines which cross the northern valley slopes between Haltwhistle and Haydon Bridge.
- 4.313. The valley sides often offer long views up and down the valley, although these are constrained by the landform. Minor tributary valleys form quiet backwaters off the main valley; they are small-scale landscapes with a secretive quality.
- 4.314. Settlement on the northern valley side is characterised by a number of castles, halls and other large estates. These reflect both the history of the Border wars and the wealth brought by industrial development in the 19th century.

Landscape Character Areas

31a Tipalt Burn

- 4.315. This is a shallow pastoral valley containing the Tipalt Burn which is a tributary of the River South Tyne. In this character area the valley sides are relatively shallow and moorland extends from surrounding upland areas into the valley. The Tipalt Burn shares the valley floor with the A69 and mainline railway and is constrained in its course. On the valley sides semi-natural woodland and mixed conifer plantations are confined to narrow tributary valleys or focused on the estate and grounds of

Blenkinsopp Hall, which occupies the south-facing slopes. Past mining activity in the valley has resulted in areas of disturbed ground. Pylons carry overhead power lines on the northern valleys sides.

31b Haltwhistle to Bridge End

- 4.316. In this area the valley sides are characterised by a strong pattern of hawthorn hedges with hedgerow trees and areas of ancient semi-natural woodland in deep gullies which drain the upland to the north. In places the hedgerows are well trimmed and they are sometimes gappy. The land use is pastoral, and valley floor settlements have expanded into this area around Haltwhistle and Haydon Bridge. Pylons cross the landscape and are visually significant.

31c North Plenmeller Common

- 4.317. This character area forms a narrow band of land between the upland Plenmeller Common and the lower valley slopes which are characterised by a strong pattern of coniferous shelterbelts extending from the upper slopes into the valley. Land use is mainly pastoral, some of which is poorly drained, and there is significant evidence of ridge and furrow. Both of these factors add visual texture to the medium- to large-scale fields. Within the tributary valleys there is broadleaved woodland, which combines with the shelterbelts to create a dense woodland pattern. Field boundaries are a mixture of hedgerows and stone walls.

31d Langley to Stocksfield

- 4.318. This area has significant mixed woodlands including High Wood and Park Wood, as well as broadleaved woodlands associated with Langley Hall and Burn, Crossley Burn, and the lower reaches of Devil's Water and March Burn. Waterfalls are characteristic, where burns drop down the stepped geology of the valley sides. The valley slopes are relatively steep and form the setting to Hexham and Riding Mill, both of which have extended onto the middle slopes of the valley. In places patches of gorse and bracken occur, reflecting the underlying acidic soils; and lines or clumps of Scots pine on the skyline form distinctive landmarks. Land use is mixed arable and pasture in medium sized fields defined by hedgerows with hedgerow trees and occasionally by stone walls.

31e Stocksfield to Prudhoe

- 4.319. This character area is defined by its past mining history and by the influence of urban development. It contains the colliery settlements of Mickley and Prudhoe, which have grown significantly in recent years. The urbanising influences of development are felt along the A695, although to the north, on the narrow lanes, it is possible to reach a more rural landscape quickly. Here the field pattern is medium sized and irregular. Fields are enclosed by well-trimmed hawthorn and blackthorn hedges. There is little woodland in this landscape and, the overall impression is one of openness.

31f Acomb to Ovington

- 4.320. This character area is defined by a concentration of estates and parkland, associated woodland, historic buildings and mixed farmland on valley slopes which are gentler than those further west. The landscape pattern comprises a strong network of woodland copses (both broadleaved and coniferous) associated with the estates and parkland, for example around Beaufront Castle and Aydon Castle. There are also many semi-natural woodlands in steep burn gullies, creating a landscape that is well-wooded overall. The wooded areas are separated by medium- to large-scale fields supporting mixed farming.

31g Ovington to Wylam

- 4.321. In this character area the valley sides become still less steep and are divided into small to medium sized irregular fields. Field boundaries are thin, trimmed hedgerows and there is little woodland or tree cover. Where it occurs it is concentrated in the tributary valleys and comprises ancient woodland and more recent planting of coniferous species. This landscape contains the historic settlements of Ovington and Horsley, and its general open character affords wide views to the south. There relatively frequent developments of new housing.

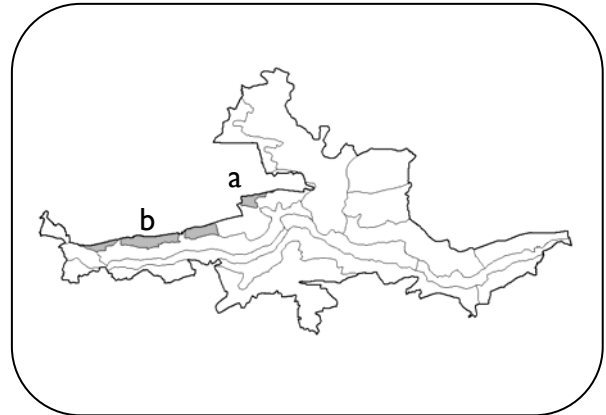
Glossary

Ridge and furrow: broad linear undulations that were created by medieval cultivation practices.

Landscape Character Type 32: Parallel Ridges and Commons

Introduction

- 4.322. This landscape shows a marked pattern of elevated ridges and shallow troughs with a strong east-to-west alignment. Its gently rolling, open moorland extends from Greenhead in the west to Wall in the east, and offers views to the edge of Wark Forest in the north and across the Tyne Gap to the Pennines in the south. This landscape extends north beyond the study area, into the Northumberland National Park.



- 4.323. This LCT is represented by two character areas: 32a Howden Hill and 32b Haltwhistle, Melkridge and Ridley Commons.

Key Characteristics

- Repeating pattern of elevated ridges and shallow troughs with strong east-west alignment: cuesta landscape.
- Visual association with the dramatic Whin Sill outcrops, which are topped by Hadrian's Wall, although these are outside the study area.
- Open moorland with mat- and purple moor grass, peat bog, improved pastures and commons, and loughs.
- Medium- to large-scale enclosure pattern defined by stone walls and post and wire fencing.
- Limited habitation of dispersed farmsteads nestling into landform and surrounded by shelter planting.
- Limited tree cover of small broadleaved copses and blocks of coniferous plantation.
- Significant area for outdoor recreation.

Description

- 4.324. Geologically this type comprises sequences of limestones, sandstones, siltstones and shales, into which the band of younger but harder igneous rock known as the Whin Sill has intruded. Glacial erosion of this geology by an extensive ice sheet scoured out weaker rocks to form basins or troughs which were covered by glacial deposits, while the Whin Sill was left protruding. The result is a landscape with a strong east-west axis, the harder igneous rocks forming a series of dramatic and rugged north-facing parallel scarps and a long line of crags otherwise known as a cuesta landscape. Either side of the outcrops there are expanses of moorland with shallow depressions containing loughs, mires and peat bogs. The outcrops of Whin Sill are seen rising often abruptly from the gently undulating moorland, creating a sense of drama and ruggedness. In places the craggy outcrop ridge is broken by glacial meltwater channels, for example at Whinstone Ridge and Sycamore Gap.

- 4.325. There are extensive areas of open mat-grass moorland and patches of carr woodland, reed bed and bog habitats associated with lower lying areas and glacial loughs; within these areas the landscape has a large scale and exposed character. Elsewhere, the land has been enclosed by sandstone walls or fencing to create a medium-scale pattern of semi-improved pastures used for sheep and cattle grazing. Many of the pastures are wet, the rushes creating visual texture. Tree cover is limited to small copses of ash and hawthorn and blocks of coniferous plantation, including Victorian Scots pine plantations set within the pastures, around the traditional sandstone farmsteads or on rocky outcrops. Many of the farmsteads date to the 19th century and are located in a dispersed pattern, nestled into the landform or among rocky outcrops, and connected by minor lanes. Muckle Moss is a NNR, and is part of the Border Mires SAC.
- 4.326. There are only a few farmsteads within this landscape. Human elements include the 18th-century Military Road (B6318) which runs in places along the north edge of the study area. Small quarries, such as at Oaky Knowe, have left areas of disused workings. More recent man-made features in this landscape relate to the area's importance for recreation and tourism. Signage, car parks, footpaths and interpretation are frequent and characteristic.
- 4.327. This landscape character type feels remote because of its narrow roads, sparse settlement, extensive agriculture management, and exposure to the elements. The landscape has a timeless quality, apparently little modified since Roman times. The complex, enduring form of the Whin Sill, set within a simple and uniform landscape of gently rolling moorland and enclosed pastures, remains its defining feature.
- 4.328. Historically the most significant features relate to the Roman period and are associated with Hadrian's Wall, although the wall itself lies beyond the study area. The landscape contains historically important earthwork evidence of pre-Roman landscape cultivation in the form of 'cord rig' near Haltwhistle and elsewhere. The landscape is a gateway to the major tourist destination of Hadrian's Wall, and the associated attractions. There is extensive access in the form of public rights of way and access land.

Landscape Character Areas

32a Howden Hill

- 4.329. This small area forms part of an open moorland plateau which extends northwards into the National Park. It undulates gently, reflecting the underlying geological sequences. In places there are small in-by-pastures, but the majority of this area comprises open mat-grass moorland with the occasional stone wall, forming a simple and yet bleak setting for Hadrian's Wall.

32b Haltwhistle, Melkridge and Ridley Commons

- 4.330. This character area is defined by the strong geological east-west axis, most dramatic at the Whin Sill. This area lies to the south of the Whin Sill, where a series of stepped terraces supports small pastures divided by stone walls. Throughout this area there are overt signs of Roman occupation associated with Hadrian's Wall

including camps and signal stations. Visitor infrastructure and signage is also prominent in parts.

Glossary

Cuesta: a ridge formed by erosion of tilted sedimentary rock strata, where hard rocks remain as a scarp on one side, with softer rocks forming a gentle slope on the other.

Mat-grass: *Nardus stricta*, a common moorland grass which thrives on poor soils.

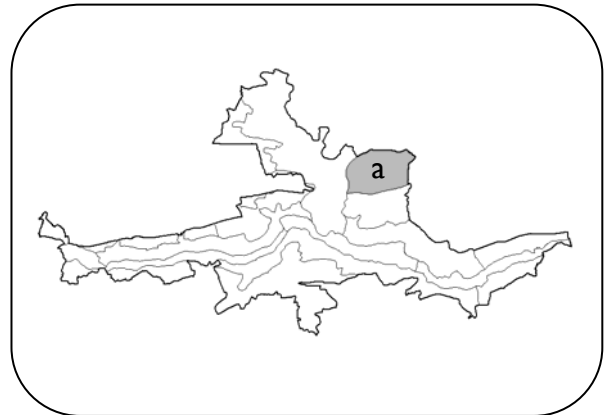
Carr: an area of low-lying wetland.

Cord rig: a type of pre-Roman cultivation, comprising a series of narrow ridges generally less than a metre apart.

Landscape Character Type 33: Tributary Valley

Introduction

- 4.331. This landscape occurs to the east of the North Tyne valley and is defined by the higher land of *Sandstone Fringe Farmland* (LCT 11) to the north and *Upland Commons and Farmland* (LCT 34) to the south. The coniferous forest to the north of this area forms a dominant feature on the skyline.
- 4.332. This LCT is represented by one character area: 33a Erring Burn.



