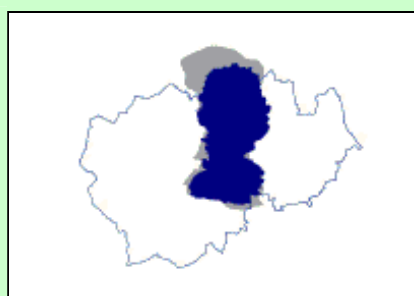


## The West Durham Coalfield



- The West Durham Coalfield
- The Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe
- Countryside Character Area
- County Boundary



### Key characteristics

- A rolling low upland landscape of ridges and valleys with a strong east-west grain.
- Soft and thinly bedded strata of Carboniferous sandstones, shales and coals give rise to gently rounded ridges with occasional steeper bluffs.
- Open ridges of pastoral farmland with regular grids of dry stone walls or gappy thorn hedges are crossed by straight enclosure roads and lanes. Fragments of heathland survive on infertile acidic soils.
- Valleys are broad with moderate slopes and occasional narrow floodplains. Agricultural land use is mixed with arable fields and improved pastures bounded by hawthorn hedges with scattered hedgerow oak and ash.
- Ancient oak woods are found in narrow steep sided denes, and along the banks of rivers and streams. Coniferous plantations are found on higher valley sides and ridges
- Old agricultural villages lie on ridge tops or valley floors. Buildings are of local sandstone with roofs of stone or welsh slate.
- Mining villages of Victorian terraced housing of brick or stone and welsh slate and later estate housing are scattered across the valleys and ridges.
- Occasional parklands and wooded estates surround small country houses.
- Relics of the mining industry include disused railway lines and viaducts, old coke ovens and small spoil heaps.
- Opencast coal workings are locally prominent features. Extensive areas of land have been opencast or reclaimed and their landscape often lacks maturity.
- The landscape is broad in scale, defined within the valleys by the enclosing ridgelines, with panoramic views from higher ridges across adjacent valleys.
- A landscape heavily influenced by development with a semi-rural or urban fringe character in places.

## Description

An upland fringe landscape of well-defined ridges and valleys running generally eastwards from the North Pennines to the lowland valleys of the Tyne and Wear. Its character is transitional between the two, with a strong upland fringe quality on higher ground in the west becoming less marked as the land falls and merges with the lowlands to the east.

The soft and thinly bedded sandstones, coal and shales of the coal measures give rise to gently rounded ridges with occasional steeper bluffs. The glacial drift covering the valley floors and lower slopes is incised in places by the small becks and burns which now occupy the broad valleys of once much larger glacial streams. The larger rivers have narrow floodplains.

The higher ridges and valley heads in the west are generally very open and pastoral, with large regular fields bounded by sparse overgrown hawthorn hedges, dry stone walls or fences with few hedgerow trees. Most of these fields were laid out in parliamentary enclosures of the C18th and contain isolated farms linked by straight roads and lanes. Fragments of heathland survive on infertile or waterlogged acidic soils. Woodland cover is generally low with scattered blocks or shelterbelts of conifers and narrow linear woodlands of oak and birch or alder following watercourses and incised valleys.

In the more sheltered valleys agricultural land use is mixed with an increased emphasis on cereal cropping. Hedges tend to be cut low and the pattern of the landscape changes much with the seasons. Tree and woodland cover varies considerably, the valleys being very open in places and heavily wooded or rich in hedgerow trees elsewhere. Ancient oak woods are found in steep sided denes and, together with alder woods, on the banks of rivers and streams. Larger plantations, often of pine or larch, are scattered across the valley sides. There are occasional parklands - some of medieval origins but more typically associated with small C19th country houses.

Old agricultural villages are scattered thinly across the landscape, often on ridge-top sites. Buildings are of local sandstone with roofs of stone flag, slate or clay pantile and are usually set around a village green. Mining and industrial towns and villages are more common and are concentrated in the north and east of the coalfield and along the valley of the Wear. Most of these settlements have a core of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing of brick or stone and welsh slate surrounded by estates of post-war public housing. They tend to occupy prominent sites on ridge tops and valley sides and are connected by a well-developed road network. Settlement edges are often abrupt or fringed by allotment gardens and pony paddocks.

