

Type II

Upland Fringes



These landscapes are characterised by rolling low fells, hilly plateau farmland and moorland. Patches of heather and features such as rocky outcrops, streams, stone walls and sparse woodland creates diversity. Despite the proximity to the M6 motorway and main roads, the landscapes are generally peaceful and lightly settled.

Sub types:

IIa Foothills

IIb Low Fells

Location

This sub type is found along the North Pennines scarps, to the south, east and west of the Lake District fells. A small part of this type west of Tebay meets the criteria for National Park designation and is being considered for designation in 2010/11.

Key Characteristics

- Rolling, hilly or plateau farmland and moorland
- Occasional rocky outcrops
- Hills are dissected by numerous streams and minor river valleys
- Areas of improved grassland, unimproved heathland and extensive conifer plantations
- Semi natural woodland in the small valleys
- Large areas of farmland are bounded by stone walls and hedges

Physical character

The geology is predominantly Carboniferous limestone. However it varies throughout this type as it forms a transition between coastal plain, farmland and the high fells of the Lake District and North Pennines.

In Carlisle and Eden the type is characterised by rolling, hilly or plateau farmland and moorland generally 150-250m AOD adjoining the North Pennines AONB.

In west Cumbria this is a broad type transitional in character between the general countryside and the distinctive open moorland and fell found mainly in the Lake District between 100 - 250m AOD.

In South Lakeland this type comprises slightly lower rolling hills between 50 - 200m AOD.

Land cover and land use

At lower levels in all these areas land use is predominantly improved pasture and meadows and there is a strong pattern of stone walls giving way to hedges at lower levels. At higher levels improved and semi improved pasture give way to open moorland. Small woodlands are common on steeper slopes and alongside streams and rivers. Numerous field boundary trees and tree clumps occur around farms. Small coniferous shelterbelts contrast with large scale plantations. Occasional marshy hollows and small tarns with willow scrub add interest.

Settlements are generally dispersed and sparse. Farmsteads are isolated, and sometimes large in scale. Villages, hamlets and farms are often discrete features, concealed by the rolling topography sited along the base of slopes following the grain of the land. In the main, minor roads criss cross through the landscapes serving the scattered farms and hamlets. These are often tree lined and follow the line of the slopes. Lines of pylons, the A66 and the M6, large scale modern agricultural buildings, quarrying, spoil heaps and coniferous plantations form large scale man made features in some parts of the landscape. These can detract from the overall character of the landscapes.

Along the North Pennines land cover ranges from improved grazing land with some arable to unimproved heathland or moorland with extensive conifer plantations. Most farmland has a pattern of large fields tending to be square with stone walls or hedges in generally poor condition. Many of the areas offer good views towards the Pennine scarp.

In the west the farmland varies between pastoral landscapes with small fields to rolling higher topography with fine long distance views.

In the south, numerous streams and minor river valleys dissect the hills. These are sometimes steep sided with

woodlands and occasional rocky outcrops. The M6 motorway and west coast mainline form a strong linear feature running adjacent to the landscape type around Tebay.

Ecology

Largely an agricultural landscape, but includes many small pockets of ecological interest. In the north and east there are areas of upland heathland and acid grassland, whilst rush pasture is frequent on poorly drained ground throughout, as are species-rich hedgerows, though these tend to be confined to lower ground. There are many small river valleys and these often support small upland oak woodlands. These woodlands are particularly notable along the upper River Belah east of Brough, where they are accompanied by stands of species-rich grassland. Occasionally there are outcrops of limestone and these support areas of limestone grassland and upland ash woodland. Species-rich springs and flushes are present where there is a calcareous influence to the irrigating waters. The numerous rivers and becks provide habitat for species such as otter, dipper and, along the River Eden, freshwater pearl-mussel.

Historic and cultural character

The settlement pattern is dispersed and the field systems mainly a product of late enclosure. In the east around Kendal settlements are more nucleated and both here, and around Furness, field patterns are linked to ancient enclosure. Some of the farms originated as late sixteenth or early 17th century bastles. Traditional farm buildings are limestone built and the field boundaries generally consist of dry stone walls. Ring garths and intacks are identifiable. Upstanding archaeological remains are widespread and include prehistoric stone circles and cairns, medieval shielings and droveways, remnants of late medieval deer parks and the prolific remains of past industries. These include quarrying and lead mining in the Pennines. Some areas, like Warcop Common, are especially rich in archaeological remains.