Key Characteristics

- Shallow valley between ridges of higher land.
- Clear drainage pattern, as the Erring Burn flows through the centre of a shallow valley.
- Geometric, medium-sized field pattern defined by hawthorn hedgerows and overlapping lines of hedgerow trees.
- Mixture of arable land and improved pastures with wet flushes along the burn.
- Inaccessible and unpopulated landscape aside from a few lanes and tracks, and isolated farmsteads.
- Generally unwooded except for small copses, some recently planted.
- Historic landscape with ridge and furrow and pele towers.

Description

- 4.333. This type forms a shallow valley or bowl drained by Erring Burn, which feeds into the North Tyne valley to the west. Geologically the area is underlain by bands of sandstone, limestone, siltstones and mudstones but covered with a thick layer of glacial deposits which give rise to a gently undulating topography. These undulations are readily perceived within the valley, but from surrounding higher land the undulations are less apparent, and the valley appears as a simple shallow bowl or depression.
- 4.334. This landscape character type is heavily managed, comprising a mixed agricultural landscape within which both arable land and improved pastures are divided by hawthorn hedges that are often well trimmed and have a large number of hedgerow trees. In places the hedgerows have been lost and only the lines of trees remain. The hedgerow trees, mainly oak and ash, overlap in views, suggesting a more wooded character than actually exists. There is some evidence of recent tree planting in the form small copses in the corners of fields. The rectilinear and ordered pattern of fields is most easily discerned when viewed from surrounding higher land; when in the valley the landscape has a more complex, loose, visually permeable pattern.

- 4.335. A few farmsteads, comprising historic buildings and modern barns, occupy the valley but otherwise there is no settlement. A number of the farms are accessed by the narrow lane which passes through the area, while others in the north are accessed by private tracks. The A68 cuts across the eastern half of this area.
- 4.336. The general inaccessibility and lack of settlement mean that this landscape has a strongly rural and tranquil character. Although its landscape pattern and characteristics are unified and intact, it generally lacks distinction.
- 4.337. A pele tower is present at Cocklaw, and a deserted medieval village at Keepwick, as well as ridge and furrow on the valley sides. There are few footpaths and little evidence of recreational use.

Glossary

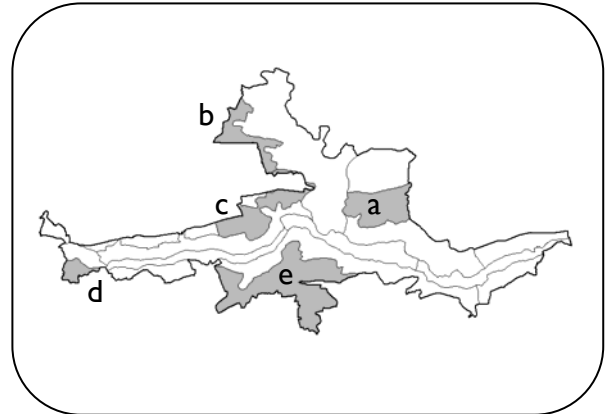
Ridge and furrow: broad linear undulations that were created by medieval cultivation practices.

Pele tower: alternative name for a tower house, a tall, defensive house of the 14th-17th century, common in Northumberland.

Landscape Character Type 34: Upland Commons and Farmland

Introduction

4.338. This landscape is located above the valley slopes of the Rivers South Tyne and North Tyne, forming a transitional landscape to the upland moorland and forest landscapes beyond. Generally it comprises open, elevated land between 200m and 250m, the elevation enabling views across the adjacent valleys and to the edge of the Kielder and Wark Forests. This landscape therefore acts as an important visual setting to adjacent valleys. It extends south into the North Pennines AONB.



4.339. This LCT is represented by five character areas: *34a Acomb Ridge*, *34b Broadpool Common*, *34c Grindon Common*, *34d Featherstone Common* and *34e Lowes and Nubbock*.

Key Characteristics

- Broad open ridges and plateau areas.
- Intermediate, transitional area between open moorland and forests and adjoining valley landscapes.
- Dissected by series of burns often flowing through incised cleughs.
- Strong medium- to large-scale geometric pattern created by stone wall and hedgerow enclosures.
- Some improved pastures on lower slopes, giving way to unimproved rougher pastures on higher land; pastures are mainly wet and rushy.
- Broadleaved trees on lower slopes and in ravines.
- Small- to medium-sized coniferous plantations creating 'blocky' character in places.
- Sparsely settled, with isolated farms marked by shelter woodland and connected by straight roads.

Description

4.340. Geologically the landscape comprises thinly bedded limestones, sandstones and mudstones overlain with glacial till. Parts of the area form a relatively flat plateau, while others undulate gently as a result of drift deposits. In places the banding of the sandstone rock is evident in the undulating topography, in the drainage pattern or in patches of acidic vegetation such as gorse and bracken. The area is drained by a series of minor burns which have cut ravines that reflect the faulting of the underlying geology. In places this results in a strong landscape pattern. These burns have birch trees and occasional woodlands along their courses.

- 4.341. Due to its transitional character, this type has a variety of field boundary types, including stone walls on elevated moorland areas, and grown-out, gappy hedgerows with post and wire fencing at lower elevations. In both cases the pattern of field boundaries is medium to large in scale and rectangular or planned in character, reflecting its origins in the 18th-century enclosure of common land. Similarly the nature of the pastures varies, fields on high ground comprising rough pastures and moorland (including areas of bracken), while those on lower slopes tend to be improved. Nevertheless pastures across the whole area have relatively poor drainage, many containing patches of rushes that add visual texture. This is a predominantly open landscape, although occasional ash or oak trees in hedgerows or along roadsides, and more extensive areas of geometric coniferous shelter planting (mixed species but commonly Scots pine and larch), can be found in some areas. Where these woodlands occur they create a 'blocky' character and provide a sense of enclosure. Muckle Moss is a NNR, and is part of the Border Mires SAC. Part of the North Pennine Moors SPA is within this landscape.
- 4.342. There is a dispersed pattern of farmsteads across the area, farms generally being located in shallow dips in the landform and often having associated plantings of ash and Scots pine for shelter. Buildings are of local stone with roofs of Welsh slate.
- 4.343. This is a textured landscape of muted colours. It is not a heavily populated area and retains a high degree of tranquillity with few overt man-made structures. Patches of open moorland and bracken scrub reinforce a sense of relative wildness despite the obvious active use. It is a simple landscape with few components but has a strong repetitive pattern of field boundaries and plantations.
- 4.344. Evidence of past arable cropping in this landscape can be seen in the subtle pattern of ridge and furrow which can be found on some of the more elevated areas of rough grassland. In addition, the remains of Hadrian's Wall, comprising remnant sections of the wall and the *vallum* or ditch, can be seen in some locations.

Landscape Character Areas

34a Acomb Ridge

- 4.345. The area lies east of the North Tyne valley and comprises an upland ridge of rough, poorly drained pastures, improved pastures, coniferous and deciduous woodlands and occasional arable fields on south-facing slopes. Field boundaries are marked typically by outgrown hedges and stone walls. Along the top of the ridge runs the military road which follows the line of Hadrian's Wall. Although no sections of the wall itself survive, the *vallum* on the south side of the road and the ditch on the north side are significant earthworks. The *vallum* runs through pasture fields and some areas of woodland; while the forward ditch is often vegetated with patches of gorse and bracken and the occasional birch or hawthorn tree. Long distance views particularly to the north are afforded from this area.

34b Broadpool Common

- 4.346. This character area forms the intermediate land between the North Tyne valley and Kielder and Wark Forests. It slopes gently in an easterly direction and is characterised by a strong pattern of deeply incised burns running west-east. These

burns flow through open rough pastures on the upper slopes, and become increasingly wooded with birch trees towards the east.

34c Grindon Common

- 4.347. This character area forms an important setting for the North Tyne valley and for the north side of the South Tyne valley and Hadrian's Wall, which runs through the eastern half of the area. It is an upland relatively flat landscape with a strong geometric pattern of stone walls and notable blocks and belts of mixed woodland plantation. The scale is large and beyond the immediate influence of the plantations it is open and bleak. The drainage pattern is weaker than elsewhere, and there are occasional loughs or dams set within shallow hollows.

34d Featherstone Common

- 4.348. This is a small area of upland landscape on the northern edge of the North Pennine moorland above the South Tyne valley. It is characterised by a strong geometric pattern of hawthorn hedges (many of which have grown out), and post and wire fencing. The pastures are unimproved and wet, creating a textured landscape. There are small copses of mixed woodland and patches of gorse scrub but the area has a generally open appearance. This is a marginal landscape and one which shows considerable evidence of past human activity in the form of ridge and furrow and linear earthworks.

34e Lowes and Nubbock Fells

- 4.349. This area extends from just west of Hexham to the River Allen valley and comprises an elevated plateau of simple landform but with a strong geometric field pattern defined by a mixture of blackthorn hedges and stone walls. Holly occurs within the hedges along with occasional oak and ash trees. In the north-east the field boundaries are predominantly hedgerows, with overlapping lines of hedgerow trees. Scots pine shelterbelts are a feature throughout this area, along with small coniferous plantations fringed by birch, hazel and bracken. Some of these woodlands show signs of management and felling activity; others have been affected by windthrow. Farmhouses are set within small groups of shelter trees. This a pastoral landscape, parts of which have been improved, parts remaining drained and rushy. The scale of the enclosures increases as one moves south towards the moorland tops. The southern half of the area is within the North Pennines AONB.

Glossary

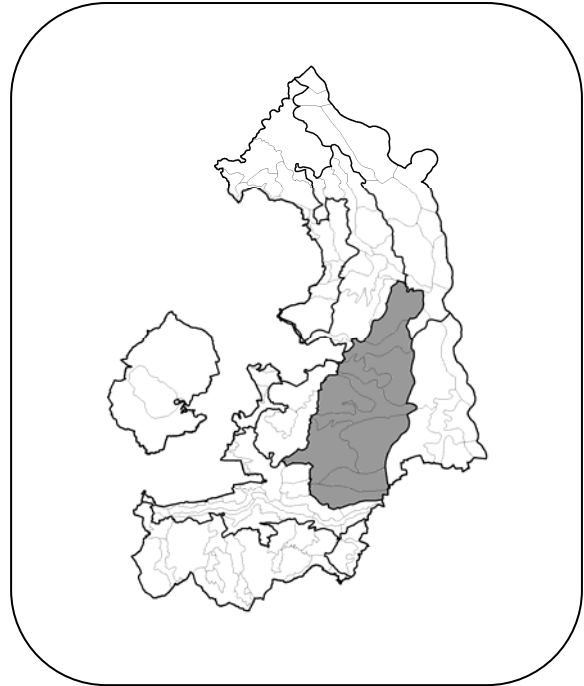
Vallum: Roman fortifications formed of earth banks and ditches.

Cleugh: a narrow gorge or chasm with high rocky sides.

Till: material deposited by glaciers.

NCA 12: MID NORTHUMBERLAND

4.350. This area, which lies inland of the Northumberland coast between Ponteland and Alnwick, is a transitional landscape between the coastal plain to the east and the hills, moors and forests to the west. It comprises rolling farmland, shallow valleys and low ridges. The whole NCA lies within the study area.