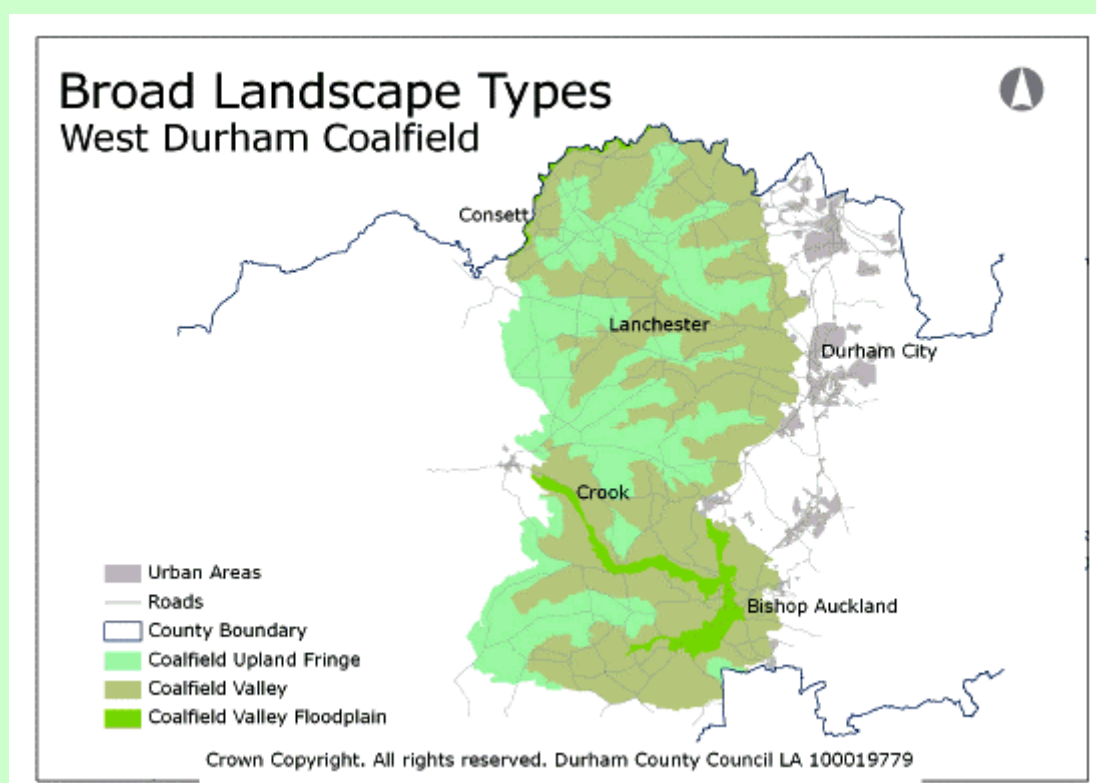
The wider landscape has been heavily influenced by coal mining. Some elements of the industrial landscape remain, notably railway lines, tramways, small waste heaps and old coke ovens, but many have been removed by land reclamation in recent years. Opencast mining has had a substantial impact on parts of the landscape where extensive tracts of land have been worked and restored to agriculture. Reclaimed or restored land is often relatively featureless or lacking in maturity.

The landscape is broad in scale, defined within the valleys by the enclosing ridgelines, with panoramic views from higher ridges across adjacent valleys. Locally within the more wooded sections of some valleys the scale is more intimate and enclosed. The landscape of the coalfield has been heavily influenced by urban and industrial development and its scattered mining towns and villages and busy roads give it a semi-rural or urban fringe character in places. In the less developed areas it retains a strongly rural quality.

