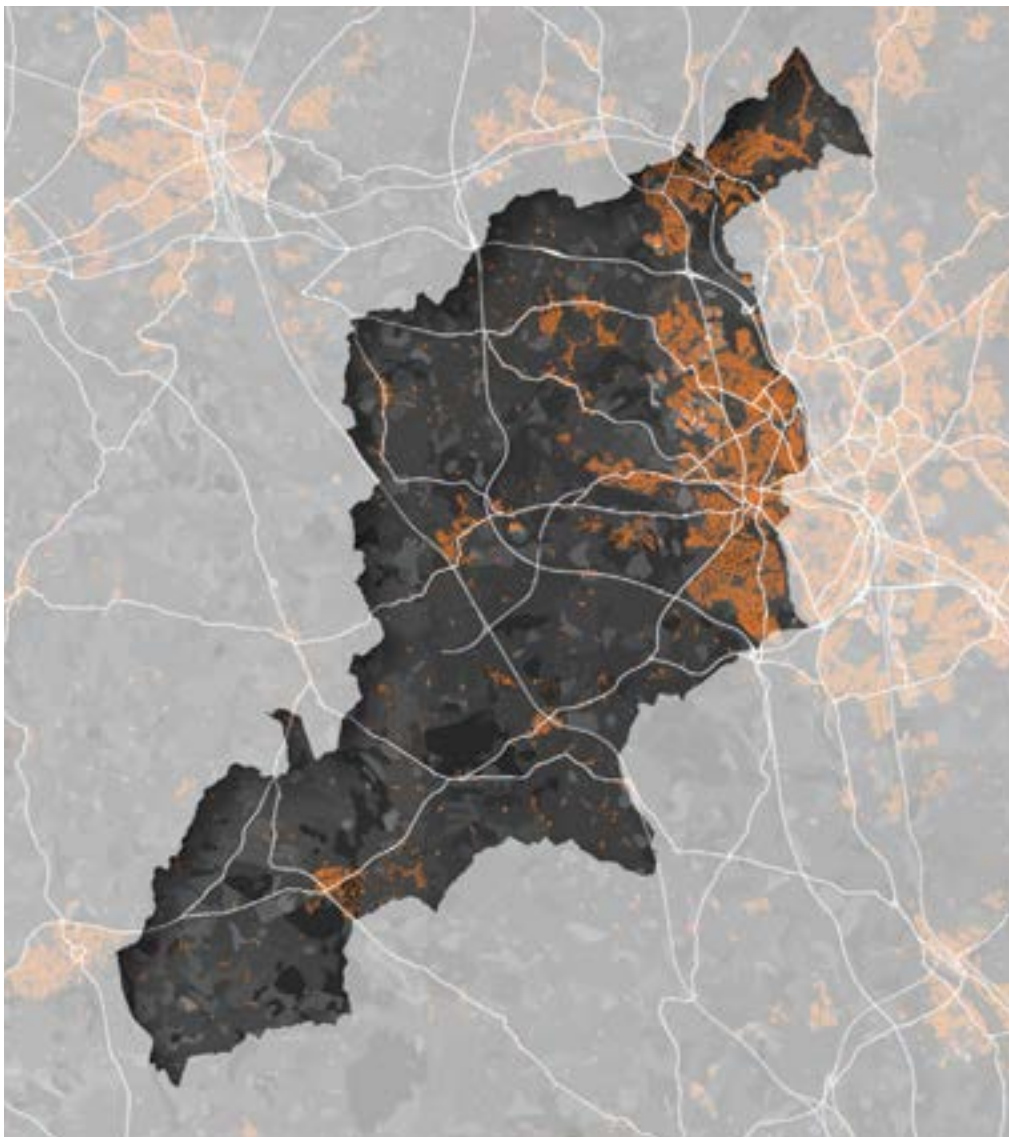




# Newcastle-under-Lyme Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment Study

## Part 2 Landscape Strategy





NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# Newcastle-under-Lyme Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment Study

## **Part 2 Landscape Strategy**

Approved

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Date

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Landscape Strategy forms Part 2 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment Study. It is informed by Part 1, the Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment. Together, the two documents, 'the Study' form part of the evidence base to inform the new Local Plan.

The Study Area comprises the rural landscapes within the Borough outside of the main urban areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove. In line with the principles of Natural England's guidance set out in [paragraph 3.2.2](#), the Study was informed by desk studies, field survey and stakeholder consultation.

Part 1 of the Study identifies and records the patterns, features and elements of the various generic types of landscape and areas of distinctive character in the Study Area that contribute to making one landscape different from another. It is these factors that contribute to defining local distinctiveness and sense of place.

The evidence provided by the Study will be used by the Council to inform planning decisions about where new development should be located, and also to help shape the policy approach to landscape and settlement character in the new Local Plan with respect to design, place-making and green infrastructure considerations in particular.

The Study provides a basis for developing an integrated, positive approach to managing landscape change by all those involved with, or that have an interest in, the planning, design and management of the Borough's landscapes.

### Landscape Strategy

Founded on an up-to-date understanding of the landscape characteristics and features that make a key contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place in the Study Area, the Landscape Strategy provides guidance for managing landscape change within each of the 7 Landscape Character Types (and their component Landscape Character Areas where appropriate) identified in Part 1 of the Study. The landscape guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive, and local circumstances should be taken into account in consideration of proposals for landscape change.

The Landscape Strategy aims to assist Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, together with other agencies, developers and local communities, in finding ways of managing positive change and regeneration, whilst conserving and enhancing landscape character and promoting local distinctiveness.

### Landscape Character Type Guidelines

Taking into account the condition of the landscape (see **Figure 5.1**) and its strength of character (see **Figure 5.2**), recommended overall landscape management objectives have been identified for each Landscape Character Type as illustrated on **Figure 5.3**. For each Landscape Character Type, guidance for landscape management and integrating development into the landscape are also provided.

## **Landscape Character Area Guidelines**

Taking into account the forces for change and key sensitivities of the landscape, area-specific landscape guidance is also provided that highlight locally explicit issues that may need to be considered in plan-making and/or development management decisions.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment Study**

1.1.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council commissioned CBA to prepare a new Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment as part of the evidence base to inform the new Local Plan.

1.1.2 The Study comprises two parts that should be considered in conjunction with each other:

- Part 1 (separate document) – Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment (including Sensitivity Assessments of Settlement Fringe Landscapes)
- Part 2 (this document) – Landscape Strategy

1.1.3 The Study Area for the assessment comprises the rural landscapes within the Borough outside of the main urban areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove as defined on **Figure 1.1**.

1.1.4 The Study identifies and records the patterns, features and elements of the various generic types of landscape and areas of distinctive character in the Study Area that contribute to making one landscape different from another. It is these factors that contribute to defining local distinctiveness and sense of place.

1.1.5 The evidence provided by the Study will be used by the Council to inform planning decisions about where new development should be located, and also to help shape the policy approach to landscape and settlement character in the new Local Plan with respect to design, place-making and green infrastructure considerations in particular.

1.1.6 The Study provides a basis for developing an integrated, positive approach to managing landscape change by all those involved with, or that have an interest in, the planning, design and management of the Borough's landscapes.

### **1.2 The Landscape Strategy**

1.2.1 Founded on an up-to-date understanding of the landscape characteristics and features that make a key contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place in the Study Area, the Landscape Strategy provides guidance for managing landscape change within each of the 7 Landscape Character Types (and their component Landscape Character Areas where appropriate) identified in Part 1 of the Study. The landscape guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive, and local circumstances should be taken into account in consideration of proposals for landscape change.

- 1.2.2 The Landscape Strategy aims to assist Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, together with other agencies, developers and local communities, in finding ways of managing positive change and regeneration, whilst conserving and enhancing landscape character and promoting local distinctiveness.



## 2.0 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY CONTEXT

### 2.1 What is Landscape?

2.1.1 As promoted by Natural England's guidance, the European Landscape Convention's definition of "landscape" is:

*'...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'* (Council of Europe, 2000)

2.1.2 The landscape provides the ever-changing backdrop to people's daily lives and is more than just 'the view' – it is about the relationship between people, place and nature. Landscape results from the way that different components of the natural and cultural environment interact and are experienced and perceived by people. As people value landscape for many different reasons, understanding how it evolved, what the landscape is like today (including its historic landscape character or "time depth") and how it is likely to change in the future is important.

### 2.2 Managing Landscape Change

2.2.1 The Borough's landscape is the product of various influences that have acted upon it over time, both ancient and more recent. The character of the landscape has altered over time, due to factors such as its underlying geology, the topography and hydrology, which have directed the overlying human activity and resultant land uses. It is these patterns of historic land use which demonstrate the cultural dimension of the present-day landscape.