4.351. Key characteristics of Mid Northumberland, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.

- *Intermediate plateau of upland fringe forming a transitional area between the Pennine uplands to the west and the low-lying coastal plain to the east; a series of ridges and intimate river valleys in the northern part of the area opening out to a broader, flatter landscape in the south.*
- *Agricultural landscape with arable and cattle farming on lower land merging into sheep farming on higher land and moorland to the west.*
- *Varied woodland cover, with well-wooded valleys of the rivers Font, Wansbeck, and Coquet, mixed and ornamental woodlands of the country estates, small coniferous blocks and belts of the more open farmland to the south;*
- *Large reservoirs and ornamental lakes provide distinctive areas of open water.*
- *Frequent country houses and fortified defensive structures, typically set within 'landscaped' parklands and ornamental woodlands on country estates.*
- *Ancient market town of Morpeth serving a medieval pattern of small villages, often surrounded by the extensive ridge and furrow of medieval field systems and ancient earthworks.*

Landscape character types and areas

- 4.352. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains four landscape character types and ten landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Landscape character types and areas in NCA12

Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
35	Broad Lowland Valley	35a	Coquet Valley
		35b	Font and Wansbeck Valleys
36	Lowland Farmed Moor	36a	Ingoe Moor
37	Lowland Farmed Ridges	37a	Wingates Ridge
		37b	Longwitton Ridge
38	Lowland Rolling Farmland	38a	Longframlington
		38b	Longhorsley
		38c	Whalton and Belsay
		38d	Pont Valley
		38e	North Tyne Ridge

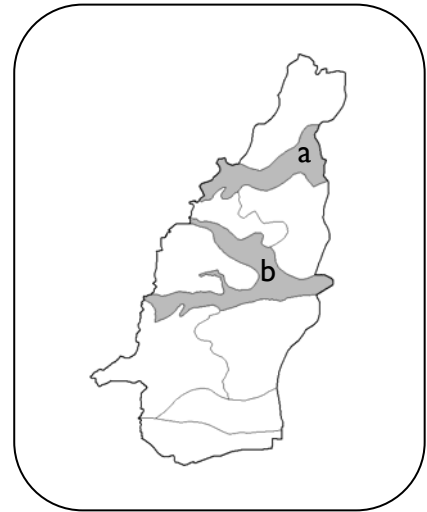
Landscape Character Type 35: Broad Lowland Valleys

Introduction

- 4.353. This landscape comprises the broad, gently v-shaped valleys of the Coquet, Font and Wansbeck rivers, between the sandstone hills and the coastal plain.
- 4.354. This LCT is represented by two character areas: 35a Coquet Valley and 35b Font and Wansbeck Valley.

Key Characteristics

- Broad, gently v-shaped valleys set into rolling farmland.
- No sharp landform distinction between valleys and surrounding farmland.
- Medium- to small-scale mixed farming landscape with enclosure provided principally by hedgerows.
- Riparian woodlands are frequent alongside meandering river channels.
- Significant local estate influences.



Description

- 4.355. Like much of *Mid Northumberland*, the *Broad Lowland Valleys* extend across the Millstone Grit, which are overlaid with large deposits of drift. These valleys are therefore not greatly distinct from the surrounding rolling farmland, but represent gently incised v-shaped valleys, meandering through the landscape. To the west, the valleys are more sharply incised, as they flow out of the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills* (NCA 2). The River Font emerges from the Fontburn Reservoir under the steep slopes of the Wingates ridge.
- 4.356. Farmland is mixed arable land and pasture, generally bounded by hedgerows and some stone walls. Improved pasture gives way to larger arable fields on the gentler slopes. Field patterns appear to be of medieval origin in places, with evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation also apparent. Hedgerow deterioration is evident in some areas, notably where arable crops are grown and the need for functional boundaries is diminished. The river sides are well wooded with riparian vegetation. There is ancient woodland at various riparian locations including Mitford, Hartburn, and Nunnykirk. The River Coquet is a designated SSSI.
- 4.357. Small villages lie along the rivers, either located at crossing points, or on the slopes above the water. The town of Morpeth, a regional centre, exerts a strong influence on the eastern extent of the Wansbeck valley. The A1 crosses both valleys on substantial bridges, and other main roads also pass through. There are several large country estates within the character area and these exert a significant influence on landscape character through their use of specific and consistent traditional materials and styles of construction. Examples include the use of stone in the construction of cottages, farms, bridges and walls, and recurring landscape elements including steel railings and mature trees laid out as parkland.

- 4.358. Views along the valley are limited by the riparian woodland, and the rising landform to either side. Where the valley is more incised, such as in the west where the rivers flow out of the sandstone hills, the landscape is of a smaller scale, although elsewhere the scale tends to be medium to small. The more intimate scale of this landscape, relative to the more open farmland around, gives it a relatively remote and tranquil feel.
- 4.359. Historic features include Mitford Castle, cairns near Netherwitton, Roman camps at Mitford Steads and Stanton, and the Registered Parks and Gardens at Kirkharle and Wallington. The Devil's Causeway, a Roman road, crosses the area, and there is frequent ridge and furrow. Footpath access is intermittent, although better along the River Coquet. The Coquet is one of the most important game fisheries in the north of England, with large runs of sea trout and salmon.

Landscape Character Areas

35a Coquet Valley

- 4.360. The River Coquet and its banks are designated as a SSSI, and support a characteristic fauna and flora that are of national significance for nature conservation. The river provides undisturbed habitat for bird species including dippers and kingfishers, as well as otters and bat colonies which thrive on the rich insect life along the valley. The Coquet cuts through thick drift deposits, in places reaching underlying limestones and Millstone Grit, and forming steep, often wooded, valley sides with boulders along the river bed. 18th century parkland can be found at Felton Park and Acton House. There is an English Heritage property at Brinkburn Priory.

35b Font and Wansbeck Valleys

- 4.361. This character area consists of the valleys of the Rivers Font and Wansbeck, downstream of Fontburn Reservoir and the Wallington estate respectively. Riparian woodlands often take on the meandering form of the hidden river channel. The landscape becomes more incised and dramatic along the course of the Hart Burn, a tributary of the River Wansbeck which flows through a wooded ravine. As is frequently the case along rivers, there is much evidence of early settlement including a deserted medieval village, Roman camps and an early Norman castle at Mitford. Urban fringe elements at the western edge of Morpeth are largely cloaked by woodland at Mitford.

Glossary

Ridge and furrow: broad linear undulations that were created by medieval cultivation practices.

Riparian: occurring along river banks.

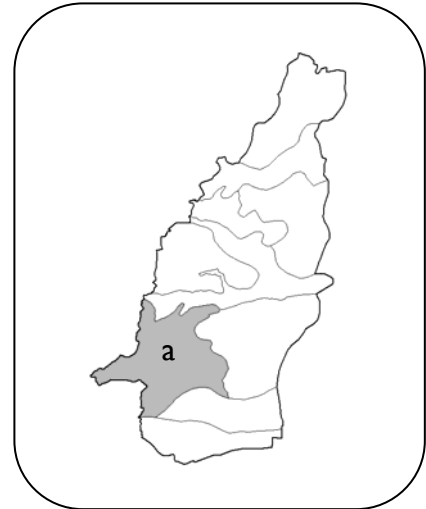
Landscape Character Type 36: Lowland Farmed Moor

Introduction

- 4.362. This is a transitional landscape, between the upland fringe to the west and the farmland to the east.
- 4.363. This LCT is represented by one character area: 36a *Ingoe Moor*.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated, exposed, open rolling farmland.
- Regular enclosure pattern.
- Remnants of moorland, exposed crags and quarries.
- Occasional small woodlands and shelterbelts.



Description

- 4.364. This is an area of elevated, open rolling land, occupying the flattened, plateau-like ridge between the valleys of the River Wansbeck to the north, the River Pont to the south, and the tributaries of the River North Tyne to the west. The landscape slopes generally to the south-east, away from the *Sandstone Fringe Farmland* (LCT 11) which it borders around Bavington. It is relatively exposed, with occasional craggy outcrops, and a clear west-facing scarp between Bingfield and Kirkheaton. Sandstones and limestones underlie the area, with deep drift deposits forming the rolling topography. The area is drained to the east and west by small burns.
- 4.365. The area is relatively treeless, with a rectilinear pattern of parliamentary enclosure fields bounded by stone walls, gappy hedgerows and wire fences. The majority of the land is maintained as improved pasture, although there are significant areas of arable cultivation. Concentrations of mature trees are found around some settlements, estates and farmsteads. Hedgerow trees increase in frequency and stature on the deeper soils of the lower slopes at the fringes of the character area. There are remnants of moorland rough grazing on the most exposed sites, such as the area east of Ingoe.
- 4.366. The landscape is sparsely settled, but is clearly human influenced and intensively farmed. There are few, isolated small villages, including the estate villages of Matfen and Capheaton. Traditional stone farmsteads are often accompanied by large modern barns. The regularity of the field pattern is reflected in the distinctive regularity of the network of minor roads. There is a history of quarrying in the area, and a large active roadstone quarry is still operational at Mootlaw. There is a small commercial wind farm close to the village of Kirkheaton.
- 4.367. Despite the exposed setting, this is an ordered agricultural landscape which does not feel remote. It contrasts with the more sheltered adjoining valley landscapes. The rolling topography offers limited intervisibility to adjacent areas, although there are occasional views to the higher ground to the west.

- 4.368. Evidence of early settlements, tumuli, standing stones and rock carvings can be seen at a number of locations. The grounds of Capheaton Hall, established and laid out during the 17th and 18th centuries, are on the Register of Parks and Garden. The Devil's Causeway Roman road crosses the area diagonally from Great Whittington to Bolam. There are a number of public rights of way, including bridleways, and part of the St Oswald's Way long-distance route, although few formal tourist attractions.

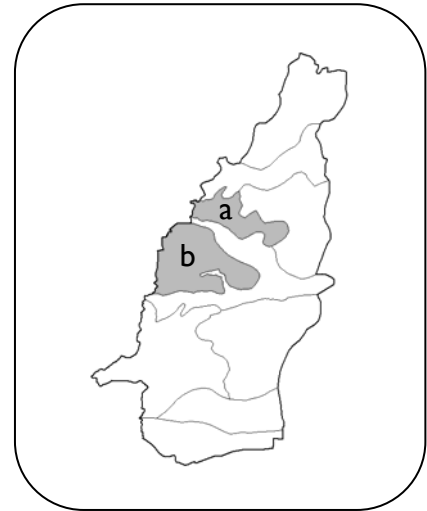
Landscape Character Type 37: Lowland Farmed Ridges

Introduction

- 4.369. This landscape comprises two broad, low ridges, located between the Coquet, Font and Wansbeck river valleys. These areas are linked to the sandstone hills to the west, and have an upland fringe character.
- 4.370. This LCT is represented by two character areas: 37a Wingates Ridge and 37b Longwitton Ridge.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated rolling upland fringe farmland.
- Relatively open, medium to large scale.
- Coniferous shelterbelts and plantations.
- Areas of moorland rough grazing, particularly to the west, amongst mixed farmland.



Description

- 4.371. These two areas extend eastward from the *Northumberland Sandstone Hills* (NCA 2), and slope generally eastwards. They stand well above the neighbouring valleys, although there is not always a sharp definition between the ridge and the surrounding farmland, particularly towards the east. The landform is undulating, resulting in alternately exposed and sheltered areas. Small burns drain the area.
- 4.372. Medium- to large-scale pasture fields predominate, divided by wire fences and dry stone walls. Hedgerows are often gappy and subject to wind-burn due to exposure. Occasionally, hedgerows and mature trees become more frequent, particularly along roadsides where there are some distinctive 'tunnels' of vegetation and also where there are fragments of parkland landscape associated with country estates, which feature sizeable mature trees. More common are coniferous plantations and shelterbelts, generally small in size. Longhorsley Moor is a valuable example of dry heath, and is protected as a SSSI, as is Greenleighton Quarry. This type of vegetation was formerly a widespread habitat in Northumberland but most has now been destroyed by agricultural improvement.
- 4.373. Scattered settlement includes hamlets such as Cambo and Wingates, which are generally traditional in character, Cambo being an estate village. There is a network of local roads, and a line of pylons crosses both ridges. Disused quarries can be found in several locations, and mineral extraction continues at Ewesley. Prominent landmarks include historic buildings as noted below.
- 4.374. This landscape has a remote quality in exposed areas, although with contrasting pockets which are on a smaller, more sheltered scale. The elevation provides a number of good vantage points over the surrounding landscape, including views into Northumberland National Park to the west, across to the coast in the east, and over the more verdant tree and hedgerow rich valleys to the north and south.