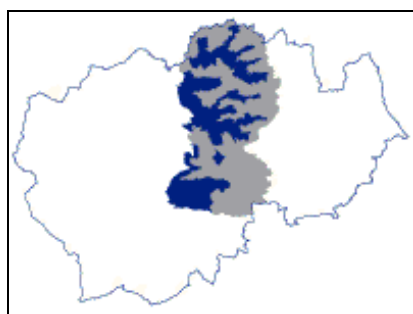
## Broad landscape types

The West Durham Coalfield can be broadly divided into those landscapes with an upland fringe character (parliamentary enclosures, dry stone walls, pastoral land use and conifer plantations) which are found on the high ridges and valley heads, and those with a lowland character (older field systems, hedgerows, mixed and arable farming) which are found in the lower reaches of the valleys. The settlement pattern of the coalfield with its scattered mining villages doesn't relate strongly to this distinction – both upland fringe and lowland coalfield landscapes have densely settled and very rural areas.

The landscape assessment identifies **Coalfield Upland Fringe** and **Coalfield Valley** landscapes. Within the coalfield valleys the **Coalfield Valley Floodplain** landscapes, with their very different landform, soils and historical development, are identified as a separate landscape type.



## Coalfield Upland Fringe



- Coalfield Upland Fringe
- The West Durham Coalfield
- County Boundary



### Key characteristics

- Broad ridges and shallow valley heads.
- Gently rounded topography of drift free, thinly bedded sandstones, mudstones, shales and coals.
- Occasional steep bluffs and incised denes.
- Heavy, seasonally waterlogged clay soils with pockets of peaty soils supporting heathland vegetation.
- Pastoral land use of improved or semi-improved pasture with some arable cropping on drier ridges.
- Regular grids of parliamentary enclosures bounded by dry stone walls or overgrown hawthorn hedges. Occasional older field systems.
- Few trees - scattered hedgerow oak, ash, rowan or birch.
- Sparsely wooded - scattered conifer plantations and shelterbelts.
- Isolated farms connected by straight enclosure roads – occasional old 'green' villages of local stone on ridge top sites.
- Scattered mining villages of stone and brick and occasional larger towns.
- Occasional relics of the mining industry including small spoil heaps, coke ovens and waggonways.
- Telecommunications masts and wind turbines prominent on some ridges
- Extensive areas of restored opencast land – often open and relatively featureless.
- A visually open landscape with commanding views across adjacent valleys to distant ridges.

### Description

An upland fringe landscape made up of the broad ridges and shallow valley heads of the coalfield valleys. The soft and thinly bedded sandstones, shales and coals of the coal measures are generally free of drift or masked by boulder clays giving rise to gently rounded convex slopes. Occasional thicker sandstone beds are marked by steeper bluffs. Small becks and burns drain the upper valleys, occasionally incised in narrow denes. Soils are heavy and seasonally waterlogged. On poorly drained ridges and plateaux, peaty gleys and deeper peats have formed, supporting heathland vegetation of heather, bilberry and acid grassland.

A predominantly pastoral landscape of improved and semi-improved pastures with occasional rougher grazing and wet rushy pasture. There is some limited arable cropping on drier ridge tops in the east. Field boundaries are a mixture of dry stone walls and hedgerows. Walls are made of thinly bedded, locally quarried sandstones. Hedges are dominated by hawthorn and are often tall, leggy, and supplemented by wire fences. Field systems are regular in pattern, dating from the enclosure of moorland wastes in the C18th under private Acts of Parliament. Some areas of unfenced common land survive on the poorest soils. Earlier hedges and walls are occasionally found around older farms and villages.

Tree and woodland cover is low. The higher ridges are generally open with sparsely scattered hedgerow oak and ash. Thin tree lines follow watercourses. Road verges are often colonised by rowan, birch and willow scrub. Small plantations and shelterbelts of pine and larch are scattered across the ridges and valley heads, with local concentrations creating a more heavily wooded character.

Historically this was a sparsely settled landscape of isolated livestock farms and large tracts of open fell associated with small agricultural villages in the adjacent valleys. Some older villages lie on ridge top sites. Buildings are of local sandstone with roofs of sandstone or welsh slate, and are typically set around a central village green. Scattered farms, most dating from the period of enclosure, are connected by straight and uniform enclosure roads. Mining settlements, ranging from small hamlets and isolated terraces to large towns, are scattered across the ridge tops. Most contain areas of C19th terraced housing of stone or brick and slate together with estates of post-war public housing and later commercial development. Settlement edges are often abrupt, or fringed by allotments, pony paddocks or industrial estates.