2.2.2 Landscapes are dynamic and are subject to continual and inevitable forces for change that apply pressures and have different influences upon landscape character. In line with the approach advocated by Natural England, the aim of the Landscape Strategy is not to preserve all landscapes created from past processes, but to ensure that valued and key characteristics that create a sense of place are maintained and enhanced for the future, whilst accommodating necessary changes arising from social, economic and environmental needs. This includes making people, places and nature more resilient to climate change.

2.2.3 It is recognised that there are opportunities and challenges for new directions in Newcastle-under-Lyme's landscapes. They require a mixture of:

- **Landscape protection** – involving appropriate criteria-based policies in the Local Plan affording protection for the key landscape features identified as being of particular local value

- **Landscape management** – involving actions that ensure sustainable development and ongoing upkeep of a landscape, guiding changes arising from meeting social, economic and environmental needs
- **Landscape planning** – involving strong forward-looking actions to enhance, restore or create landscapes

2.2.4 In some areas it may be appropriate for the landscape to be allowed to evolve in a sustainable manner and opportunities taken to introduce new elements in the landscape. In others, it might be appropriate to preserve the features that contribute to its sense of place.

2.2.5 Alongside the need to protect locally valued landscapes/features, there is also a need to maintain functional ecosystems that provide services to support quality of life and the economy. For example, proposals for making changes to particular landscapes in order to enhance them and ensure they are resilient to climate change may be appropriate – such as creating opportunities to expand and link valuable semi-natural habitats to mitigate the effects of fragmentation at the landscape-scale.

## **2.3 Landscape Policy Context**

2.3.1 The Landscape Strategy reflects the principles of the European Landscape Convention, the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, and Natural England’s guidance (see Part 1 of the Study for details). It provides a valuable context for spatial planning by informing our understanding of the intrinsic character and value of the Borough’s landscapes.

## 3.0 UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE

### 3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 Located within the north-west of Staffordshire, the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme covers approximately 211 square kilometres and has a population of 129,400<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.1.2 It contains rural areas with a number of villages of varying sizes, the main urban settlement and economic centre of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the town of Kidsgrove (see **Figure 1.1**). Newcastle-under-Lyme forms part of a contiguous urban conurbation with the City of Stoke-on-Trent to the east and is surrounded by Green Belt to the west.
- 3.1.3 Outside of the main urban areas, the majority of the Borough is dominated by undulating rural landscapes with farmlands, woodlands and villages.
- 3.1.4 The Gritstone Uplands form a distinctive outcrop of gritstone in the very north of the Borough, on which the Castle of Mow Cop is a prominent landmark. The Coalfield Farmlands form an elevated, undulating landscape with prominent small hills that encompasses the urban areas in the north. This landscape is characterised by former extractive land uses including the wooded, restored mining landscape to the west of the Newcastle-under-Lyme urban area.
- 3.1.5 The Ancient Redland Farmlands overlie the Palaeozoic mudstones and sandstones in the centre of the Borough. They are distinguished by the deep red soils and ancient pastoral farmland that covers them. The Ancient Clay Farmlands form the lower lying landform to the west of the Coalfield Farmlands and Ancient Redland Farmlands. They are a gently undulating pastoral landscape, characterised by a well-defined, irregular field pattern bound by ancient hedgerows, with scattered oak trees.
- 3.1.6 The Sandstone Hills & Farmlands span the south of the Borough. They are characterised by a pattern of large arable fields and large plantation woodlands located on distinctive undulating, rounded hills, interspersed by more intimate pastoral fields on steeper slopes. The Ancient Sandstone Farmlands are a gently undulating, sparsely settled, productive rural landscape in the south-west of the Borough.
- 3.1.7 The River Valley landscape is limited to a small area in the east of the Borough, identified as a green corridor within the Newcastle-under-Lyme/Stoke-on-Trent conurbation. It is a varied landscape, with wooded slopes and a seasonally flooded flat valley that is largely used for recreational purposes, with pockets of ancient farmland and meadows.

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<sup>1</sup> 2018 ONS Population estimates (NOMIS)

## **3.2 The Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment**

- 3.2.1 The Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment (see Part 1) provides an up-to-date understanding of the Borough's landscape today. This will enable better-informed decisions to be made about the future management of the landscape and provide an evidence base for developing planning policies and informing proposals for landscape change.
- 3.2.2 The Study was undertaken in accordance with the principles of Natural England's guidance set out in 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014).

### **Landscape Character Types**

- 3.2.3 The Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment describes how physical and cultural influences have combined to create the unique and distinctive character of the Borough's landscapes.
- 3.2.4 The area is characterised by variations in the landscape, and these differences are represented by 7 generic Landscape Character Types. Each of the Landscape Character Types has a distinct and homogenous character that shares broadly similar patterns of physical and cultural attributes in terms of geology, topography, drainage patterns, land cover, ecology and historic evolution. They may occur repeatedly in the Borough or just in one place.

### **Landscape Character Areas**

- 3.2.5 The Landscape Character Types have been further sub-divided into 18 component Landscape Character Areas, which are unique individual geographical areas that share common characteristics with other areas of the same type. Each Landscape Character Area has a distinct and recognisable local identity and sense of place.
- 3.2.6 The landscape classification for Newcastle-under-Lyme is illustrated on **Figure 3.1**.

## 4.0 HOW TO USE THE LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

### 4.1 General

- 4.1.1 When exploring possible proposals for landscape changes, it is important to consider the valued characteristics of the landscape and how they may be affected by the change. As there are many local variations in landscape, site-based decisions should take account of local circumstances in addition to the understanding of the character and dynamics of the Borough's different landscapes provided by the Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment (see Part 1). Ideally, decisions about significant landscape changes should, wherever possible, be made through engagement with people who live in, work in and/or visit the area.

### 4.2 User Guide

#### Key Steps

- 4.2.1 The key steps for using the Landscape Strategy to inform decisions about development or land management proposals are outlined in **Box 4.1**.

#### **Box 4.1 – How to use the Landscape Strategy**

**Step one:** Using the landscape classification map (see **Figure 3.1**), locate which Landscape Character Type and Landscape Character Area is relevant to the proposal for landscape change.

**Step two:** Refer to the Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment (see Part 1) to gain an understanding of how the landscape has developed and its current character and sense of place.

**Step three:** Using the Landscape Strategy guidelines in [Section 5.0](#), identify the landscape guidelines that are relevant to the proposal for landscape change.

**Step four:** Taking into account the relevant Landscape Strategy guidelines, assess the effects that the proposal is likely to have on the landscape. If appropriate, modify the proposal to ensure a positive contribution to landscape character and sense of place.

## Key Principles for Decision Making

4.2.2 Decisions about development or land management proposals should be informed by the following recommended principles:

- As the local planning authority, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council should use the Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment (Part 1) and this Landscape Strategy (Part 2) to assist in the development management process. Development assessed as having potential to have a significant effect on sensitive landscapes and valued landscape features should be considered as candidates for refusal or require planning conditions that ensure important landscape features are not lost.
- Avoid a standardised “anywhere” approach to design by using the Landscape Strategy to inform the process of negotiation between officers and developers, to support appropriate high-quality place shaping. The local planning authority should be proactive in helping developers better understand how their proposals can be designed to reflect and enhance local landscape character. For example, officers should use the Study to (i) highlight to developers characteristic features of the landscape that should be considered for enhancement, restoration or conservation etc, and (ii) to identify specific criteria and landscape considerations that a development proposal should take account of prior to approval and subsequently assessed against.
- The local planning authority should, where appropriate, encourage developers to use local building materials, building styles, native species and other characteristic features and elements of a particular landscape to strengthen local distinctiveness.
- Developers and other agents of change should be encouraged to adopt creative solutions to conserving and/or enhancing local landscape character and identify the means by which development and land management proposals might be successfully integrated into the existing landscape character. Consideration should be given to the scale of development, layout and relationship to existing development and field patterns. In addition to informing new development on greenfield sites, the Landscape Strategy may also be used to help identify opportunities for creating new landscapes and restoring habitats on previously developed brownfield sites that offer limited landscape features for new development to refer to.
- The local planning authority should consider the cumulative effects of small-scale development and incremental change on landscape character. Incremental changes can gradually erode landscape character and local distinctiveness if the wider context of a development or land management proposal is not fully considered. The Landscape Strategy identifies key characteristics such as distinctive field patterns, vegetation features and settlement patterns that are particularly susceptible to incremental change. The Landscape Strategy may also be used to identify the means by which such developments may be successfully incorporated into the landscape and indeed enhance particular characteristics.