- 4.375. Historical features include ancient settlements and enclosures, as well as bastle houses. The Wallington estate extends across large parts of this landscape, with ornamental lakes created by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown at Rothley Lakes, and prominent folly buildings at Codger Fort and Rothley Castle. A disused railway line is now used as a footpath, and there are extensive areas of access land and several other public rights of way.

Landscape Character Areas

37a Wingates Ridge

- 4.376. The *Wingates Ridge* is relatively pronounced, particularly to the south where it slopes steeply to the River Font. Numerous small-scale coniferous plantations and linear shelterbelts cross the ridge. Grassland is semi-improved, with frequent scrub and bracken encroachment in places. The land is grazed by sheep, cattle and increasingly by horses in fields surrounding large rural properties and smallholdings. The landscape is crossed by a network of narrow lanes, many of which are tree lined and very enclosed. There is a caravan park at Todburn Moor.

37b Longwitton Ridge

- 4.377. This character area lies between the Rivers Font and Wansbeck. Generally open and windswept, much of the area consists of expansive areas of treeless pasture bounded by dry stone walls. In places this is relieved by scrub and hedgerow remnants, and broken up by plantations. Land is predominantly managed as pasture, though with some significant areas of arable land, particularly towards the east. Woodland cover includes a large conifer plantation at Broomfield Fell and numerous predominantly coniferous on-farm woodlands. There are some notable areas of ancient woodland close to Longwitton and along Hart Burn, and a number of distinctive mature Scots pine and beech shelterbelts.

Glossary

Dry heath: heather moorland occurring on well-drained shallow peat less than 0.5 metres deep.

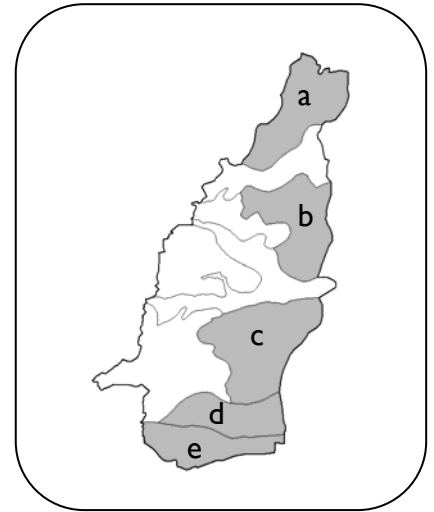
Ancient woodland: an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.

Bastle house: a type of defensive farmhouse common to northern England and southern Scotland in the 16th century.

Landscape Character Type 38: Lowland Rolling Farmland

Introduction

- 4.378. This is a large area of rolling or undulating farmland, stretching from the Tyne Gap to Alnwick. Although there are variations in enclosure, patterns, and tree cover in this landscape, the overall form is relatively continuous.
- 4.379. This LCT is represented by four character areas: 38a Longframlington, 38b Longhorsley, 38c Whalton and Belsay and 38d Pont Valley.



Key Characteristics

- Undulating agricultural landscape with rich soils under predominantly arable cultivation.
- Generally little tree cover, with occasional small-scale woodlands and plantations.
- Medium-scale parliamentary enclosure landscape.
- Field enclosure by hedgerows, with frequent hedgerow trees, has become fragmented in many places.
- Trunk roads and prominent road alignments exert a strong influence.
- Locally important estate influences, with woodland, and estate villages.

Description

- 4.380. This landscape occurs on Millstone Grit and limestones, which are overlaid with thick drift deposits. The landscape undulates smoothly, with few prominent landforms. Much of the area is relatively elevated, generally between 100m and 150m, though up to almost 200m in places. The land generally slopes gradually down towards the east, forming part of the wider transition between the upland areas to the west, and the coastal plain to the east. Drainage is via burns and small rivers, including the upper reaches of the Rivers Pont and Blyth.
- 4.381. For the most part, this is an arable landscape of regular fields, medium to large in scale. Pasture becomes more common as the ground rises to the west. The field pattern is strong in places, and around Longhorsley or Whalton, for example, medieval patterns can be discerned. Field boundaries are generally hedges, well-maintained in several areas, although gappy in others, and increasingly replaced by post and wire on higher ground. Stone walls occur on higher ground, and in association with estates. There is generally little tree cover, and the main woodlands are coniferous plantations, although there are occasional hedge trees and pockets of broadleaf woodland. Exceptions occur at estates and other sites, including airfields. Longhorsley Moor is a valuable example of dry heath, and is protected as a SSSI.
- 4.382. Settlement is scattered, although more or less continuous across this landscape. There are several larger villages in the north, including Swarland and Shilbottle, with areas of modern housing. Further south, smaller hamlets are common, including estate villages at Belsay and Matfen, and often with a central green. Road

infrastructure is often prominent within this landscape, with several main roads including the A1 passing through. The fringes of Alnwick and Morpeth add a developed influence to the north and south-east extremities of the landscape, respectively. There are airfields at Ouston, Tranwell and Eshott, the last still operational, the others former military sites.

- 4.383. The rolling topography occasionally provides expansive views towards the uplands to the west, or towards the coast to the east. The coastal views are especially important from the north-east of the area, close to the coastal plain. Elsewhere the rolling topography also serves to obscure views. The intensiveness of agricultural use leads to apparent neglect of more traditional features such as hedgerows in some areas. Other areas appear better maintained, and there are traditional villages and estate influences.
- 4.384. Hadrian's Wall, a World Heritage Site and Northumberland's most prominent historic feature, runs through the south of this area, although there are few visible remains. There are several shrunken or deserted medieval villages. Historic estates are locally influential features, with associated woodlands and buildings. The most significant are at Belsay and Bolam, both of which are, at least partially, publically accessible. Mining has been a historical influence on the northern part of this landscape.

Landscape Character Areas

38a Longframlington

- 4.385. This character area occupies undulating, relatively high ground bordering the coastal plain between the Aln and Coquet valleys. Rectilinear field units are bounded by hedgerows originating from the parliamentary enclosures. Sizeable coniferous plantations can be found around Swarland and north of Shilbottle. Although the last colliery closed in the late 1990s, coal mining was formerly a significant presence in this landscape, with collieries at Shilbottle, Whittle and Longframlington. Although full restoration is yet to have been completed, there is little physical evidence of this industry now. Other former industrial activity included lime and tile manufacturing.

38b Longhorsley

- 4.386. This area has a strong enclosure pattern and an intricate network of small settlements, farmsteads, hedgerow trees and woodlands. Around Longhorsley, field sizes are smaller and patterns are less regular, indicating that they are older, possibly medieval. The fertile farmland of the area is cut by two major roads, the A1 and A697, which exert a significant influence on the landscape through severance and visual and aural intrusion.

38c Whalton and Belsay

- 4.387. This is a medium- to large-scale landscape of mixed arable and pastoral fields, with villages set within it. The country estates at Belsay and Bolam, and to a lesser extent Milbourn, stand out as well-wooded fragments of historic landscape, with 18th century parkland, estate buildings and other characteristic details. There is a scattering of medieval shrunken village sites across the area. Areas of less regular,

smaller-scale field patterns, notably around Whalton and Ogle, hint at continuity from an earlier date, possibly medieval. To the east of the area, the disused Tranwell airfield, A1 trunk road, and institutional land uses including Kirkley Hall College and the former St Mary's Hospital site, combine with other urban fringe influences.

38d Pont Valley

- 4.388. This area is a medium- to small-scale shallow valley. The dominant land use is pasture, and a particular characteristic of this area is the higher frequency of mature hedgerow trees. Field sizes are smaller and boundaries less regular than in other parts of lowland Northumberland, indicating that they may predate the parliamentary enclosures. There is evidence of deserted medieval villages at East Matfen and Heugh. The stone villages of Matfen and Stamfordham are developed around a central green. Water meadows upstream of Stamfordham are a distinctive and unusual feature. Historic estates are influential, with estate villages such as Matfen, farms and parkland all evident. The grounds of Matfen Hall have been converted into a golf course. Towards the east of the character area there are urban fringe elements, including power lines and horse paddocks.

38e North Tyne Ridge

- 4.389. This character area overlooks the Tyne Gap, dropping away steeply in places to the Tyne valley. Views over the valley can be obtained from Halton Shields. The open arable landscape is occasionally punctuated by clusters of largely broadleaf woodland and pockets of improved pasture, with coniferous blocks and strips to the west. Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site runs through the area, although there are few visible remains. The line of the wall is followed by the B6318, the former military road. Overhead electricity transmission infrastructure and the A69 trunk road are prominent elements to the immediate west of Heddon on the Wall.

Glossary

Deserted medieval village: medieval settlements which have been abandoned leaving only the remains of earthworks. A *shrunk medieval village* retains some habitation, though earthworks show that the settlement was once more extensive.

NCA 13: SOUTH EAST NORTHUMBERLAND COASTAL PLAIN

4.390. This area covers a broad strip of the North Sea coast, and occupies the easternmost part of the study area. It stretches from Amble in the north to the southern edge of the study area, where it extends into Newcastle and North Tyneside. The coastal plain widens towards the south, taking in the developed areas around Ashington, Blyth, and Cramlington. Morpeth and Ponteland are located on its western boundary.



4.391. Key characteristics of the *South East Northumberland Coastal Plain*, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.

- *Widespread urban and industrial development, extending north from the urban edge of Newcastle across the coastal plain, with mining towns and villages, merging into rural landscape towards the north.*
- *Large-scale, opencast coal mining sites and restored sites which include deep mine spoil heaps.*
- *Sweeping sandy beaches and rocky headlands remain within largely developed coast.*
- *Large open arable fields, with large scattered country houses, and institutional establishments.*
- *Extensive urban fringe effect near settlements.*
- *Prominent blocks of mixed and coniferous woodland on reclaimed colliery sites, with broadleaved woods on steeper valley sides, and within estate parkland.*
- *Frequent areas of open water and wetland in areas of mining subsidence and as features within restored landscapes.*

Landscape character types and areas

- 4.392. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains four landscape character types and seven landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.9.

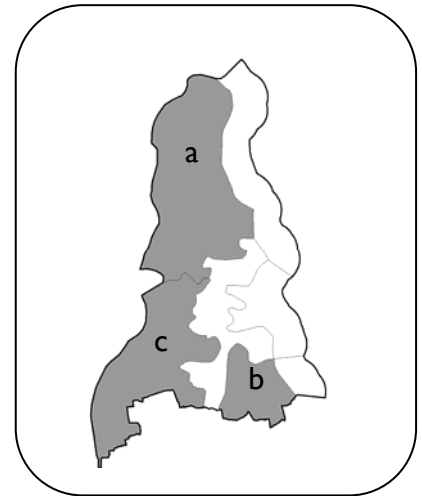
Table 4.9 Landscape character types and areas in NCA13

Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
39	Coalfield Farmland	39a	Coastal Coalfields
		39b	Seaton Delaval
		39c	Stannington
40	Broad Bays and Dunes	40a	Druridge Bay
		40b	Seaton Dunes
41	Developed Coast	41a	Blyth and Wansbeck Estuaries
42	Urban and Urban Fringe	42a	Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington

Landscape Character Type 39: Coalfield Farmland

Introduction

- 4.393. This landscape comprises the more rural areas of the coastal plain, and includes well-settled farmland, with extensive industrial land uses. Historic and ongoing mineral extraction has affected large parts of the landscape, while urban fringe is also a key influence. This is a heavily modified landscape which has lost much of its natural landscape structure and which is dominated by man-made elements.
- 4.394. This LCT is represented by three character areas: 39a Coastal Coalfields, 39b Seaton Delaval and 39c Stannington.