Perceptual character

These are mostly small to medium scale enclosed landscapes with open moorland in higher parts. The landscape is transitional and is often seen against a backdrop of the larger fells and pikes of the Lake District and North Pennines. At lower levels the feeling is more intimate due to the topography and woodland cover containing views in some places. On higher land open views to the surrounding fells and sea give an expansive feeling to the area. In some cases the views open across valleys where farmland and towns, such as Kendal and Appleby, are framed in the landscape. The landscapes are diverse varying from pasture to woodland to moorland and give a different feel with each season. The rich green of improved fields often contrasts strongly with the mottled and subdued hues of surrounding fells. Although easy to access the countryside is attractive and peaceful and is highly valued locally and is often as a rural backwater.

Sensitive characteristics or features

The strong matrix of stone walls and hedges provide a framework to the improved and semi improved pasture. Wooded ghylls, woodland and hedgerow trees provide interest and support biodiversity. These are sensitive to changes in land management. Farmsteads and villages are discrete and dispersed and follow the grain of the rolling topography and are sensitive to unsympathetic expansion and redevelopment. Rural roads connect farmsteads and settlements following the flow of the topography and are sensitive to highway safety improvements or access to new developments. The remote, peaceful and rural farmland is sensitive to additional large scale coniferous plantations. The contrast in scale with Pennine Scarps and Lakeland Fells and more intimate farms and woodland are sensitive to large scale infrastructure development.

Vision

This landscape will be conserved and enhanced.

Field boundaries, woodland, other natural features, cultural and historic features will be conserved and enhanced to reinforce the distinctiveness of the areas. Farm-scale woodlands will be supported in relation to

agricultural change and to reinforce existing woodland patterns. Unimproved heathland will be managed and conserved. New large-scale forestry will be resisted and the boundaries of existing plantations will be softened and a diversity of tree species will be supported. Existing settlements and built features will be conserved and new development will respect the grain and scale of the landscape. Informal and small-scale recreational activities will be managed to support nature conservation interests and local distinctiveness.

Changes in the Landscape

Over the next 10 – 20 years this landscape could be subject to the following changes or issues:

Climate Change

- Changes in agricultural practices to help mitigate against climate change, such as short rotation forestry, could affect landscape features and local character.
- There could be an increase in alien species along river and streams in response to climate change and temperature rises.

Management Practices

- Agricultural intensification and changes in agricultural policy and practices, along with the erection of new large scale farm buildings could affect landscape features and local character.
- Over grazing along streams can reduce woodland regeneration and a lack of variation in vegetation.
- Continued neglect and removal of field boundaries including walls and hedges could further erode these features in the landscape.
- Afforestation pressures have decreased in recent years but could be replaced by short rotation forestry as a response to the need to provide more renewable energy sources in rural areas.
- Agri-environment schemes could provide opportunities for habitat creation and boundary enhancements.

Development

- Planned and incremental expansion of settlements and farmsteads and the use of non vernacular materials could erode local character.
- Upgrading the national grid and the development of more large scale wind energy schemes could erode

the open and generally undeveloped character, particularly close to national landscape designations.

- There could be a short term return to open cast coal mining in areas along the west coast.
- Other development pressures include quarrying extensions and communications masts.

Access and Recreation

- Public rights of way and areas of open access land provide a network of routes that enable quiet appreciation and enjoyment of the countryside. Ongoing maintenance is needed to support this network in the future.
- Recreation which, although often low key in these landscapes, could increase as more people utilise these areas to access higher peaks, particularly along the edge of the national parks and North Pennines.
- Increased road traffic associated with recreation could change the character of the local road network.