- Developers should be encouraged to use the Study as a baseline resource for informing Environmental Impact Assessments, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and Landscape and Visual Appraisals for proposed development<sup>2</sup>. The impact of development on key landscape features and characteristics should be assessed and where impacts are found likely to occur, appropriate scheme modification or mitigation measures should be required to avoid, reduce or compensate for potential adverse impacts.
- Wherever possible, opportunities to introduce new landscape features should be identified to compensate for loss or degradation elsewhere. This might include ensuring that where a particular habitat or area of planting is lost as a result of development, habitat creation or planting is undertaken at a suitable location close by to offset the loss and provide a net environmental gain.
- Ensure that change is appropriate to landscape character. Proposals should be pursued that are appropriate to the relevant Landscape Character Type and Landscape Character Area, and the features and characteristics that define their local distinctiveness (including experiential/perceptual aspects such as a sense of tranquillity.)
- Site-specific proposals should also be informed by the historic landscape character type mapping provided by the [Staffordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project](#), which provides a tool for helping understand the “time depth” in the present landscape.

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<sup>2</sup> Undertaken by a competent landscape professional in accordance with the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment third edition (2013)

## 5.0 LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Taking into account the condition of the landscape (see **Figure 5.1**) and its strength of character (see **Figure 5.2**), recommended landscape management objectives have been identified for each Landscape Character Type as illustrated on **Figure 5.3**, selected from the landscape strategies outlined in **Box 5.1** as appropriate:

#### Box 5.1 – Landscape Management Strategies

- **Conserve:** Landscapes of strong character in good condition and therefore judged to be of high quality, where emphasis should be on conservation of existing character and of particular features that contribute to this character. The aim should be to continue the current management regime/adopt best practice approaches. Great care will need to be taken in the introduction of new characteristics.
- **Enhance:** Landscapes of strong/moderate character in good/moderate condition but becoming weakened and individual features may have suffered decline or damage. This may include improvements to landscape management practices and the introduction of positive new elements or features.
- **Restore:** Landscapes of moderate character in moderate condition where the emphasis should be on restoring elements of historic, ecological and amenity value that have been lost or declined, and on enhancing character. This may include re-introduction of landscape elements/features in line with best practice.

5.1.2 For each Landscape Character Type, evaluative information and guidelines are provided as outlined in **Box 5.2**.

#### Box 5.2 – Landscape Character Type Guidelines

- **Character Description**
- **Key Landscape Features**
- **Forces for Change**
- **Landscape Condition**
- **Strength of Character**
- **Key Landscape Sensitivities**
- **Landscape Guidelines:**
  - **Overall Landscape Management Objective**
  - **Guidance for Landscape Management**
  - **Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape**



- 5.1.3 Taking into account the forces for change and key sensitivities of the landscape, area-specific landscape guidelines are also provided that highlight locally explicit issues that may need to be considered in plan-making and/or development management decisions. For each Landscape Character Area within a Landscape Character Type, evaluative information and guidelines are provided as outlined in **Box 5.3**.

**Box 5.3 – Landscape Character Area Guidelines**

- **Key Characteristics**
- **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**
- **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**
- **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

**5.2 Landscape Character Type & Area Guidelines**

- 5.2.1 Landscape Guidelines for each of the Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas described in the Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment (Part 1) are as follows.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE A: GRITSTONE UPLANDS

### Character Description

See the relevant character description in Part 1.

### Key Landscape Features

- Distinctive upland landscape, with outcrops of gritstone and associated heathland
- Gritstone walls and stone dwellings
- Small-scale, pastoral fields
- Steep, treed slopes
- Distinctive landmark of Mow Cop Castle that has strong intervisibility with the northern part of the Study Area

### Forces for Change

- Development pressures for new housing that would affect the rural character of the existing village settlements and could result in further coalescence of settlements, particularly along the main transport routes
- Climate change resulting in adaptation of agricultural practices and land use change that could increase pressure on priority habitats
- Climate change resulting in extreme weather events such as drought that could lead to loss of ancient and veteran trees particularly in the hedgerows and ancient woodlands, resulting in a decline in woodland cover
- Climate change could result in pressure for changes to land use including creation of new habitats that would alter the characteristics of the landscape
- Recreational pressures which could result in changing land use and fragmentation of remaining pockets of pastoral landscape
- Further fragmentation of the pastoral landscape due to pressures to shift to larger scale livestock rearing/dairy farming, resulting in changes in land use
- Loss and alteration to the characteristic farmsteads as a result of urbanisation and pressure to alter farming techniques and products
- Increasing requirement to locate renewable energy developments within the rural landscape that would alter the land uses and introduce potentially prominent modern features in the rural landscape

### Landscape Condition

The landscape in the Gritstone Uplands LCT, within the Study Area, has been altered by former extraction and expansion of the settlements. Gritstone wall field margins are evident in places, but the replacement of hedgerows by fences is becoming more commonplace. The condition of the landscape is perceived to be **moderate**.

## Strength of Character

The Gritstone Uplands LCT, within the Study Area, overall has a **strong** character, with distinctive rocky outcrops and ridges, the notable landmark of Mow Cop Castle that is visible across the north of the Borough and regionally characteristic dark gritstone building materials.

## Key Landscape Sensitivities

- Distinctive gritstone outcrops and associated lowland heathland habitats
- Pockets of historic pastoral farmland with distinctive gritstone wall boundaries
- Historic landmark features including Mow Cop Castle and distinctive gritstone dwellings within the village

## Landscape Guidelines

The recommended overall management objective for the Gritstone Uplands LCT should be to **conserve** the existing character of the area, especially the distinctive landmark features such as Mow Cop castle and the gritstone outcrops and associated lowland heathland. Distinctive gritstone walls and field boundary hedgerows should be **enhanced**.

## Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to ensure they are in good ecological condition
- Where appropriate, encourage the restoration of hedgerows with typical species, by gapping up and planting accompanying hedgerow trees and adopting appropriate cutting regimes
- Conserve and enhance stone wall field boundaries
- Protect features of historic interest, particularly those that are landmarks in the landscape
- Conserve the rural character of the villages and farmsteads and limit the urban influence across the landscape type
- Conserve open views from important viewpoints

## Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape

- Ensure new development is informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality and contributes, as appropriate, to the conservation of the landscape, having regard to visual impact and local vernacular
- Conserve the overall rural character of the small-scale landscape
- Retain hedges and use them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores
- Ensure that development, including residential, infrastructure and renewable energy developments are sensitively located and do not detract from landmark features
- Avoid locating development, including residential and solar farms and associated sub-station interchanges on prominent hill tops so rooftops do not interrupt prominent skylines
- Ensure development is proportionate to the size of the existing settlement
- Ensure new development reflects the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings and make use of traditional/local building materials
- Ensure proposals for diversification and conversion of existing buildings such as farm buildings retain the overriding rural and historic character of the farmsteads

- Ensure new developments connect with existing PROW within development layout
- Encourage the inclusion of greenspace in new developments to provide opportunities for engaging with nature and fostering community spirit
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
- The colour of agricultural buildings should be selected by considering where it is located, and the predominant tones of surrounding vegetation, relevant local materials and the sky
- Incorporate the principles of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), for example rainwater harvesting, incorporating green space and areas of unsealed soil into development to allow water infiltration
- Minimise and reduce light pollution where possible

## **A1: Mow Cop Gritstone Uplands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Elevated outcrop of gritstone with landmark Mow Cop castle at the top, providing strong intervisibility with the northern region of the Study Area
- Historic small-scale pastoral farmland fieldscapes around the settlement fringes
- The generally linear development of Mow Cop, characterised by historic gritstone building materials

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

There are no additional landscape sensitivities specific to this character area

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic pastoral farmland including historic field patterns and thick hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve the extensive, panoramic views from Mow Cop Castle and its strong presence in local views
- Conserve and enhance the use of historic gritstone building materials

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE B: COALFIELD FARMLANDS**

### **Character Description**

See the relevant character description in Part 1.

### **Key Landscape Features**

- Distinctive undulating topography with small, prominent hills, particularly through the north of the LCT
- Small-scale, pastoral fields with thick hedgerow boundaries
- Large areas of restored landscape as country parks with woodland
- The Wedgwood Monument is a prominent landmark, particularly visible across the southern part of the LCT

### **Forces for Change**

- Development pressures, particularly for new housing/employment sites on the edge of the urban area that would result in urban expansion, and could lead to loss of recreational, pastoral and wooded landscapes
- Development pressures for new housing that would affect the rural character of the existing village settlements and could result in coalescence of settlements, particularly along the main transport routes
- Climate change resulting in adaptation of agricultural practices and land use change that could increase pressure on priority habitats
- Climate change resulting in extreme weather events such as drought that could lead to loss of ancient and veteran trees particularly in the hedgerows and ancient woodlands, resulting in a decline in woodland cover
- Fragmentation of the pastoral landscape due to pressures to shift to larger scale livestock rearing/dairy farming, resulting in changes in land use
- Loss and alteration to the characteristic farmsteads as a result of urbanisation and pressure to alter farming techniques and products
- Increase in demand for housing and infrastructure would result in an increase in demand for raw materials, which could increase productivity of existing extraction sites and potential need to extend sites or develop new ones
- Climate change could result in pressure for changes to land use including creation of new habitats that would alter the characteristics of the landscape
- Increasing requirement to locate renewable energy developments within the rural landscape that would alter the land uses and introduce potentially prominent modern features in the rural landscape
- The legacy of coal mining, particularly around Newcastle-under-Lyme, could lead to issues with contamination of groundwater and surface water due to rising mine water

## Landscape Condition

The Coalfield Farmlands LCT is an altered landscape. Former extractive sites have largely been sensitively restored and form a network of wildlife sites, country parks and woodland particularly in the south of the LCT. There are pockets of intact ancient pastoral farmland and small areas of ancient woodland. The landscape is influenced by the adjoining urban areas and has become fragmented in places, particularly in proximity to the urban edges. The overall condition of the landscape is perceived to be **moderate**.