Key Characteristics

- Low-lying coastal farmland, medium to large in scale, and generally open and expansive.
- Heavily modified rural area, with extensive industrial and urban fringe influences.
- Well settled, with mining towns and villages.
- Large-scale opencast mine sites.
- Distinctive, simple landscapes on restored former opencast sites.
- Pylons, chimneys, and transport and industrial infrastructure are prominent.
- Occasional wooded estate landscapes.

Description

- 4.395. This landscape is underlain by the lower and middle coal measures, including layers of sandstone, mudstone, and coal. The exploitation of coal, which here occurs in shallow seams close to the surface, has had a major impact on the development of this landscape. The surface landscape is generally quite flat, with gently rolling areas, and rises no higher than 89m at Berwick Hill, near Ponteland. The only substantial rivers are the Blyth, which flows through the incised Stannington Vale, and the Wansbeck, flowing in an incised valley from Morpeth. The smaller River Lyne and Seaton Burn are less significant landscape features.
- 4.396. Land use is generally mixed farmland, comprising large or very large fields with weak boundaries. Hedgerows are often gappy and hedgerow trees are limited. Woodland cover in general is infrequent and consists principally of coniferous plantations. Deciduous tree cover is restricted to occasional mature hedgerow trees and small copses. Exceptions are the wooded valleys of the Blyth and Wansbeck rivers, and the wooded Blagdon estate. Elsewhere only scattered fragments of ancient woodland remain. There are several areas of reclaimed land, representing former mineral workings. Restoration has generally resulted in oversimplified geometric landscapes of pasture and conifer blocks, which lack distinctive features. Wetlands and pools, the result of subsidence or restoration, are relatively frequent and in places have developed into valuable habitat, for example the SSSI at Holywell Pond. Although

mineral extraction has affected large parts of this area, there are also pockets of rural character which have been relatively unaffected. There are further SSSIs at Hawthorn Cottage Pasture, New Hartley Ponds, Willow Burn Pasture, Arcot Hall, Darras Hall and Prestwick Carr.

- 4.397. Amble lies at the southern edge of the Northumberland Coast AONB, and is part of Northumberland's tourism-oriented coast. Elsewhere, settlements are related to the mining and quarrying industries, and often have large post-war extensions. Older villages retain a core of buildings in honey-coloured sandstone, although more modern buildings are generally of brick. The estate village of Bothal, with its medieval castle, retains a traditional layout and appearance. Transport corridors, including the A1 and the East Coast Main Line railway, with its overhead cables, are prominent linear features, and several lines of pylons cross the landscape. The main human influence lies in the opencast mines which still operate on a large scale at Shotton and Steadsburn, or are currently being restored, at Stobswood and Maidens Hall.
- 4.398. There are few prominent viewpoints within this landscape, although both seaward and landward views are available. Coastal views are often available on the eastward-sloping coastal plain. Frequently, the most prominent features in views are pylons, and chimneys such as those of the Alcan smelter at Lynemouth. There are also a number of westward views, including long views to the Simonside and Cheviot Hills. The extent of modification, and the simplistic approach taken to restoration, are such that the majority of this landscape is degraded in character and has lost much of the subtle variation in its natural characteristics. However, significant pockets of undisturbed land remain across the area.
- 4.399. Mining activity has been ongoing in this area since the 15th century, both by surface and deep mining methods. Although the closure of the last deep mine, at Ellington, was announced as late as 2005, the majority of the mines are now long gone, along with their distinctive pithead buildings, spoil heaps and degraded land. A preserved colliery at Woodhorn is now a museum. Despite the heavy modifications of the landscape, medieval ridge and furrow remains in places. Blagdon estate and Seaton Delaval Hall are Registered Parks and Gardens. There are country parks at Woodhorn, Plessey Woods and Hadston, although the network of public rights of way is limited.

Landscape Character Areas

39a Coastal Coalfields

- 4.400. This relatively flat coastal plain has been heavily modified by mining and industrial activity. Restoration has generally resulted in oversimplified geometric landscapes of pasture and conifer blocks, which lack distinctive features. Opencast mining operations are ongoing at a small number of large sites. Despite general heavy modification of this landscape, there are pockets of unaltered rural character, including fragments of ancient woodland, and many of the older village centres, such as Ulgham, feature attractive honey coloured sandstone buildings. There are nature reserves at Druridge Bay and Hauxley. A golf course is situated within the estate of Longhirst Hall near Pegswood.

39b Seaton Delaval

- 4.401. This area lies at the south-east of the study area, and slopes gently east from Cramlington to the coastal strip at Seaton Sluice. The large arable and pastoral fields with outgrown hedges are typical of the LCT, although there are more shelterbelts here, and the estate woodlands of Seaton Delaval Hall provide landscape features, including a long avenue on the A190. The surrounding settlement edges and main roads are key influences. Brick predominates within settlements such as Seaton Delaval, although sandstone farmsteads remain elsewhere.

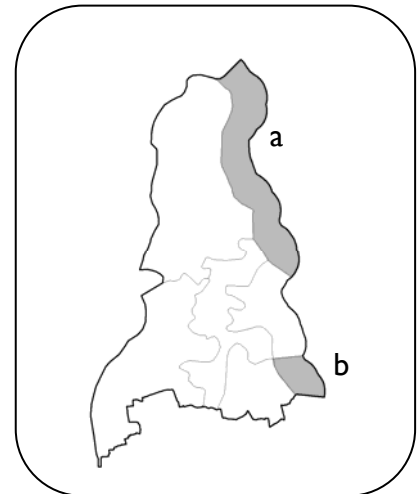
39c Stannington

- 4.402. The character of this landscape is significantly modified and influenced by adjoining urban areas and their associated infrastructure. Several transport corridors run north-south through this landscape, including the A1, East Coast Main Line, A192, and another rail line. Scattered development east of the A1 gives a more urban fringe impression associated with the west edge of the industrial settlements of Bedlington and Cramlington. To the west of the A1, the landscape is more rural, and includes the wooded Blagdon Estate designed landscape. From many vantage points, electricity transmission lines, housing and industry are prominent if not dominant elements. The wooded, incised valleys of the Blyth and Wansbeck rivers are significant features cutting through the farmland, and both have public access, with Plessey Woods Country Park on the Blyth.

Landscape Character Type 40: Broad Bays and Dunes

Introduction

- 4.403. This landscape comprises the coastal strip of the less intensively developed part of the *South East Northumberland Coastal Plain*. Although largely undeveloped, and with significant nature conservation interest, the coastline has been extensively man-modified by past mineral extraction. Druridge Bay is within the Northumberland Heritage Coast.
- 4.404. This LCT is represented by two character areas: 40a *Druridge Bay* and 40b *Seaton Dunes*.



Key Characteristics

- Wide sweeping sandy bays backed by dunes.
- Sharp transition with heavily modified coastal plain.
- Emerging leisure land uses.
- Industrial and mining infrastructure.
- Ecologically rich, despite, and in some cases because of, industrial activity.

Description

- 4.405. The narrow coastal strip is low-lying, and comprises a series of broad sandy bays separated by rocky headlands, again resulting from the alternation of harder and softer rocks within the underlying geology. Flat wave-cut platforms and offshore rocky islets are characteristic: Coquet Island is the only substantial island. The bays have broad, sweeping sand beaches backed by extensive dune systems.
- 4.406. To landward, the coastal strip supports mixed farmland, primarily large arable fields. Lengths of coast are backed by extensive dune systems, which are largely intact. There are very few trees in this exposed landscape, exceptions being the mixed plantations around Ladyburn Lake, and coniferous shelterbelts to the north. Water bodies at Ladyburn Lake and Hauxley are the result of mining subsidence, and now have biodiversity value, the ponds at Hauxley being a Northumberland Wildlife Trust nature reserve. The coast is protected as part of the Northumbria Coast Ramsar site and SPA, and Coquet Island is also an SPA. There are also a number of SSSIs along the coast, including Cresswell Ponds and Hadston Links.
- 4.407. Amble is the main settlement at the northern end of the coastal strip, and has an adjacent caravan park. Otherwise, settlement is limited to the southern section, where urban fringe influences are more prominent. There are further caravan parks located along the coast at Cresswell and Newbiggin Point. Industrial uses dominate the area around Lynemouth, where extensive land reclamation has taken place on the shoreline, and the chimneys of the power station and Alcan smelter are visible.
- 4.408. Views along the northern section of the coast are open, and the elemental coastal landscape remains dramatic, even with the presence of the power station. To the north, views focus on Coquet Island, while the most prominent features in the south

are the chimneys of the Alcan smelter. Despite the development, this landscape feels open and relatively tranquil.

- 4.409. There are few remaining overt historical features along this coastline, although there are a number of buried remains such as Bronze Age burials. A medieval tower house is located at Cresswell. Recreation is important, with coastal footpaths and open access land along the dunes. Amble is at the southern extent of the Northumberland Coast AONB, and the beaches of Druridge Bay are similarly popular with visitors. The proximity of settlement increases the recreational use of these sections of coastline.

Landscape Character Areas

40a Druridge Bay

- 4.410. An attractive, almost unbroken, stretch of sandy beach and mature sand dunes is backed by a variety of landscapes, all of which owe their origins to the long history of mining and industrial activity in the area. To the south are the smelter works and power station at Lynemouth. Further north, the legacy of former industry, particularly opencast mining, is a simplified landscape of reclamation, in places enhanced by subsidence wetlands. Druridge Bay Country Park is centred on Ladyburn Lake, and offers opportunities for water sports. Caravan parks and golf courses sit by the shore, and accessible wildlife reserves have been created on former derelict land, for example at Hauxley and Cresswell Pools.

40b Seaton Dunes

- 4.411. This short strip of coastline comprises the sandy bay between Blyth and Seaton Sluice at the southern boundary of the study area. The bay is backed by high dune systems, while the coastal edge of the town is formed by a rocky headland. The dunes have car parks for access, and a well-used coastal footpath. Although the dune systems are generally intact, infrastructure such as car parking is in poorer condition. Combined with the industrial features of Blyth Harbour, which are always visible, this extends an urban fringe feel to the landscape.

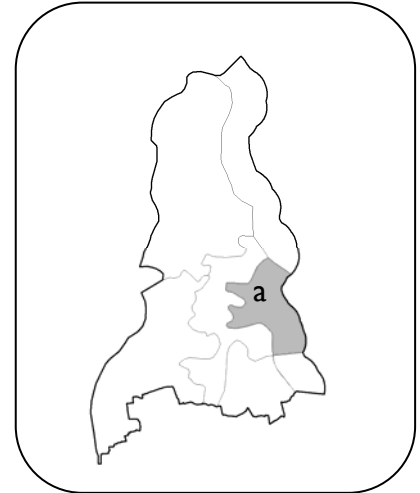
Landscape Character Type 41: Developed Coast

Introduction

- 4.412. This landscape forms the coastal edge of Blyth and adjacent settlements, and is closely related to *Urban and Urban Fringe* (LCT 42). Its coastal character is linked to the *Broad Bays and Dunes* (LCT 40) to north and south.
- 4.413. This LCT is represented by one character area: *41a Blyth and Wansbeck Estuaries*.