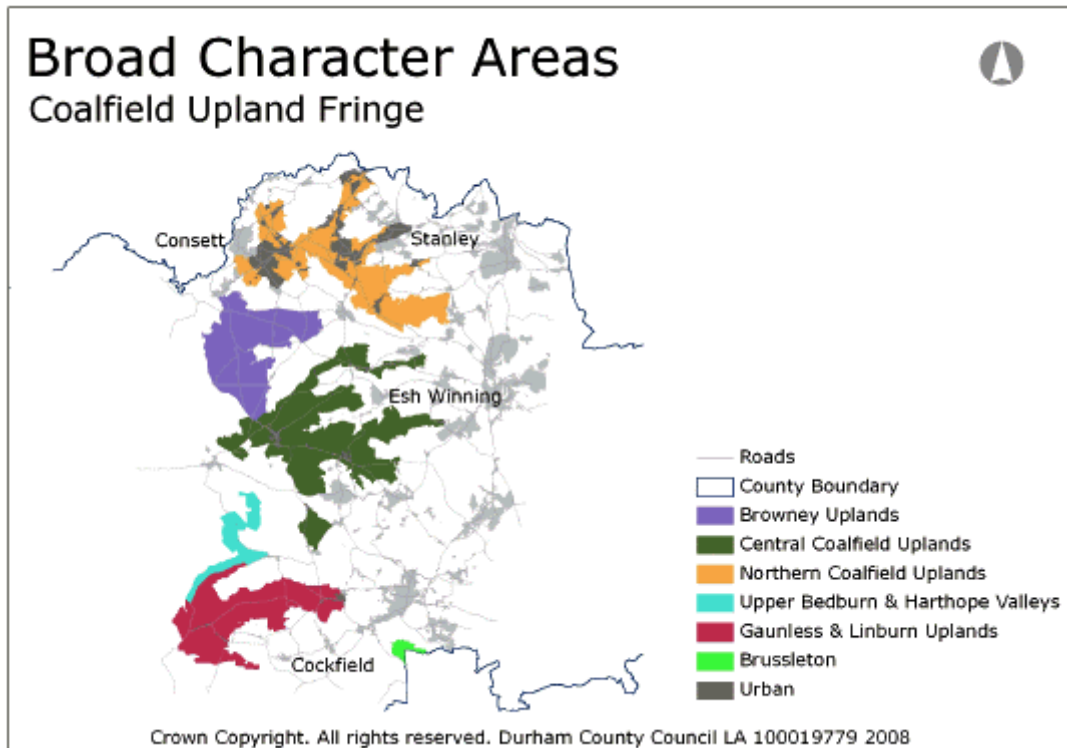
Coal mining and the production of coke and steel have heavily influenced the landscape, although much of the industrial legacy has been removed by land reclamation in recent years. Some relics survive; including small spoil heaps, coke ovens, limekilns, waggonways, bridges and mine buildings. Large tracts of land have been opencast for shallow coal on the exposed drift-free ridges and restored to agriculture or forestry. Older sites in particular were restored with little regard to the character of the landscape and remain open and relatively featureless. Telecommunications masts and wind turbines are prominent features on some ridge tops.

The landscape is visually open and broad in scale with commanding views across the adjacent ridges and valleys. In places it has a remote and strongly rural character, but elsewhere its frequent mining towns and villages, industrial estates, busy roads, communications masts and overhead services give it a semi-rural or urban fringe character.