## Strength of Character

The Coalfield Farmlands LCT has an overall **strong** character, particularly in the north where there is a stronger sense of time depth associated with the small-scale pastoral fields and pattern of hedgerow/tree vegetation, and characteristic undulating topography with small, prominent hills. There is a greater urban influence through the central and southern parts of the LCT, with pockets of historic pastoral fields.

## Key Landscape Sensitivities

- Pockets of ancient pastoral farmland with thick, mixed species hedgerows and hedgerow oaks
- Network of country parks, nature sites and woodland
- Landmark features that are remnants of the mining heritage

## Landscape Guidelines

The recommended overall management objective for the Coalfield Farmlands LCT should be to **enhance** the landscape as a whole, particularly through restoration of former extractive sites, and to reduce the prominence of urban development. Important surviving landscape features such as historic pastoral farmland and features of the mining past should be **conserved**.

## Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic pastoral farmland including the thick hedgerow boundaries
- Protect features of historic interest, particularly those that are landmarks in the landscape
- Conserve and enhance existing ancient and semi-natural woodland, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to ensure they are in good ecological condition
- Conserve and enhance permanent pasture by encouraging sustainable grazing regimes with appropriate stocking levels and adopting low input fertiliser systems to enhance biodiversity and preserve the pastoral character
- Restore, manage and protect rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetland habitats from pollution (including flood plain grazing marsh and wet woodland)
- Identify, conserve and consider opportunities for restoring wetland habitats such as wet woodland, grazing marsh, grasslands and lowland meadows
- Enhance access to woodland as part of woodland management, to increase opportunities for quiet recreation
- Manage recreational landscapes to provide multifunctional, inclusive spaces, enhance connectivity and maximise biodiversity benefits
- Develop and manage transitional scrub communities between woodland and adjoining habitats to buffer and soften the transition

- Conserve and enhance the mosaic habitats on previously developed land, as part of the understanding of the industrial heritage and for the unique habitat they provide
- Integrate semi-natural habitats into arable systems, through field margins and buffer strips adjacent to watercourses, and by providing habitat for farmland birds, retaining in-field ponds and riparian woodland
- Conserve the rural character of the villages and farmsteads and limit the urban influence across the landscape type
- Conserve open views towards important features including Mow Cop and the Wedgwood Monument

### **Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape**

- Ensure new development is informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality and contributes, as appropriate, to the conservation of the landscape, having regard to visual impact and local vernacular
- Conserve the overall rural character with rural villages, farms and hamlets linked by rural roads
- Retain hedges and use them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows and other tree planting to help integrate development
- Integrate water features such as streams and ponds into new developments
- Ensure that development, including residential, infrastructure and renewable energy developments are sensitively located and do not detract from landmark features
- Avoid locating development, including residential and solar farms and associated sub-station interchanges on prominent hill tops so that they do not interrupt skylines or become prominent on hillsides
- Ensure village extensions maintain a gap between the separate villages, to avoid further coalescence and urbanisation
- Ensure new development reflects the form, scale and proportions of the existing settlement and vernacular buildings and make use of traditional/local building materials
- Ensure proposals for diversification and conversion of farm buildings retains the overriding rural and historic character of the farmsteads
- Ensure new developments connect with existing PROW within development layout
- Encourage the inclusion of greenspace in new developments to provide opportunities for engaging with nature and fostering community spirit
- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads in village cores by low brick walls and hedges as appropriate
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
- The colour of agricultural buildings should be selected by considering where it is located, and the predominant tones of surrounding vegetation, relevant local materials and the sky
- Incorporate the principles of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), for example rainwater harvesting, incorporating green space and areas of unsealed soil into development to allow water infiltration
- Minimise and reduce light pollution where possible



## **B1: North Kidsgrove Coalfield Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Distinctive undulating landform with small streams in valleys
- Ancient field pattern
- Urban influences associated with the northern edge of Kidsgrove
- Open views across the undulating landscape, including towards the distinctive hill top folly at Mow Cop

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Well vegetated streams
- Acid grassland and heath mosaic at Dale Green
- Long, open views across the undulating landscape towards Mow Cop

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Restore lowland heathland from conifer plantations by expanding and buffering isolated patches of heathland

## **B2: East Kidsgrove Coalfield Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Prominent, undulating landform
- Pastoral farmland with a generally small-scale, largely irregular field pattern
- Well maintained hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Narrow, sunken lanes
- Urban influences associated with the eastern fringe of Kidsgrove, western edge of Biddulph and northern edge of Newcastle-under-Lyme, as well as scattered and ribbon development within the LCA

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Long, open views across the undulating landscape towards Mow Cop

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

There are no additional landscape guidelines specific to this character area.

### **B3: South Kidsgrove Coalfield Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Undulating landform with a small-scale, ancient pastoral field pattern
- Former mining landscape with mining heritage visible in the landscape as disused shafts
- Pattern of woodland including ancient woodland
- Recreational value of PROW, National Cycle Route 5, Bathpool Park and a ski slope
- Influenced by the urban edges of Kidsgrove and Newcastle-under-Lyme, as well as transport infrastructure
- Long, open views across pastoral farmland with urban backdrops
- Skylines feature the landmark Wedgwood Monument, but are broken elsewhere by a telecommunications mast, electricity pylons and large industrial buildings

#### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Ancient woodland
- Ponds relating to former mining activity
- Recreational pressure
- Long, open views from hilltops including towards the Wedgwood Monument

#### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

#### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Ensure land developed for recreation enhances existing landscape features, creates links between villages and recreational assets and is in keeping with the rural character

## **B4: Apedale Coalfield Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Undulating landform
- Former coal mining landscape with several areas restored as country parks characterised by woodland and ponds that are used for recreation
- Distinctive pattern of woodland, including ancient woodland, secondary woodland and plantation woodland
- Pockets of ancient pastoral farmland bound by thick, mixed species hedgerows and scattered hedgerow oaks
- Urban influences associated with the western edge of Newcastle-under-Lyme and several former mining villages
- Long views across undulating wooded countryside, and to the east over Newcastle-under-Lyme

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Distinctive pattern of woodland including ancient woodland
- Ponds relating to former mining activity
- Recreational and ecological value of restored mining sites such as Bateswood Local Nature Reserve and Apedale Country Park
- Long, open views from hilltops and the edge of settlement

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and enhance ponds
- Ensure land developed for recreation enhances existing landscape features, creates links between villages and recreational assets and is in keeping with the rural character
- Conserve long, open views from the edges of settlement

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE C: ANCIENT REDLAND FARMLANDS**

### **Character Description**

See the relevant character description in Part 1.

### **Key Landscape Features**

- Distinctive strongly undulating landform with open, often long distance views across ancient farmland
- Pockets of remnant historic parkland
- Well treed stream corridors and field ponds
- Ancient pastoral farmland with distinctive mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees and scattered, small blocks of broadleaved, plantation and ancient woodland
- Isolated red brick farmsteads and rural villages connected by narrow sunken lanes

### **Forces for Change**

- Development pressures, particularly for new housing/employment sites on the edge of the urban area that would result in urban expansion, and could lead to loss of recreational, pastoral and wooded landscapes
- Development pressures for new housing that would affect the rural character of the existing village settlements and could result in coalescence of settlements, particularly along the main transport routes
- Climate change resulting in adaptation of agricultural practices and land use change that could increase pressure on priority habitats
- Climate change resulting in extreme weather events such as drought that could lead to loss of ancient and veteran trees particularly in the hedgerows and ancient woodlands, resulting in a decline in woodland cover
- Climate change could result in pressure for changes to land use including creation of new habitats that would alter the characteristics of the landscape
- Climate change could lead to increased risk of flooding along watercourses, and/or more frequent drought periods that would alter river flows and related ecological networks
- Intensification of farming leading to drainage and improvement of permanent pasture and meadows on the floodplain and loss of riparian vegetation and hedgerows
- Fragmentation of the pastoral landscape due to pressures to shift to larger scale livestock rearing/dairy farming, resulting in changes in land use
- Loss and alteration to the characteristic farmsteads as a result of modernisation and pressure to alter farming techniques and products
- Increase in demand for housing and infrastructure would result in an increase in demand for raw materials, which could increase productivity of existing extraction sites and potential need to extend sites or develop new ones
- Increasing requirement to locate renewable energy developments within the rural landscape that would alter the land uses and introduce potentially prominent modern features in the rural landscape
- The legacy of coal mining, particularly around Newcastle-under-Lyme, could lead to issues with contamination of groundwater and surface water due to rising mine water
- The route of HS2 will introduce new, incongruous, engineered elements including embankments, viaducts and cuttings into the landscape, as well as the noise and movement of future high speed trains

## Landscape Condition

The Ancient Redland Farmlands LCT is a relatively intact rural landscape, comprising ancient pastoral farmland with generally strong hedgerows and pockets of ancient woodland. The landscape is generally well cared for. The overall condition of the landscape is perceived to be **good**.