Key Characteristics

- Intensively developed landscape, comprising a coastal urban edge.
- River mouths with mudflats or modified to form harbours.
- Large-scale industrial structures and former industrial sites.
- Fragmented farmland amongst urban development.



Description

- 4.414. The low-lying coastal strip is centred on broad bay, into which the Rivers Blyth and Wansbeck emerge. As in the Broad Bays and Dunes the bay is framed by rocky promontories, with wave-cut platforms extending into the sea at Newbiggin Point, Spital Carrs, and Crab Law, and rocky offshore islets. The Wansbeck estuary is relatively narrow and sandy. That of the Blyth, and the tributary Sleek Burn, is much wider with extensive mudflats. However, its natural features have been extensively modified for use as a major port. The topography of this area does not rise above 10m.
- 4.415. The chief land uses are urban and industrial. Arable farming, with remnant hedgerows, persists in fragmented areas around the mouth of the Wansbeck. The banks of the Wansbeck are fringed with deciduous scrub woodland, with more scrubby woodland along the Sleek Burn and River Blyth. The coast is protected as part of the Northumbria Coast Ramsar site and SPA, and there are overlapping SSSI designations.
- 4.416. This is the most developed section of Northumberland's coastline, and is dominated by the large-scale industrial developments around Blyth Harbour, including highly visible silos and wind turbines. Formerly a major coal port, the harbour now has significant areas of derelict and 'brownfield' land. The site of the now-demolished Blyth Power Station occupies extensive areas between the two river mouths. Associated railway sidings are interspersed with rows of former miners' housing, as at Cambois. Blyth Harbour has been regenerated with public sculpture and new built development. At the north edge of the area, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea is a former fishing village and resort town. Concrete defensive works to halt coastal erosion with concrete have affected Newbiggin Point.

- 4.417. Industrial elements are present in all views from this area, the most visually significant being the chimneys of the Alcan smelter, the silos at Blyth Harbour, and the wind turbines located on the quay and offshore. Other more human-scale landmarks include the church on Newbiggin Point and the 'Couple' sculpture in Newbiggin Bay. Coastal views from Newbiggin are the least affected by industry, although northward views to Druridge Bay are not possible due to the alignment of the coast.
- 4.418. Most historical features within this landscape are of relatively modern date. World War I coastal batteries at Blyth are scheduled monuments, and there are several historic buildings close to Blyth Harbour, reflecting the former prosperity of the port. Recreation is important in the north of the area, where the Victorian resort town of Newbiggin remains a popular destination. Caravan parks are located by the wooded mouth of the Wansbeck, and at Newbiggin.

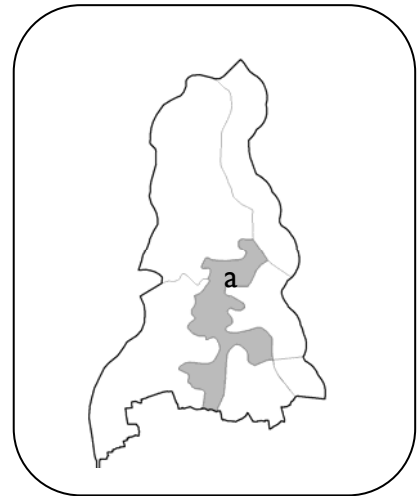
Landscape Character Type 42: Urban and Urban Fringe

Introduction

- 4.419. This landscape comprises the large settlements at the south-east of the study area, together with the heavily urban-influenced areas of fragmented farmland and industry which separate them.
- 4.420. This LCT is represented by one character area: 42a *Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington*.

Key Characteristics

- Large built-up areas including former mining towns.
- Large-scale industrial and commercial land uses.
- Significant human features, including dual carriageways, railways, pylons, and chimneys.
- Residential areas of a range of ages.



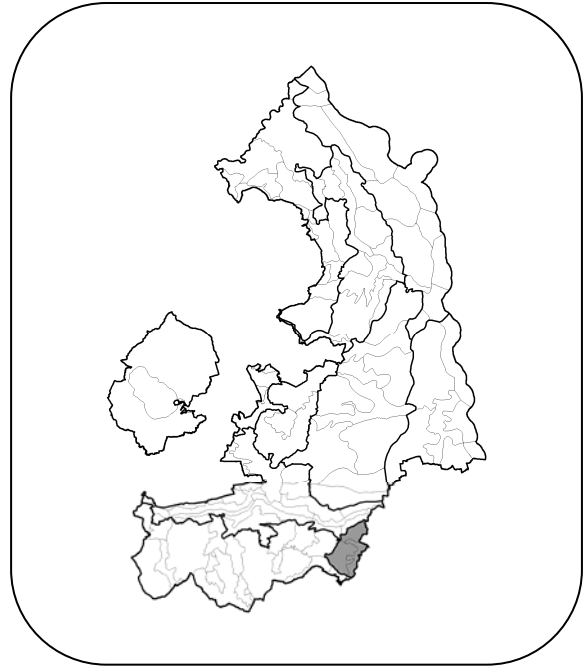
Description

- 4.421. Physically, the area is similar to the *Coalfield Farmland* (LCT 39). The generally flat land, with some gentle summits, slopes eastwards to the coast, and is underlain by the coal measures. The geology was formerly worked for coal, via deep and surface mines, although no extraction currently takes place in this area. The landscape is cut through by the valleys of the Rivers Wansbeck and Blyth, as well as several smaller burns. In places, the natural landform has been modified, and is often obscured by development.
- 4.422. Most of the area is built up, but pockets of fragmented farmland remain, mostly arable. Fields are a range of shapes and sizes, having been modified by surrounding land uses, but are generally large and rectilinear. Field boundaries often comprises gappy or outgrown hedges, with post and wire fences replacing hedges entirely in places. Tree cover includes coniferous plantations and deciduous woodlands, both often sited on reclaimed or restored land. Some deciduous woodland has nature conservation value, as do wetlands and ponds caused by mining subsidence. There is a SSSI at Willow Burn Pasture.
- 4.423. Settlement forms the bulk of this character area. The main settlements of Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington comprise a range of ages and styles of development. Blyth has a strong 19th-century core related to the harbour. Ashington is more dispersed, though concentrated around long terraces of housing built as miners' homes. Cramlington was chiefly developed in the 1960s as a new town, and its character is defined by the approaches to planning prevalent in that era. Bedlington has a more traditional central core of stone buildings along the main street, though again this is surrounded by modern development. The majority of housing across this LCT dates from the 20th century, and brick is the predominant material. Urban fringe land uses include retail parks and industrial estates. There are areas of derelict land associated with former workings or industrial buildings.

- 4.424. Views are generally limited by the density of built development, although elevated locations allow occasional long views north-west to the Cheviot Hills. The chimneys of the Alcan smelter are a prominent landmark in the northern part of the LCT, and pylons are often features in the view. Although the towns are generally well-kept, much of the urban fringe areas are degraded. The presence of elaborate 19th and early 20th century buildings amongst areas of derelict land indicates a former prosperity now lost.
- 4.425. There are historic remnants of medieval villages, such as the 11th-century church in Woodhorn. More recent historic buildings are located within the cores of the main settlements. Industrial heritage is also a key aspect of this landscape. There are a number of public rights of way across the farmland and urban fringe areas, including along the wooded valleys of the Blyth and Wansbeck.

NCA 16: DURHAM COALFIELD PENNINE FRINGE

4.426. This rolling, large-scale low upland landscape lies to the east of the *North Pennines* (NCA 10), dipping down gently eastwards to the heavily settled lowlands of the Tyne and Wear valleys. A mainly rural landscape, it is heavily influenced in places by urban and industrial development and mineral working. Only a small part of the north-west of this NCA lies within Northumberland.



4.427. Key characteristics of the *Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe*, as defined in *Countryside Character of England*, are quoted below.

- *A rolling upland landscape of broad open ridges and valleys with a strong west-east grain.*
- *A transitional landscape with pastoral farming on higher ground in the west giving way to arable and mixed farming in the valleys and to the east.*
- *A rural landscape heavily influenced by the mining industry, in particular to the north and east, with scattered mining and industrial settlements, of terraced and estate housing, occupying prominent sites linked by a network of main roads.*
- *Numerous small plantations of conifers or mixed woodland, as blocks or shelterbelts, on hillside; in places more extensive conifer woodlands on hillsides.*
- *Open wide ridges of regular large fields bounded by dry stone walls and fences and crossed by straight roads. Isolated farmsteads.*
- *Broad valleys of arable and mixed farmland with low hedges, strips of broadleaved woodland following rivers and streams, and conifer plantations on valley sides.*
- *Open-cast coal workings often forming intrusive features in the rural landscape. Restored areas often creating bland landscape.*
- *A few scattered small country houses, set within parkland and well-wooded estates..*

Landscape character types and areas

- 4.428. This NCA, as refined for this classification, contains two landscape character types and three landscape character areas, as set out in Table 4.10.

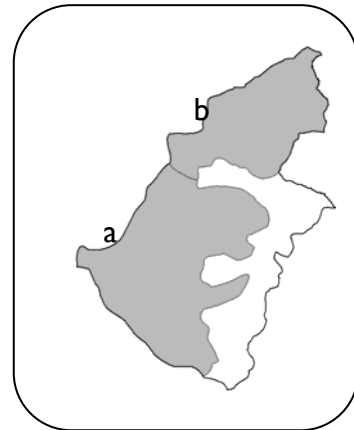
Table 4.10 Landscape character types and areas in NCA16

Landscape character type (LCT)		Character area	
43	Coalfield Upland Fringe	43a	Kiln Pit Hill Hinterland
		43b	Prudhoe Hinterland
44	Coalfield Valley	44a	Derwent Valley

Landscape Character Type 43: Coalfield Upland Fringe

Introduction

- 4.429. This is an upland fringe landscape made up of the broad ridges and shallow tributary valleys of the Durham coalfield.
- 4.430. This LCT is represented by two character areas: 43a *Kiln Pit Hill Hinterland* and 43b *Prudhoe Hinterland*.



Key Characteristics

- Broad ridges of gently rounded topography.
- Heavy, seasonally waterlogged clay soils with pockets of peaty soils supporting heath vegetation.
- Pastoral land use of improved or semi-improved pasture with some arable cropping on drier ridges.
- Regular grids of parliamentary enclosures bounded by dry stone walls or overgrown hawthorn hedges; occasional older field systems.
- Sparsely wooded – scattered conifer plantations, shelterbelts, occasional hedgerow oak, ash, rowan or birch.
- Isolated farms connected by straight enclosure roads and occasional old ‘green’ villages of local stone on ridge top sites.
- Relicts of the mining industry including small spoil heaps, coke ovens, waggonways, and restored opencast mining land.
- A visually open landscape with commanding views across adjacent valleys to distant ridges.