## Broad Character Areas

The Coalfield Upland Fringe landscape type is represented by six Broad Character Areas

**Browney uplands.** Gently sloping ridges in the branching head of the Browney Valley. An open pastoral landscape of improved pasture with areas of semi-improved pasture, rough grazing and heathland on higher ground in the west. Field systems are regular and uniform, dating from parliamentary enclosures of the C18th. Field boundaries are predominantly dry stone walls with some overgrown hedges. The area is crossed by straight and uniform enclosure roads, often lined by trees or scrub. Isolated farms are scattered across the area. The landscape is generally open with scattered small conifer plantations. There are larger plantations in the valleys of the Butsfield and Rippon burns. The coal seams of the Browney uplands are generally thin and unproductive and the area has not been much affected by coal mining. Some areas in the east around Humber Hill and the west along the A68 have been opencast and restored.



**Central Coalfield Uplands.** A complex of high ridges between the valleys of the Wear and its northern tributaries. The ridges are gently or moderately sloping with occasional steeper bluffs. A pastoral landscape of improved pasture, with fragments of heathland at Hedleyhope Fell and Stanley Moss, and some areas of arable cropping on the drier eastern ridges. Much of the landscape has been opencast for coal and has regular field systems of young hedges, wire fences and new stone walls. Fragments of parliamentary enclosures, and earlier field systems around older villages, survive in places. The landscape is generally open with few mature trees and a scattering of small shelterbelts. Some areas in the west are heavily wooded, with large blocky conifer plantations. Old agricultural villages and later mining villages are scattered along the ridge tops. Wind turbines are notable features of the skyline.

**Northern Coalfield Uplands.** Densely settled ridges between the northern coalfield valleys. Large mining & industrial towns & villages sprawl along the ridgelines connected by busy roads. Outside of the urban areas land use is largely pastoral. There are fragments of heathland at Chapman's Well and Annfield Plain. Field systems are regular and uniform, many dating from parliamentary enclosures of the C18th, others from C20th opencast coal mining and land reclamation. Field boundaries are a mixture of dry stone walls and overgrown hedges and wire fences. The ridges in the north are generally open in character with few trees or woodlands. Those in the south and west are heavily wooded with frequent large conifer plantations. Telecommunications masts are notable features of the skyline.

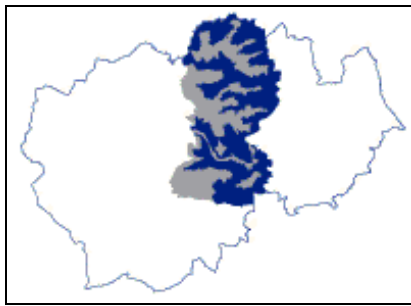
**Upper Bedburn and Harthope Valleys.** The upland fringes of the Bedburn, Harthope & Wear valleys between the coalfield valley landscape of the Wear and the moorland fringes of the North Pennines. Heavily afforested ridges and valley slopes in the edge of Hamsterley Forest. Large regular parliamentary enclosures, bounded by a mixture of walls and hedges, lie between large conifer plantations, and are crossed by straight enclosure roads. Isolated farms are scattered across the area. There is an area of parkland and associated estate lodges at Dryderdale Hall. The village of Hamsterley lies on the southern ridge overlooking the lower Bedburn and Wear valleys.

**Gaunless and Linburn Uplands** The upper reaches of the Gaunless and Linburn valleys. A pastoral landscape of improved and semi-improved or wet rushy pastures bounded by sparse, often overgrown, hedgerows, low dry stone walls or wire fences. Field boundaries are mostly regular in pattern, dating from C18th parliamentary enclosures, or from C20th opencast coal mining. Roads are generally straight and uniform in width. There are areas of older, less regular, enclosure on south-facing slopes falling from the village of Woodland. The landscape is very open with scattered small plantations and few hedgerow trees. Larger woodlands follow the incised valley of the Arn Gill and Foul Syke, tributaries of the Gaunless. Isolated farms are scattered across the ridges. In the south, farms of the Raby Estate are painted white.

**Brussleton.** The high ground of Brussleton Hill overlooks the Hummerbeck and Gaunless valleys and merges in the east with the limestone escarpment. The landscape is heavily wooded with ancient oak woods on its north facing slopes, and a dense network of more recent plantations associated with opencast coal mining and land reclamation. Agricultural landuse is mostly pasture. Field patterns vary in character with regular parliamentary enclosures to the north and west, and older enclosures to the east, both heavily disrupted in places by opencast mining. The area is crossed by the Roman road Dere Street, followed by a minor road in the south and a well-defined hollow-way in the north. There are pockets of naturally re-vegetating mining dereliction around the hilltop and a number of telecommunications masts.