Guidelines

Natural Features

- Encourage sustainable management of moorland, woodland, ghyll woodland and wetland areas and habitats.
- Reduce the artificial appearance of straight edged plantations by feathering in broad leaved species and by leaving open areas along edges and water courses to help them assimilate into the landscape.
- Support better management of ancient and semi natural woodlands.
- Refrain from additional large-scale plantations and encourage small farm-scale plantations that enhance the landscape characteristics.
- Encourage planting of a mosaic of new, well-designed woodland incorporating open areas and recreational provision.
- Support the development of a mosaic of habitats through woodland, wetland, species rich grassland and heathland to improve nature conservation value and robustness to climate change.
- Encourage appropriate planting of locally native woodland alongside rivers, stream and ghylls.
- Ensure that 'linked patterns' of vegetation are created to enhance landscape and nature conservation value.

Cultural Features

- Retain and restore dry stone walls, traditional gateposts and features on a whole farm basis where appropriate.
- Retain and restore hedgerows to enrich the more prominent farmland particularly in Carlisle/Eden.
- Restrict the replacement of walls and hedges by post and wire fences and encourage planting and traditional management of hedgerows.

Development

- Protect village fringes from unsympathetic development.
- Resist development of important open spaces such as small pastures or woods within villages.
- Ensure that new farm buildings are integrated into the landscape by careful siting and design and redundant modern buildings are removed.
- Protect uncluttered skylines and key views to and from the area from large-scale energy infrastructure developments such as large scale wind turbines, pylons and expansive areas of biomass planting that may erode the character of the area.
- Conserve the rural character of the existing small road network.

Access and Recreation

- Public rights of way and access to open access land should be well maintained to allow quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the areas.

Sub type IIb

Low Fells

Location

This sub type is found to the east of Kendal around Hay Fell and Lambrigg Fell.

Key Characteristics

- Rolling low fells with rocky outcrops
- Open improved pasture
- Some areas of bracken, moorland and heather
- Small woodlands and scrub on the steeper slopes and by farms
- Distant views along Kent and Lune valley

Physical character

This sub type is mainly Silurian gritstones forming low fells between 200m-300m AOD. They have a distinctive northeast to southwest grain. The relatively soft sedimentary rocks have eroded to fairly rounded forms with only occasional rocky outcrops and a knobbly outline in places.

Land cover and land use

The vegetation is generally open grassland with varying intensity of management. Sometimes there is a strong contrast between rich green improved pasture enclosed by stone walls and open moorland of rough grass, bracken and remnant heather.

The open landscape is relatively featureless with only occasional stone wall field boundaries. Trees can be found along small streams, and willow scrub is often found in rushy hollows. Small woods or scrub can be found on steeper slopes. Tree clumps are often associated with farm buildings. Occasional farmsteads coincide with the improved land served by peripheral lanes.

The M6 motorway and to a lesser extent the A684 are discordant features. Fell tops afford distant views down the Kent and Lune valleys.

Ecology

These low fells support areas of upland heathland and acid grassland, with areas of rush pasture and purple moor-grass and stands of gorse scrub. Small upland oak woodlands are present along stream valleys and small stands of wet woodland are present in damp hollows.

Historic and cultural character

There are few settlements and most are isolated farmsteads. The field system is a product of late enclosure and defined by dry stone walls. There is evidence of some medieval deer parks and widespread evidence of quarrying.

Perceptual character

Due to the transitional location and relationship to higher fells, these are relatively undramatic low fells. They have a simple, open character. Colourful patches of heather, streams and wooded steep slopes and the mosaic of stone walls provide interest which can be accentuated with seasonal change. Despite the movement and noise where the M6 motorway carves through the Westmorland fells, the area is still generally seen as an open place to enjoy the countryside, with wide and largely unspoiled panoramic views. A sense of isolation can occur at times of poor weather as views become enclosed by cloud or rain.

Sensitive characteristics or features

The distinctive landscape grain and mosaic of walls are sensitive to unsympathetically sited and scaled development and changes in land management. The small woodlands and contrasting wide open moorlands are sensitive to changes in land management. The wide and expansive views of Lakeland Fells and the Howgills are sensitive to significant and large scale infrastructure development.

Vision

This landscape will be conserved and enhanced.