## Strength of Character

The Ancient Redland Farmlands LCT has an overall **strong** character, due to the distinctive topography, the strong sense of time depth associated with ancient pastoral fields, the pattern of hedgerow vegetation and dispersed, rural settlement pattern.

## Key Landscape Sensitivities

- Well treed stream corridors and scattered field ponds
- Ancient pastoral farmland with mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Dispersed pockets of broadleaved, plantation and ancient woodland
- Dispersed settlement pattern of rural villages, hamlets and farmsteads
- Open, often long distance views across rolling farmland
- Generally strong rural character

## Landscape Guidelines

The recommended overall management objective for the Ancient Redland Farmlands LCT should be to **conserve** the landscape as a whole, particularly the ancient pastoral farmland, woodland and hedgerow network, as well as the dispersed rural settlement pattern and generally strong rural character.

## Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic pastoral farmland including historic field patterns and thick hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve and enhance existing ancient and semi-natural woodland, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to ensure they are in good ecological condition
- Where appropriate, encourage the restoration of hedgerows with typical species, by gapping up and planting accompanying hedgerow trees and adopting appropriate cutting regimes
- Conserve and enhance permanent pasture by encouraging sustainable grazing regimes with appropriate stocking levels and adopting low input fertiliser systems to enhance biodiversity and preserve the pastoral character
- Restore, manage and protect rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetland habitats from pollution (including flood plain grazing marsh and wet woodland)
- Identify, conserve and consider opportunities for restoring wetland habitats such as wet woodland, grazing marsh, grasslands and lowland meadows
- Enhance access to woodland as part of woodland management, to increase opportunities for quiet recreation
- Manage recreational landscapes to provide multifunctional, inclusive spaces, enhance connectivity and maximise biodiversity benefits
- Develop and manage transitional scrub communities between woodland and adjoining habitats to buffer and soften the transition

- Integrate semi-natural habitats into arable systems, through field margins and buffer strips adjacent to watercourses, and by providing habitat for farmland birds, retaining in-field ponds and riparian woodland
- Protect features of historic interest, particularly those that are landmarks in the landscape
- Conserve the rural character of the villages and farmsteads and limit the urban influence across the landscape type
- Conserve open views from important viewpoints
- Plant trees around settlements, along motorways and major highway corridors to screen the visually intrusive urban areas from the surrounding landscape

### **Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape**

- Ensure new development is informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality and contributes, as appropriate, to the conservation of the landscape, having regard to visual impact and local vernacular
- Conserve the overall rural character with rural villages, farms and hamlets linked by rural roads
- Retain hedges and use them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows and other tree planting, using locally appropriate mixes, to help integrate development
- Integrate water features such as streams and ponds into new developments
- Ensure that development, including residential, infrastructure and renewable energy developments are sensitively located and do not detract from landmark features
- Avoid locating development, including residential and solar farms and associated sub-station interchanges on prominent hill tops so rooftops do not interrupt prominent skylines
- Ensure village extensions maintain a gap between the separate villages, to avoid further coalescence and urbanisation
- Maintain linear form of settlements and avoid closes and cul-de-sacs where possible
- Ensure new development reflects the form, scale and proportions of the existing settlement and vernacular buildings and make use of traditional/local building materials
- Ensure proposals for diversification and conversion of existing buildings such as farm buildings retain the overriding rural and historic character of the farmsteads
- Ensure new developments connect with existing PROW within development layout
- Encourage the inclusion of greenspace in new developments to provide opportunities for engaging with nature and fostering community spirit
- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads in village cores by low brick walls and hedges as appropriate
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
- The colour of agricultural buildings should be selected by considering where it is located, and the predominant tones of surrounding vegetation, relevant local materials and the sky
- Incorporate the principles of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), for example rainwater harvesting, incorporating green space and areas of unsealed soil into development to allow water infiltration
- Minimise and reduce light pollution where possible

## **C1: Madeley Ancient Redland Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Rolling landform
- Generally small-scale pastoral landscape but in places arable fields have been enlarged and hedgerows removed
- Large farmsteads and remnant parkland scattered across the hills that encompass Madeley
- Deciduous ancient woodland located on steep slopes and on outcrops of rock
- Urban influences including the M6, West Coast Mainline and vertical features often interrupt the skyline and locally erode the rural character and sense of tranquillity
- Locally designated ecological network, largely of woodland and grassland
- Recreational value of PROW, Bateswood Nature Reserve and Onneley Golf Club

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Regionally valued RIGS
- Remnant parkland at Old Madeley Manor

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and enhance RIGS
- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic parkland farmland including grassland, woodland and individual trees



## **C2: Keele Ancient Redland Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Undulating elevated landform
- Small to medium sized woodlands, often on steep slopes
- Large arable fields in the south with hedgerows removed
- Localised urban influences include Keele University, the urban edge of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the M6
- Scattered field ponds
- Strong time depth associated with parkland at Keele Hall
- Panoramic views over Newcastle-under-Lyme in the north

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Historic parkland associated with Keele Hall
- Woodland on steep slopes

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic parkland including grassland, woodland and individual trees
- Conserve and enhance woodland on steep slopes

### **C3: Whitmore Ancient Redland Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Undulating landform incised by the valleys of small streams
- Sparsely settled landscape of dispersed farmsteads
- Distinctive wooded valley slopes in the west
- Mixed farming with small-scale pastoral fields and large-scale arable fields, interspersed with woodland and parkland
- Scattered field ponds and a distinctive network of fishing ponds in the south
- Generally open, long distance views enclosed by distant landform and woodland

#### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Time depth associated with rural settlement and remnant parkland features at Butterton including the Hall
- Wooded valley slopes

#### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

#### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic parkland including grassland, woodland and individual trees
- Conserve and enhance woodland on steep slopes

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE D: ANCIENT CLAY FARMLANDS

### Character Description

See the relevant character description in Part 1

### Key Landscape Features

- Internationally and nationally important meres and mosses
- Strong hedgerow patterns and mature hedgerow oaks
- Small woodlands, including ancient woodland
- Well treed stream corridors
- Dispersed settlement pattern, linked by narrow, often sunken winding lanes

### Forces for Change

- Development pressures for new housing that would affect the rural character of the existing village settlements and could result in coalescence of settlements, particularly along the main transport routes
- Climate change resulting in adaptation of agricultural practices and land use change that could increase pressure on priority habitats
- Climate change resulting in extreme weather events such as drought that could lead to loss of ancient and veteran trees particularly in the hedgerows and ancient woodlands, resulting in a decline in woodland cover
- Fragmentation of the pastoral landscape due to pressures to shift to larger scale livestock rearing/dairy farming, resulting in changes in land use
- Loss and alteration to the characteristic farmsteads as a result of modernisation and pressure to alter farming techniques and products
- Increase in demand for housing and infrastructure would result in an increase in demand for raw materials, which could increase productivity of existing extraction sites and potential need to extend sites or develop new ones
- Climate change could result in pressure for changes to land use including creation of new habitats that would alter the characteristics of the landscape
- Increasing requirement to locate renewable energy developments within the rural landscape that would alter the land uses and introduce potentially prominent modern features in the rural landscape
- Climate change could lead to increased risk of flooding along watercourse channels, and/or more frequent drought periods that would alter river flows and related ecological networks

### Landscape Condition

The Ancient Clay Farmlands LCT is a relatively intact landscape, comprising small-scale ancient pastoral farmland with generally strong hedgerows and pockets of ancient woodland. The landscape is rural and generally well cared for with occasional urban influences from the road network and larger villages in the east. The overall condition of the landscape is perceived to be **good**.