Description

- 4.431. The soft and thinly bedded sandstones, shales and coals of the coal measures are generally free of drift or masked by boulder clays, giving rise to gently rounded, convex slopes. Occasional thicker sandstone beds are marked by steeper bluffs. Small becks and burns drain the upper valleys, sometimes incised in narrow denes. Soils are heavy and seasonally waterlogged. On poorly drained ridges and plateaux, peaty gleys and deeper peats have formed.
- 4.432. This is a predominantly pastoral landscape of improved and semi-improved pastures with occasional rougher grazing and wet rushy pasture. There is some limited arable cropping on drier ridge tops. Field boundaries are a mixture of dry stone walls and hedgerows. Walls are made of thinly bedded, locally quarried sandstones. Hedges are dominated by hawthorn and can be tall and leggy, or well trimmed and gappy and are often supplemented by wire fences. Field systems are regular in pattern, dating mainly from the enclosure of moorland wastes in the 18th century under private Acts of Parliament. Some areas of unfenced common land survive on the poorest soils. Earlier hedges and walls are occasionally found around older farms and villages. Tree and woodland cover is infrequent. The higher ridges are generally open, with sparsely scattered hedgerow oak and ash. Narrow tree lines follow watercourses.

Road verges are often colonised by rowan, birch and gorse scrub. Small plantations and shelterbelts of pine and larch are scattered across the ridges, with local concentrations creating a more heavily wooded and blocky character.

- 4.433. Settlement is limited. The southern edge of Prudhoe, comprising Prudhoe Hospital, extends into the north of the area. Elsewhere, farmsteads and hamlets are of stone construction. Coal mining and the production of coke and steel have influenced the landscape, although much of the industrial legacy has been removed by land reclamation in recent years. Some relicts survive; including small spoil heaps, coke ovens, lime kilns, waggonways, bridges and mine buildings. Large tracts of land have been opencast for shallow coal on the exposed drift-free ridges and restored to agriculture or forestry. Older sites in particular were restored with little regard to the character of the landscape, and remain open and relatively featureless. Telecommunications masts are prominent features on some ridge tops.
- 4.434. The landscape is visually open and broad in scale with commanding views across the adjacent ridges and valleys. In places it has a remote and strongly rural character. The proximity to mining towns, combined with the busy roads and communications masts, give other parts a semi-rural or urban fringe character.
- 4.435. Historically this was a sparsely settled landscape of isolated livestock farms and large tracts of open fell associated with small agricultural villages in the adjacent valleys. Some older villages lie on ridge top sites. Buildings are of local sandstone with roofs of sandstone or Welsh slate, and are typically set around a central village green. Scattered farms, most dating from the period of enclosure, are connected by straight and uniform enclosure roads. There is little tourist or recreation infrastructure, other than a scattering of rights of way.

Landscape Character Areas

43a Kiln Pit Hill Hinterland

- 4.436. This area comprises an elevated open ridge between the Derwent Reservoir to the south-west and the Derwent valley to the east. There is little tree cover and the field systems are regular and uniform, many dating to the parliamentary enclosures of the 18th century while others date from 20th century opencast cast mining and land reclamation. Field boundaries are a mixture of dry stone walls and outgrown hedges and wire fences. There are patches of wet pasture and gorse and small coniferous plantations which give a 'blocky' character to this area and reflect the acidic soils. Settlement comprises scattered stone-built farmsteads. Elevated open areas have wide views into Derwentdale. The busy A68 skirts the western edge of the area.

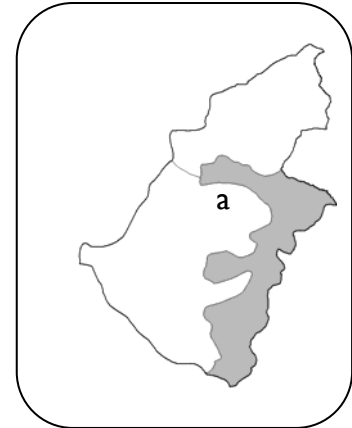
43b Prudhoe Hinterland

- 4.437. This area comprises upland to the south of Prudhoe and is characterised by regular, medium-sized fields, defined by trimmed hawthorn hedges and gorse. Shallow depressions in the rolling topography where there is poor drainage have been colonised by semi-natural oak-birch woodland at Hoynes West and East Wood. Steeper slopes support rough grazing and areas of bracken and gorse scrub, and offer wide views northwards across the River Tyne valley. The larger towns of Prudhoe and Stocksfield have some influence along the north edge of the area.

Landscape Character Type 44: Coalfield Valley

Introduction

- 4.438. This character type occurs once within Northumberland, covering the Derwent valley, through which the River Derwent and its tributaries flow. This landscape straddles the south-eastern boundary of Northumberland, extending into County Durham.
- 4.439. This LCT is represented by one character area: 44a Derwent Valley.



Key Characteristics

- Broad, well-defined valleys with occasional narrow floodplains and incised denes.
- Open landscape, relatively broad in scale but enclosed by rounded ridgelines.
- Mixed farmland of improved pasture and arable cropping.
- Sub-regular field patterns of old enclosures bounded by thorn hedges; occasional regular parliamentary enclosures.
- Scattered hedgerow trees – oak, ash, sycamore and beech.
- Well wooded with ancient oak-birch woods in narrow denes and along watercourses, and mixed plantations on valley sides.
- Scattered mining towns and villages connected by busy roads.
- Extensive areas of restored opencast land and reclaimed colliery land – often open and relatively featureless.
- Strongly rural landscape in places but with a ‘semi-rural’ or urban fringe quality in more settled areas.

Description

- 4.440. The valley is broad and well-defined with moderately sloping sides and occasional areas of narrow floodplain. Soft and thinly bedded sandstones, coal and shales of the coal measures are covered by glacial drift of boulder clay with pockets of sands and gravels, giving rise to gently rounded topography. Small rivers, becks and burns cut down into the valley floor drift, in places creating narrow, steep-sided denes. Heavy, seasonally waterlogged, clay soils support a predominantly pastoral land use with limited arable cropping on lower flatter areas. Field boundaries are mostly hedges – cut low in arable areas, but often tall and overgrown in pastoral areas. Field systems are generally ‘sub-regular’ in pattern, dating from the enclosure of arable town fields around older villages or intakes from the open fells. More regular grids of parliamentary enclosures are found on higher valley sides.
- 4.441. This is a well-wooded valley with ancient oak woods lying in branching denes and large coniferous or mixed plantations (of Scots pine and larch) on the valley sides. Younger broadleaved woodlands of pioneer species like birch, alder and willow

follow old railway lines and colliery land. The networks of old hedges are scattered with locally abundant oak, ash, beech and sycamore trees.

- 4.442. Mining towns and villages occur throughout the main valley, although these largely occur on the County Durham side. Most of these settlements have a core of 19th-century terraced housing of brick or stone and Welsh slate, surrounded by estates of post-war public housing, for example at Consett. Settlement edges are often abrupt or fringed by allotment gardens, pony paddocks and industrial land. Land reclamation and opencast coal mining have had a substantial impact on the more settled parts of the landscape, where extensive tracts of land have been worked and restored to agriculture or forestry. Reclaimed or restored land is often relatively featureless or lacking in maturity.
- 4.443. The landscape is broad in scale, defined within the valley by the enclosing ridgelines, with panoramic views from higher ridges across adjacent valleys. Locally, within the more wooded sections of the valley, the scale is more intimate and enclosed. The landscape of the coalfield has been heavily influenced by urban and industrial development and its scattered mining towns and villages and busy roads give it a semi-rural or urban fringe character in places. In the less developed areas it retains a strongly rural quality.
- 4.444. The valley landscape has been heavily influenced by coal mining, although much of its legacy has been removed by land reclamation in recent years. The disused railway line, which has several landmark viaducts over wooded denes, offers commanding views across the valley. It is now used for recreation, including the Derwent Valley Heritage Way. Other elements of the industrial landscape remain, notably small waste heaps and old coke ovens.

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APPENDIX I

Origin of Landscape Character Types and Areas

ORIGIN OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES AND AREAS

- Table 1, below, sets out which landscape character areas and landscape character types were derived from previous LCA studies. Some of these were adopted with little amendment, while others have been modified to fit within the consolidated LCA. Some areas or types were derived from more than one study. The table sets out only the original study in which the type or area first appeared, not the extent of modification. Where the type or area was the result of new work for the consolidated LCA, the 'origin' box is shaded grey. All areas and types, regardless of their origin, have been reviewed to ensure consistency across the study area.
- Previous LCA studies are abbreviated as follows:

ACM: *AXIS (2006) Alnwick and Castle Morpeth Landscape Character Assessment*. Alnwick District Council and Castle Morpeth Borough Council.

LAWD: J. Benson et al, Landscape Research Group, University of Newcastle (2003) *Landscape Appraisal for Onshore Wind Development*. Government Office for the North East.

TNNP: Julie Martin Associates (2007) *A Landscape Character Assessment of Tynedale District and Northumberland National Park*. Tynedale District Council and Northumberland National Park Authority.
- All refined NCAs were derived from the NCAs defined in the Countryside Character of England reports.

Table 1 Origin of landscape character types and areas

Landscape character type (LCT)		Origin of LCT	Character area		Origin of area
1	Broad River Mouth		1a	Tweed River Mouth	
2	Coastal Incised Valley		2a	Lower Aln	ACM
			2b	Lower Coquet	
3	Farmed Coastal Plain	LAWD	3a	Haggerston	
			3b	Lucker	
			3c	Rock	
4	Rocky Coastline	LAWD	4a	North Tweed Coast	
			4b	Farne Islands Coast	
			4c	Craster Coast	
5	Sandy Coastline	LAWD	5a	Holy Island Coast	
			5b	Beadnell and Embleton Bays	
			5c	Aln and Coquet Estuaries	
6	Broad Sandstone Valley		6a	Whittingham Vale	ACM
7	Estate Valley		7a	Hulne Park	ACM (Lower Aln)
8	Outcrop Hills and Escarpments	LAWD/TNNP	8a	Doddington Ridge	
			8b	Kyloe and Chillingham Hills	
			8c	Charlton Ridge	ACM

Landscape character type (LCT)		Origin of LCT	Character area		Origin of area
			8d	Beanley Moor	ACM
			8e	Rothbury Forest	TNNP/ACM
			8f	Harwood Forest	TNNP
			8g	Sweethope and Blackdown	TNNP
9	Sandstone Upland Valleys	TNNP	9a	Coquetdale	ACM
10	Smooth Moorland		10a	Rosebrough Moor	
			10b	Alnwick Moor	
11	Sandstone Fringe Farmland	LAWD/TNNP	11a	Belford Hills	
			11b	Buteland and Colt Crag	TNNP
			11c	Hetton	
12	Broad Farmed Vale		12a	Breamish Vale	
13	Broad Floodplain Valley	LAWD	13a	Till and Glen Valleys	
14	Igneous Foothills		14a	Moneylaws and Coldside	
			14b	Wooler Foothills	
			14c	Old Fawdon	
15	Upland Fringe Farmland		15a	Lilburn and Roddam	
			15b	Upper Coquet	ACM
16	Open Rolling Farmland	LAWD	16a	Halidon	
			16b	Duddo and Lowick	
			16c	East Learmouth	
17	Upland Fringe Ridges		17a	Horse Rigg	
18	Upland Fringe Valley		18a	Bowmont Valley	
			18b	Wooler Vale	
			18c	Upper Breamish	
			18d	Upper Aln	
19	Moorland and Forest Mosaic	TNNP	19a	Kielder and Redesdale Forests	TNNP
			19b	Kielder Reservoir	TNNP
20	Rolling Upland Valleys	TNNP	20a	Otterburn and Elsdon Valley	TNNP
			20b	Bellingham and Woodburn Valley	TNNP
			20c	Upper North Tyne Valley	TNNP
21	Rolling Uplands	TNNP	21a	Corsenside Common	TNNP
			21b	Ealingham Rigg	TNNP
			21c	Otterburn Plateau	TNNP
22	Farmed River Valleys	TNNP	22a	Devil's Water and Hinterland	TNNP
			22b	Dipton Wood and Slaley	TNNP
23	Lower Dale	TNNP	23a	Lower South Tyne	TNNP
			23b	Lower Allenheads	TNNP
			23c	Lower Derwent	TNNP
24	Middle Dale	TNNP	24a	Middle South Tyne	TNNP