Agricultural change will be managed to conserve and re-create key components such as species rich grassland, heather moorland and other natural features. Where complementary diversification is a real prospect in this marginal farming area it will be encouraged. Low key recreational uses and extensive woodland planting will be introduced in carefully sited areas to enrich the character and support the management of existing features and moorland. New housing development will be sensitive to the surrounding landscape and reinforce local vernacular.

Changes in the Landscape

Over the next 10 – 20 years this landscape could be subject to the following changes or issues:

Climate Change

- Changes species and habitats could arise as temperatures rise and species migrate higher up hillsides.

Management Practices

- Increased grazing, scrub and heather clearance could continue to change the character of the moorland.
- The loss of remaining moorland through drainage, reseeding, fertilisation and enclosure by fences.
- Symptoms of neglect, including grazed woods, over mature farm copses, unmanaged heather and dilapidated walls and barns.

Development

- Planned and incremental expansion of settlements and farmsteads and the use of non vernacular

materials could erode local character.

- The M6 corridor as an element in the landscape could have the potential to attract new large scale commercial development. Improvements to surfacing, lighting and information systems along the motorway could affect its appearance and people's awareness of it in the landscape.
- The development of more large scale wind energy schemes could erode the open and generally undeveloped character, particularly close to national landscape designations.
- Other development pressures include quarrying extensions and communications masts.

Access and Recreation

- Despite open access land and the Dalesway passing through this landscape recreation is low key and compatible with the landscape.
- Public rights of way provide a network of routes that enable quiet appreciation and enjoyment of the countryside. Ongoing maintenance is needed to support this network in the future.
- Current farm stewardship grants provide the opportunity to develop more public access in the countryside. Future grant or other programmes may continue to support this.

Guidelines

Natural Features

- Enhance and/or recreate fell wetland habitats including flushes, small tarns and bog pools. This may include preventing drainage improvements and blocking existing drains to maintain high water levels, preventing overgrazing and poaching by stock, excluding supplementary feeding areas and controlling scrub encroachment.
- Protect gills from encroachment by stock to encourage the development of more diverse ground flora, scattered trees and woodland.
- Protect rocky outcrops as features by preventing removal or disturbance and controlling scrub encroachment.
- Consider recreating heather moorland on suitable land.
- Regenerate suppressed heather through management programmes including reduction of stocking levels, control of bracken, phased cutting and burning.

- Regenerate rough pasture through controlled light grazing, control of bracken and rushes.
- Restrict further agricultural improvement including ploughing, re-seeding, application of fertiliser, liming or herbicide treatment.
- Conserve and reinforce the scattered pattern of isolated mature trees and clumps concentrated around farms and tarns.
- Bring remnant and grazed woodland back into appropriate management by exclusion of livestock, natural regeneration and restocking.
- Ameliorate existing coniferous plantations including softening geometric outlines, introduction of open spaces and identifying suitable species for diversification and long term retention.
- Plant lower sheltered slopes with a mosaic of mixed and broad-leaved woodland avoiding moorland, wetland and rocky outcrops.

Cultural Features

- Restore fenced boundaries to traditional stone walls.
- Restrict removal of stone walls and replacement by fences.
- Manage and repair derelict stone walls.
- Avoid the use of 'barrier' fencing.

Development

- Ensure that developments take advantage of the natural containment offered by intermediate ridges and horizons, avoiding sites on prominent edges of the plateau.
- Avoid siting large scale wind energy, other vertical structures such as telecommunications masts, pylons and overhead transmission lines in open and prominent areas where it could degrade the rural character of the area.
- Retain the rural character of the M6 corridor by resisting large scale commercial development and ensuring new motorway infrastructure such as information signs and necessary lighting is sited to minimise adverse effects on open parts of the landscape. Noise pollution should be mitigated against through careful selection of surface materials.
- Ensure that all developments are carefully designed so as not threaten the open, unspoiled character; this is particularly the case with tall and vertical structures such as large wind turbines and pylons.

Access and Recreation

- Public rights of way should be well maintained and quiet recreational areas and facilities should be improved and developed to be compatible with the pastoral character of this sub type.
- Seek opportunities to enhance access to farmland through farm stewardship or other schemes.
- Promote and enhance existing recreation routes by improving waymarking, providing appropriate surfacing, gates and gaps and interpretation.