## Strength of Character

The Ancient Clay Farmlands LCT has an overall **strong** character, due to the strong rural character, sense of time depth associated with ancient pastoral fields and the dense pattern of hedgerow vegetation.

### Key Landscape Sensitivities

- Internationally and nationally important meres and mosses
- Strong hedgerow patterns and mature hedgerow oaks
- Small woodlands, including ancient woodlands
- Well treed stream corridors
- Dispersed settlement pattern
- Strong rural character

### Landscape Guidelines

The recommended overall management objective for the Ancient Clay Farmlands LCT should be to **conserve** the landscape, in particular the ancient pastoral farmland, woodland and hedgerow network, the dispersed settlement pattern and strong rural character.

### Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance areas of historic pastoral farmland including the thick hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve and enhance existing ancient and semi-natural woodland, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to ensure they are in good ecological condition
- Where appropriate, encourage the restoration of hedgerows with typical species, by gapping up and planting accompanying hedgerow trees and adopting appropriate cutting regimes
- Conserve and enhance permanent pasture by encouraging sustainable grazing regimes with appropriate stocking levels and adopting low input fertiliser systems to enhance biodiversity and preserve the pastoral character
- Restore, manage and protect rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetland habitats from pollution (including flood plain grazing marsh and wet woodland)
- Identify, conserve and consider opportunities for restoring wetland habitats such as wet woodland, grazing marsh, grasslands, lowland meadows, meres and mosses
- Integrating semi-natural habitats into arable systems, through field margins and buffer strips adjacent to watercourses, and providing habitat for farmland birds, retaining in-field ponds and riparian woodland
- Enhance access to woodland as part of woodland management, to increase opportunities for quiet recreation
- Develop and manage transitional scrub communities between woodland and adjoining habitats to buffer and soften the transition
- Protect features of historic interest, particularly those that are landmarks in the landscape
- Conserve the rural character of the villages and limit the urban influences

### **Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape**

- Ensure new development is informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality and contributes, as appropriate, to the conservation of the landscape, having regard to visual impact and local vernacular
- Conserve the overall rural character with rural villages, farms and hamlets linked by rural roads
- Retain hedges and use them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores
- Integrate water features such as streams and ponds into new developments
- Ensure that development, including residential, infrastructure and renewable energy developments are sensitively located and do not detract from landmark features
- Ensure rooftops don't break the treed skyline
- Ensure village extensions maintain a gap between the separate villages, to avoid further coalescence and urbanisation
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows and other tree planting to help integrate development
- Ensure new development reflects the form, scale and proportions of the existing settlement and vernacular buildings and make use of traditional/local building materials
- Ensure new developments connect with existing PROW within development layout
- Encourage the inclusion of greenspace in new developments to provide opportunities for engaging with nature and fostering community spirit
- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads in village cores by low brick walls and hedges as appropriate
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
- Ensure proposals for diversification and conversion of farm buildings retains the overriding rural and historic character of the farmsteads
- The colour of agricultural buildings should be selected by considering where it is located, and the predominant tones of surrounding vegetation, relevant local materials and the sky
- Incorporate the principles of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), for example rainwater harvesting, incorporating green space and areas of unsealed soil into development to allow water infiltration
- Minimise and reduce light pollution where possible

## **D1: Audley Ancient Clay Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Ancient, pastoral farmland with generally dense hedges and hedgerow trees
- Scattered small field ponds
- Cluster of large, nucleated villages on the south-eastern boundary with settlement elsewhere comprising scattered historic farmsteads
- Elevated wooded skylines to the west, including the landmark Wedgwood Monument
- Open views across rolling countryside, punctuated by trees

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Strong sense of time depth associated with Castle Hill Motte Audley
- High density of small field ponds
- Fragments of grassland and heathland habitats

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and consider opportunities for restoring and enhancing field ponds
- Restore lowland heathland from conifer plantations by expanding and buffering isolated patches of heathland

## **D2: Betley Ancient Clay Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Strong parkland character associated with Betley
- Settled rural landscape with historic, linear villages and scattered historic farmsteads
- Internationally and nationally important nature value associated with meres and mosses
- Small-scale views across undulating arable and pastoral farmland towards treed horizons

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Historic linear villages in the west
- Historic parkland character associated with Betley

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Maintain linear form of settlements and avoid closes and cul-de-sacs where possible
- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic parkland farmland including grassland, woodland and individual trees

### **D3: Wrinehill Ancient Clay Farmlands Landscape Character**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Small-scale pastoral farmland interspersed with blocks of woodland
- Well treed landscape with strong hedgerow fields and well treed streams
- Sparsely settled, largely inaccessible rural landscape
- Views generally enclosed by trees, with distant views towards Crewe from elevated locations
- Urban features on the skyline in the north including overhead lines for the West Coast Mainline, and electricity pylons contrast with the otherwise strong rural character

#### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Distant views towards Crewe from elevated points

#### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

#### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve long distance, open views from elevated locations



## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE E: SANDSTONE HILLS & FARMLANDS**

### **Character Description**

See the relevant character description in Part 1.

### **Key Landscape Features**

- Ancient woodland and large coniferous plantation accompanied by fragments of heathland on elevated landform
- Scattered areas of parkland associated with landed estates
- Pockets of intact hedgerow pattern with hedgerow oaks associated with small-scale, pastoral fields
- Well treed stream corridors
- Generally strong rural character
- Ancient narrow sunken lanes with sandstone hedgebanks

### **Forces for Change**

- Development pressures for new housing that would affect the rural character of the existing village settlements and could result in coalescence of settlements, particularly along the main transport routes
- Climate change resulting in adaptation of agricultural practices and land use change that could increase pressure on priority habitats
- Climate change resulting in extreme weather events such as drought that could lead to loss of ancient and veteran trees particularly in the hedgerows and ancient woodlands, resulting in a decline in woodland cover
- Climate change could result in pressure for changes to land use including creation of new habitats that would alter the characteristics of the landscape
- Climate change could lead to increased risk of flooding along watercourses, and/or more frequent drought periods that would alter river flows and related ecological networks
- Intensification of farming leading to drainage and improvement of permanent pasture and meadows on the floodplain and loss of riparian vegetation and hedgerows
- Fragmentation of the pastoral landscape due to pressures to shift to larger scale livestock rearing/dairy farming, resulting in changes in land use
- Loss and alteration to the characteristic farmsteads as a result of modernisation and pressure to alter farming techniques and products
- Increase in demand for housing and infrastructure would result in an increase in demand for raw materials, which could increase productivity of existing extraction sites and potential need to extend sites or develop new ones
- Increasing requirement to locate renewable energy developments within the rural landscape that would alter the land uses and introduce potentially prominent modern features in the rural landscape
- The route of HS2 will introduce new, incongruous, engineered elements including embankments, viaducts and cuttings into the landscape, as well as the noise and movement of future high speed trains

## Landscape Condition

The Sandstone Hills & Farmland LCT comprises a combination of large, arable fields with internal field boundaries removed, and smaller, more intimate pastoral landscapes with strong networks of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, interspersed by plantation woodland, historic parklands and ancient woodlands of varying size. Settlement is generally small-scale, but some villages have experienced small-scale expansion, which is generally well-integrated into the landscape. The overall condition of the landscape is perceived to be **good**.

## Strength of Character

The Sandstone Hills & Farmland LCT has an overall **strong** character, due to the characteristic undulating topography which forms distinctive, rounded hills, with intimate valleys and prominent, hilltop coniferous plantation woodlands, interspersed by historic estates and pockets of small-scale pastoral fields with strong hedgerow networks and hedgerow trees.

## Key Landscape Sensitivities

- Ancient woodland and large coniferous plantation accompanied by fragments of heathland on elevated landform
- Scattered areas of parkland associated with landed estates
- Pockets of intact hedgerow pattern with hedgerow oaks associated with small-scale, pastoral fields
- Well treed stream corridors
- Generally strong rural character
- Settled rural landscape with settlement linked by ancient narrow sunken lanes with sandstone hedgebanks

## Landscape Guidelines

The recommended overall management objective for the Sandstone Hills and Farmlands LCT should be to **conserve** the landscape, particularly through conservation and restoration of woodland, parkland, hedgerows and heathland. Where fields have been enlarged and hedgerows lost, these should be **enhanced**.

## Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic pastoral farmland including historic field patterns and thick hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve and enhance existing ancient and semi-natural woodland, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to ensure they are in good ecological condition
- Where appropriate, encourage the restoration of hedgerows with typical species, by gapping up and planting accompanying hedgerow trees and adopting appropriate cutting regimes
- Conserve and enhance permanent pasture by encouraging sustainable grazing regimes with appropriate stocking levels and adopting low input fertiliser systems to enhance biodiversity and preserve the pastoral character
- Restore, manage and protect rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetland habitats from pollution (including flood plain grazing marsh and wet woodland)
- Identify, conserve and consider opportunities for restoring wetland habitats such as wet woodland, grazing marsh and grasslands

- Enhance access to woodland as part of woodland management, to increase opportunities for quiet recreation
- Develop and manage transitional scrub communities between woodland and adjoining habitats to buffer and soften the transition
- Integrate semi-natural habitats into arable systems, through field margins and buffer strips adjacent to watercourses, and by providing habitat for farmland birds, retaining in-field ponds and riparian woodland
- Protect features of historic interest, particularly those that are landmarks in the landscape
- Conserve the rural character of the villages and farmsteads and limit the urban influence across the landscape type
- Restore lowland heathland from conifer plantations by expanding and buffering isolated patches of heathland

### **Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape**

- Ensure new development is informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality and contributes, as appropriate, to the conservation of the landscape, having regard to visual impact and local vernacular
- Conserve the overall rural character with dispersed villages, farms and cottages linked by rural roads
- Retain hedges and use them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows and other tree planting, using locally appropriate mixes, to help integrate development
- Integrate water features such as streams and ponds, into new developments
- Ensure that development, including residential, infrastructure and renewable energy developments are sensitively located and do not detract from landmark features
- Avoid locating development, including residential and solar farms and associated sub-station interchanges on prominent hill tops so rooftops do not interrupt prominent skylines
- Ensure village extensions maintain a gap between the separate villages to avoid coalescence and urbanisation
- Maintain linear form of settlements and avoid closes and cul-de-sacs where possible
- Ensure new development reflects the form, scale and proportions of the existing settlement and vernacular buildings and make use of traditional/local building materials
- Ensure proposals for diversification and conversion of existing buildings such as farm buildings retain the overriding rural and historic character of the farmsteads
- Ensure new developments connect with existing PROW within development layout
- Encourage the inclusion of greenspace in new developments to provide opportunities for engaging with nature and fostering community spirit
- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads in village cores by low brick walls and hedges as appropriate
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
- The colour of agricultural buildings should be selected by considering where it is located, and the predominant tones of surrounding vegetation, relevant local materials and the sky
- Incorporate the principles of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), for example rainwater harvesting, incorporating green space and areas of unsealed soil into development to allow water infiltration
- Minimise and reduce light pollution where possible

## **E1: Chapel Chorlton Sandstone Hills & Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Undulating landform with low, rounded hills and localised steep slopes
- Low density of small, scattered woodlands
- Network of locally designated habitats including woodland, floodplain grazing marsh, lowland raised bog and good quality semi improved grassland
- Settled landscape with nucleated and linear villages and isolated farmsteads
- Generally strong rural character and strong sense of tranquillity, locally eroded by the West Coast Mainline, A51 and A53
- Long, open views punctuated by trees from high points

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Long, open views from high points

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve open views across the landscape

## **E2: Maer Sandstone Hills & Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Undulating landform with localised, rounded hills north of the River Tern Valley
- Prominent wooded hills, including a large coniferous plantation, smaller deciduous woodlands and ancient woodland
- Arable fields are generally large, with internal boundaries removed
- Pockets of small-scale pastoral fields with strong hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees
- Strong sense of time depth associated with historic parkland at Maer Hall
- Important ecological network of woodland, grassland and wetland, including Maer Pond SSSI and The Bogs SBI
- Settled rural landscape with small villages and isolated farmsteads
- Generally strong rural character and strong sense of tranquillity, locally eroded by the A51 and A53
- Long views framed by landform and woodland

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Fragments of heathland within the Maer Hills
- The valley of the River Tern, including important habitats along it
- Pockets of small-scale pastoral fields with strong hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees
- Strong sense of time depth associated with historic parkland at Maer Hall
- Long views framed by landform and woodland

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Restore lowland heathland from conifer plantations by expanding and buffering isolated patches of heathland within the Maer Hills
- Conserve and enhance the route of the River Tern, including habitats at Maer Pool and The Bogs
- Conserve framed views across the landscape

### **E3: Loggerheads Sandstone Hills & Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Rolling landscape rising to a high point within the hilltop village of Loggerheads
- Scattered medium to large blocks of woodland, including plantation woodland
- High density of locally designated sites with natural value including woodland, and grassland
- Settled rural landscape with a large, expanded village and outlying, historic villages and hamlets
- Long views across arable and pastoral farmland to the west

#### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Well treed settlement at Loggerheads
- Fragments of heathland
- Long views across arable and pastoral farmland to the west

#### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

#### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and enhance the wooded setting of Loggerheads
- Restore lowland heathland from conifer plantations by expanding and buffering isolated patches of heathland
- Conserve long views across the landscape

## **E4: Hales Sandstone Hills & Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Undulating landform forming rounded hills that fall away to the west
- Shallow valleys containing tree lined, sinuous streams
- Large areas of woodland, particularly in the east, that include plantation and ancient woodland, with high ecological value
- Woodland and hedgerow trees combine to create strong visual enclosure

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Fragments of lowland heathland
- Strong sense of visual enclosure
- Time depth, ecological and recreational value associated with the Shropshire Union Canal

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Restore lowland heathland from conifer plantations by expanding and buffering isolated patches of heathland
- Conserve the strong sense of visual enclosure by conserving and enhancing trees and woodlands
- Manage the canal network and its associated assets including hedgerows and towpaths to maximise biodiversity benefits, recreational and historical value

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE F: ANCIENT SANDSTONE FARMLANDS**

### **Character Description**

See the relevant character description in Part 1.

### **Key Landscape Features**

- Pockets of ancient pastoral farmland, with a well-defined, sub-regular field pattern with dense hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Hedgerow trees and riparian vegetation along streams create a well treed appearance
- Fragments of historic parkland
- Sparse settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, estate farms and occasional small rural hamlets
- Network of narrow lanes, often with hedge banks

### **Forces for Change**

- Development pressures for new housing that would affect the rural character of the existing village settlements and could result in coalescence of settlements, particularly along the main transport routes
- Climate change resulting in adaptation of agricultural practices and land use change that could increase pressure on priority habitats
- Climate change resulting in extreme weather events such as drought that could lead to loss of ancient and veteran trees particularly in the hedgerows and ancient woodlands, resulting in a decline in woodland cover
- Climate change could result in pressure for changes to land use including creation of new habitats that would alter the characteristics of the landscape
- Climate change could lead to increased risk of flooding along watercourse channels, and/or more frequent drought periods that would alter river flows and related ecological networks
- Intensification of farming leading to drainage and improvement of permanent pasture and meadows on the floodplain and loss of riparian vegetation and hedgerows
- Fragmentation of the pastoral landscape due to pressures to shift to larger scale livestock rearing/dairy farming, resulting in changes in land use
- Loss and alteration to the characteristic farmsteads as a result of modernisation and pressure to alter farming techniques and products
- Increase in demand for housing and infrastructure would result in an increase in demand for raw materials, which could increase productivity of existing extraction sites and potential need to extend sites or develop new ones
- Increasing requirement to locate renewable energy developments within the rural landscape that would alter the land uses and introduce potentially prominent modern features in the rural landscape



## Landscape Condition

The Ancient Sandstone Farmlands LCT is a landscape which has experienced some field enlargement and loss of internal hedgerows. There are pockets of intact, ancient pastoral farmland, and parkland and stream vegetation. The overall condition of the landscape is perceived to be **moderate**.

## Strength of Character

The Ancient Sandstone LCT has an overall **moderate** strength of character due to the distinct, gently undulating topography and enlarged, open arable fields. There are pockets of more intact landscape where there is a stronger sense of time depth associated with distinctive historic parkland, small-scale pastoral fields and a strong pattern of hedgerow/tree vegetation.

## Key Landscape Sensitivities

- Pockets of ancient pastoral farmland, with well-defined hedgerow boundaries
- Pockets of historic parkland
- Hedgerow trees and well treed small streams
- Sparse settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, estate farms and historic rural hamlets

## Landscape Guidelines

The recommended overall management objective for the Ancient Sandstone Farmlands LCT is to **enhance** the landscape, particularly through restoration of hedgerows and historic field patterns where they have been modified. Important surviving landscape features such as historic pastoral farmland and parkland should be **conserved**.

## Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic pastoral farmland including historic field patterns and thick hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve and enhance existing ancient and semi-natural woodland, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to ensure they are in good ecological condition
- Conserve and enhance areas of high quality, historic parkland including woodland, clumps of trees and specimen trees
- Where appropriate, encourage the restoration of hedgerows with typical species, by gapping up and planting accompanying hedgerow trees and adopting appropriate cutting regimes
- Conserve and enhance permanent pasture by encouraging sustainable grazing regimes with appropriate stocking levels and adopting low input fertiliser systems to enhance biodiversity and preserve the pastoral character
- Restore, manage and protect rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetland habitats from pollution (including flood plain grazing marsh and wet woodland)
- Identify, conserve and consider opportunities for restoring wetland habitats such as wet woodland, grazing marsh, grasslands and lowland meadows
- Develop and manage transitional scrub communities between woodland and adjoining habitats to buffer and soften the transition

- Integrate semi-natural habitats into arable systems, through field margins and buffer strips adjacent to watercourses, and by providing habitat for farmland birds, retaining in-field ponds and riparian woodland
- Protect features of historic interest, particularly those that are landmarks in the landscape
- Conserve the historic and rural character of the settlements and farmsteads and limit the urban influence across the landscape type

### **Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape**

- Ensure new development is informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality and contributes, as appropriate, to the conservation of the landscape, having regard to visual impact and local vernacular
- Conserve the overall rural character with sparse settlement, farms and cottages linked by rural roads
- Retain hedges and use them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows and other tree planting, using locally appropriate mixes, to help integrate development
- Integrate water features such as streams and ponds, into new developments
- Ensure that development, including residential, infrastructure and renewable energy developments are sensitively located and do not detract from landmark features
- Avoid locating development, including residential and solar farms and associated sub-station interchanges on prominent hill tops so rooftops do not interrupt prominent skylines
- Ensure village extensions maintain a gap between the separate villages, to avoid further coalescence and urbanisation
- Maintain linear form of settlements and avoid closes and cul-de-sacs where possible
- Ensure new development reflects the form, scale and proportions of the existing settlement and vernacular buildings and make use of traditional/local building materials
- Ensure proposals for diversification and conversion of existing buildings such as farm buildings retain the overriding rural and historic character of the farmsteads
- Ensure new developments connect with existing PROW within development layout
- Encourage the inclusion of greenspace in new developments to provide opportunities for engaging with nature and fostering community spirit
- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads in village cores by low brick walls and hedges as appropriate
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
- The colour of agricultural buildings should be selected by considering where it is located, and the predominant tones of surrounding vegetation, relevant local materials and the sky
- Incorporate the principles of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), for example rainwater harvesting, incorporating green space and areas of unsealed soil into development to allow water infiltration
- Minimise and reduce light pollution where possible

## **F1: Knighton Ancient Sandstone Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Mixed arable and pastoral farming
- Hedgerow trees, and riparian trees along the River Tern contribute to a well treed character with a strong sense of enclosure
- Strong pattern of regular, planned enclosure in the south
- Settled rural landscape with small, villages and a high density of scattered farmsteads

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Strong sense of enclosure

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and enhance existing trees and hedgerows to ensure they are in good ecological condition

## **F2: Oakley Ancient Sandstone Farmlands Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Productive arable farmland comprising large fields with internal boundaries removed
- Scattered woodlands, well treed streams and hedgerow trees create visual enclosure
- Time depth associated with pattern of historic parkland
- Sparsely settled rural landscape with a generally strong rural character

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Network of locally designated woodland and wetland
- Strong sense of visual enclosure by trees
- Time depth, ecological and recreational value associated with the Shropshire Union Canal

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Conserve and enhance existing trees and hedgerows to ensure they are in good ecological condition
- Manage the canal network and its associated assets including hedgerows and towpaths to maximise biodiversity benefits, recreational and historical value

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE G: RIVER VALLEY**

### **Character Description**

See the relevant character description in Part 1.

### **Key Landscape Features**

- Distinctive green corridor providing separation between urban areas
- Largely flat floodplain with steep, wooded valley sides to the west
- Meandering, tree lined river channel
- Pockets of pastoral farmland and meadowland with hedge and ditch boundaries

### **Forces for Change**

- Urban run-off affecting the water quality of the watercourse
- Intensification of farming leading to drainage and improvement of permanent pasture and meadows on the floodplain and loss of riparian vegetation and hedgerows
- Development pressures, particularly for new housing/employment sites on the edge of the urban area that would result in urban expansion, and could lead to loss of recreational, pastoral and wooded landscapes
- Potential changes in farming practices including loss of livestock with remaining pastures and meadows no longer being grazed, with consequential scrub encroachment
- Development pressures for new housing that could result in coalescence of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent
- Recreational pressures which could result in changing land use and fragmentation of remaining pockets of pastoral landscape
- Climate change resulting in adaptation of agricultural practices and land use change that could increase pressure on priority habitats
- Climate change resulting in extreme weather events such as drought that could lead to loss of ancient and veteran trees particularly in the hedgerows and ancient woodlands, resulting in a decline in woodland cover
- Fragmentation of the pastoral landscape due to pressures to shift to larger scale livestock rearing/dairy farming, resulting in changes in land use
- Climate change could result in pressure for changes to land use including creation of new habitats that would alter the characteristics of the landscape
- Increasing requirement to locate renewable energy developments within the rural landscape
- Climate change could lead to increased risk of flooding along the river valley, and/or more frequent drought periods that would alter the river flows and related ecological networks

## Landscape Condition

The River Valley LCT is an altered landscape. The landscape is influenced by the urban areas to the east and west and has become fragmented in places. A range of recreational land uses form a network of urban parks, sports facilities and woodland, with small pockets of intact ancient farmland and ancient woodland. The overall condition of the landscape is perceived to be **moderate**.

## Strength of Character

The River Valley LCT has an overall **moderate** character, particularly in the north where there is a stronger urban character. However the river valley is a distinctive, well treed green corridor which contrasts with the surrounding urban areas with localised prominent landform and pockets of ancient woodland and ancient farmland.

## Key Landscape Sensitivities

- Green corridor forming an approach to Newcastle-under-Lyme from the south
- The well treed Lyme Brook, its floodplain and associated ponds
- Steeply sloping landform
- Ancient woodland on the valley sides
- Network of urban parks, local nature sites and woodland

## Landscape Guidelines

The recommended overall management objective for the River Valley LCT should be to **conserve** the distinctive, well treed green corridor. This will include management of key features including the floodplain, riparian trees, woodland and pockets of ancient pastoral farmland. There are opportunities to **enhance** the management and restoration of meadowland and grassland, and for replanting and management of hedgerows and woodland.

## Guidance for Landscape Management

- Manage and protect the important river valley landscape by maintaining the mosaic of riparian pasture and woodlands
- Conserve and enhance areas of historic pastoral farmland including the thick hedgerow boundaries
- Conserve and enhance existing ancient and semi-natural woodland, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to ensure they are in good ecological condition
- Where appropriate, encourage the restoration of hedgerows with typical species, by gapping up and planting their accompanying hedgerow trees, adopting appropriate cutting regimes
- Conserve and enhance permanent pasture by encouraging sustainable grazing regimes with appropriate stocking levels and adopting low input fertiliser systems to enhance biodiversity and preserve the pastoral character
- Restore, manage and protect rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetland habitats from pollution (including flood plain grazing marsh and wet woodland)
- Identify, conserve and consider opportunities for restoring ponds and wetland habitats such as wet woodland, grazing marsh, grasslands and lowland meadows
- Enhance access to woodland as part of woodland management, to increase opportunities for quiet recreation

### **Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape**

- Ensure new development is informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality and contributes, as appropriate, to the conservation of the landscape, having regard to visual impact and local vernacular
- Ensure built form and associated changes to roads are well-integrated with the existing character and structure of settlements, and do not disrupt visual unity along the valley
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows and other tree planting to help integrate development
- Ensure urban extensions maintain a gap between the separate urban areas, to avoid further coalescence and urbanisation
- Ensure that development including residential, infrastructure and renewable energy developments are sensitively located and do not detract from landmark features
- Ensure new development reflects the form, scale and proportions of the existing settlement and vernacular buildings and make use of traditional/local building materials
- Ensure new developments connect with existing PROW within development layout
- Encourage the inclusion of greenspace in new developments to provide opportunities for engaging with nature and fostering community spirit
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
- Incorporate the principles of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), for example rainwater harvesting, incorporating green space and areas of unsealed soil into development to allow water infiltration
- Minimise and reduce light pollution where possible

## **G1: Lyme River Valley Landscape Character Area**

**Key Characteristics** (see character description in Part 1 for details)

- Steep sided valley sides, contrast with a relatively flat floodplain surrounding the Lyme Brook
- Well treed and wooded landscape, including ancient woodland on the valley sides
- High recreational value of sports facilities and an urban park
- Intimate landscape, generally visually enclosed by trees and woodlands, with glimpses of the surrounding urban area

### **Specific Landscape Sensitivities**

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Recreational and ecological value of woodland and urban parks

### **Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity**

See character description in Part 1 for details.

### **Specific Landscape Guidelines**

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Ensure land developed for recreation enhances existing landscape features, creates links between urban areas and recreational assets and is in keeping with the character





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