Landscape character type (LCT)		Origin of LCT	Character area		Origin of area
			24b	Middle West Allen	TNNP
			24c	Middle East Allen	TNNP
			24d	Middle Devil's Water	TNNP
			24e	Middle Derwent	TNNP
25	Moorland Ridges	TNNP	25a	Blenkinsopp Common	TNNP
			25b	Hartleyburn and Knarsdale Commons	TNNP
			25c	Whitfield Moor	TNNP
			25d	Allen Common and Mohope/Acton Moors	TNNP
			25e	Hexhamshire and Bulbeck Commons	TNNP
26	Upland Farmland and Plantations	TNNP	26a	Healey	TNNP
27	Upper Dale	TNNP	27a	Upper West Allen	TNNP
			27b	Upper East Allen	TNNP
28	Basin Valley and Fringes	TNNP	28a	River Irthing	TNNP
29	Broad Wooded Valley	TNNP	29a	North Tyne Valley	TNNP
30	Glacial Trough Valley Floor	TNNP	30a	Haltwhistle to Newbrough	TNNP
			30b	Newbrough to Corbridge	TNNP
			30c	Corbridge to Wylam	TNNP
31	Glacial Trough Valley Sides	TNNP	31a	Tipalt Burn	TNNP
			31b	Haltwhistle to Bridge End	TNNP
			31c	North Plenmeller Common	TNNP
			31d	Langley to Stocksfield	TNNP
			31e	Stocksfield to Prudhoe	TNNP
			31f	Acomb to Ovington	TNNP
			31g	Ovington to Wylam	TNNP
32	Parallel Ridges and Commons	TNNP	32a	Howden Hill	TNNP
			32b	Haltwhistle, Melkridge and Ridley Commons	TNNP
33	Tributary Valley	TNNP	33a	Erring Burn	TNNP
34	Upland Commons and Farmland	TNNP	34a	Acomb Ridge	TNNP
			34b	Broadpool Common	TNNP
			34c	Grindon Common	TNNP
			34d	Featherstone Common	TNNP
			34e	Lowes and Nubbock Fells	TNNP
35	Broad Lowland Valley		35a	Coquet Valley	ACM
			35b	Font and Wansbeck Valleys	ACM
36	Lowland Farmed Moor		36a	Ingoe Moor	ACM
37	Lowland Farmed Ridges		37a	Wingates Ridge	ACM

Landscape character type (LCT)		Origin of LCT	Character area		Origin of area
			37b	Longwiton Ridge	ACM
38	Lowland Rolling Farmland		38a	Longframlington	ACM
			38b	Longhorsley	ACM
			38c	Whalton and Belsay	ACM (Blyth and Pont Rivers)
			38d	Pont Valley	ACM
			38e	North Tyne Ridge	
39	Coalfield Farmland		39a	Coastal Coalfields	ACM
			39b	Seaton Delaval	
			39c	Stannington	ACM
40	Broad Bays and Dunes		40a	Druridge Bay	ACM
			40b	Seaton Dunes	
41	Developed Coast		41a	Blyth and Wansbeck Estuaries	
42	Urban and Urban Fringe		42a	Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington	
43	Coalfield Upland Fringe	TNNP	43a	Kiln Pit Hill Hinterland	TNNP
			43b	Prudhoe Hinterland	TNNP
44	Coalfield Valley	TNNP	44a	Derwent Valley	TNNP

APPENDIX 2

Consultation

CONSULTATION

1. Public consultation was undertaken to inform the development of the LCA. Consultation was undertaken in two stages, the first forming part of the Council's LDF consultation process, and the second being a web-based consultation using the Council's 'Limehouse' application.
2. The first draft of the LCA document, which formed the basis for the consultation, also included the guidelines sections which now form the separate Part B: The Changing Landscape.
3. This Appendix summarises the results of the consultation process.

LDF Consultation

4. Six events were held, focusing on a community planning presentation and workshops, led by a representative of NCC. The draft LCA was presented in map format, with notes available on the characterisation. Participants were asked to review the map and fill in a short questionnaire regarding the parts of the landscape which they knew best. The questionnaire is included at the end of this Appendix.
5. Attendance at each session was between around 15 and 30 people. A register was taken by NCC, with details of all attendees. There was a good level of general interest, with a number of verbal comments and discussion points being made. However, very few written responses were forthcoming, and a total of less than 10 completed questionnaires were gathered over the six events.
6. The written responses were mostly positive in relation to names and boundaries, with points of detail relating to descriptions. Many people appeared broadly happy with the content of the map. Several people commented verbally on the appropriateness of the names of types and areas.
7. Discussions on people's perception of pressures for change, and their aspirations for landscapes, proved useful. Wind farms were repeatedly brought up, particularly the issue of defining 'search areas' or similar. Suggestions for the innovative reuse of former open cast sites were also raised.

Limehouse Consultation

8. The draft LCA, together with an online questionnaire based on the one below, was available via the Council's website from 21 December 2009 until 25 January 2010. All parties on the Council's consultation list were notified, and paper documents were sent to those who requested them.
9. A total of 47 responses were received. Respondents included a range of government agencies, commercial companies, advocacy groups, and individuals. The responses have been broken down as set out in Table 2.

Table 2 Consultation Responses by Respondent Type

Group	Responses	Individual respondents
Government agencies	5	Coal Authority Forestry Commission One North East Environment Agency Natural England
Commercial companies	23	National Grid (1) Peel Energy Holdings (2) Prism Planning (3) RWE Npower Ltd. (1) Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd. (16)
Other local authorities	2	County Durham Northumberland National Park Authority
Town and parish councils	2	Haltwhistle Town Council Riding Mill Parish Council
Charitable and advocacy groups	4	Tyne Rivers Trust Northumberland Wildlife Trust PANiC Stations Widdrington and Stobswood Residents Opposed to Opencast Mining (ROOM)
Private individuals	7	
Anonymous	4	

10. Of the 47 responses, 8 were general responses to the LCA as a whole. These were received from the government agencies, the two local authorities and National Grid. The responses from Riding Mill PC and Haltwhistle Town Council related to their areas of interest in the Tyne Gap area. The remaining responses each related to one specific LCT, as set out in Table 3.

Table 3 Consultation Responses by LCT

LCT	Number of responses
4 Hard Coastline	1
5 Soft Coastline	1
8 Outcrop Hills and Escarpments	1
10 Smooth Moorland	1
11 Sandstone Fringe Farmland	1
15 Upland Fringe Farmland	1
16 Open Rolling Farmland	2
19 Moorland and Forest Mosaic	1
21 Rolling Uplands	1
25 Moorland Ridges	1
26 Upland Farmland and Plantations	1
27 Upper Dale	1
28 Basin Valley and Fringes	1
30 Glacial Trough Valley Floor	1
32 Parallel Ridges and Commons	1
33 Tributary Valley	1

LCT		Number of responses
34	Upland Commons and Farmland	1
36	Lowland Farmed Moor	2
37	Lowland Farmed Ridges	2
38	Lowland Rolling Farmland	2
39	Coalfield Farmland	7
41	Developed Coast	3
42	Urban and Urban Fringe	2
43	Coalfield Upland Fringe	1

Comments relating to the LCA

11. Relatively few comments were received relating to the names and boundaries of the LCTs and character areas. Some comments on boundaries related to matters of relatively fine detail, although character area boundaries are not considered to be fixed lines on the ground, but represent zones of transition between landscape types. A potential issue with the consultation exercise was the scale of the map provided, which led to a very small number of respondents seeking clarification as to where the precise boundaries lay. There were no significant changes to boundaries arising from the consultation exercise.
12. Several comments on naming related to the use of the word 'coalfield' in area names, which was seen as negative and 'backward-looking' by some. However, other respondents were more positive about this name, and it was widely recognised. After some consideration, it was decided to retain the word coalfield, as it is in established use, for example the *Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe* National Character Area.
13. Other changes were made, including renaming character area 1a from *Tweed Mouth* to *Tweed River Mouth*, to avoid confusion with the settlement of Tweedmouth. The Druridge Bay area had been classified as part of the *Developed Coast*, which attracted several comments from respondents who emphasised the qualities of this coastline. In response, a new LCT, *Broad Bays and Dunes*, was devised to recognise the difference between this area and the coast between Newbiggin and Blyth.
14. Several responses related to the descriptions of characteristics, pointing out errors or drawing attention to aspects which had been overlooked. Some detailed responses relating to south-east Northumberland were particularly useful in this respect, drawing attention to viewpoints and localised variations in landscape character. Responses of this nature were checked and where relevant their details have been incorporated into the report, adding valuable local knowledge.
15. A small number of comments objected to certain uses of language within the report, which was considered to be overly negative in tone, and which suggested certain features, including forestry and farm buildings, were necessarily detractive in the

landscape. In order to conform to published guidance regarding the neutrality of LCA, this terminology was reviewed and overly negative statements were removed.

16. A small number comments related to the nature of the LCA, including questions as to the appropriateness of the scale employed. These considerations were established in the brief from NCC, and could not be changed during the course of the study, or varied across the study area.

Comments relating to principles and guidelines

17. The majority of the comments related to the forces for change, principles and guidelines sections of the document, which now form part of the separate Part B: The Changing Landscape. The separation of Parts A and B was one result of the consultation responses. Comments relating to principles and guidelines were considered during the drafting of Part B, and key points are summarised below.
18. Concerns were raised as to how the guidelines set out would relate to the emerging LDF, and to what extent they would influence policy and planning decisions at County and local levels. The LCA has been commissioned to provide the Council with a robust, up-to-date evidence base. Policy matters are the remit of the Council.
19. Responses from government agencies and commercial companies were largely concerned with ensuring that the LCA, particularly the guidelines, were consistent with existing planning policy. Specific guidelines were seen as too prescriptive, and potentially restrictive of certain types of development, such as forestry, wind turbines and pylons. This view was echoed in the responses received from commercial companies, most of which related to the wind power industry.
20. The finalised Part B does not include material relating to minerals, waste, or renewable energy, including wind power, as this will be the subject of a forthcoming landscape sensitivity study.
21. A number of detailed comments were received which stressed the importance of protecting certain landscapes from specific types of development. Many of these were received from individuals and advocacy groups, and in contrast to those from the government agencies, frequently found the wording of guidelines too loose and not restrictive enough.
22. Each suggestion, regardless of the source of the response, was carefully considered for its appropriateness, and a number of guidelines have been added or revised, principally in relation to south-east Northumberland which was the focus of the most numerous comments. The wording of comments has sought to strike a balance, avoiding prescriptiveness on the one hand, and weakness on the other.

NORTHUMBERLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Landscape character type: _____

Name of this area: _____

- 1. Does this area make sense to you as a distinct area? Are the boundaries in the right place? Does the name make sense?***

- 2. Do you agree with the key characteristics? Are any missing or inaccurate? Does this sum up the area for you?***

- 3. Are there any particular key issues/forces for change within this landscape?***

- 4. Please let us know of any other issues which you feel relate to this landscape, or to the landscape character assessment in general.***