## Coalfield Valley



- Coalfield Valley
- West Durham Coalfield
- County Boundary



### Key characteristics

- Broad, well defined valleys with occasional narrow floodplains and incised denes.
- Rounded topography of thinly bedded sandstones, mudstones, shales and coals overlain by glacial boulder clays.
- Heavy, seasonally waterlogged, clay soils.
- Mixed farmland of improved pasture and arable cropping.
- Sub-regular field patterns of old enclosures bounded by thorn hedges. Occasional regular Parliamentary enclosures.
- Scattered hedgerow Oak, Ash, Sycamore and Beech.
- Variable woodland cover – open in places but wooded elsewhere with ancient oak-birch woods in narrow denes and along watercourses, and blocky conifer plantations on valley sides.
- Scattered mining towns and villages connected by busy modern roads.
- Occasional older 'green' villages linked by narrow winding roads.
- Extensive areas of restored opencast land and reclaimed colliery land – often open and relatively featureless.
- Scattered relics of the mining industry - small spoil heaps, coke ovens and railway lines.
- Occasional ornamental parklands.
- An open landscape, relatively broad in scale but defined by enclosing ridgelines.
- A strongly rural landscape in places but with a 'semi-rural' or urban fringe quality in its more settled areas.

### Description

Broad, well defined valleys with moderately sloping sides and occasional narrow floodplains. Soft and thinly bedded sandstones, coal and shales of the coal measures are covered by glacial drift of boulder clay with pockets of sands and gravels giving rise to gently rounded topography. Small rivers, 'becks' and 'burns' cut down into the valley floor drift in places creating narrow, steep sided denes.



Heavy, seasonally waterlogged, clay soils support a mosaic of mixed farmland with the emphasis shifting from pasture in the upper valleys to arable cropping – mostly cereals and oil-seed rape - in the lower reaches. Field boundaries are mostly hedges - cut low in arable areas, but often tall and overgrown in pastoral areas. Field systems are generally 'sub-regular' in pattern, dating from the enclosure of arable town fields around older villages or intakes from the open fells. More regular grids of parliamentary enclosures are found on higher valley sides.

Tree and woodland cover varies considerably. The valleys are very open in some places and heavily wooded or rich in hedgerow trees in others. Ancient oak and oak-birch woods are found in narrow denes on the valley floor. Younger broadleaved woodlands of pioneer species like birch, alder and willow follow old railway lines and colliery land. Larger plantations, often of pine or larch, are scattered across the valley sides. Hedgerow oak, ash, sycamore and occasionally beech are common. In places these combine with streamside alder and tall overgrown hedges to give a well-wooded character to the landscape.

Mining towns and villages are scattered across the valleys connected by a well-developed road network. Most of these have a core of 19th century terraced housing of brick or stone and welsh slate surrounded by estates of post-war public housing. Settlement edges are often abrupt or fringed by allotment gardens, pony paddocks and industrial land. This settlement pattern overlies and largely obscures an older network of small agricultural villages that survives in the more rural upper valleys. These older villages often have a core of buildings of local stone set around a central village green. There are occasional small parklands, mostly associated with C19th country houses.

The valley landscape has been heavily influenced by coal mining although much of its legacy has been removed by land reclamation in recent years. Some elements of the industrial landscape remain - notably railway lines, tramways, small waste heaps and old coke ovens. Land reclamation and opencast coal mining have had a substantial impact on the more settled parts of the landscape where extensive tracts of land have been worked and restored to agriculture or forestry. Reclaimed or restored land is often relatively featureless or lacking in maturity.

The landscape is broad in scale, defined within the valleys by the enclosing ridgelines, with panoramic views from higher ridges across adjacent valleys. Locally within the more wooded sections of some valleys the scale is more intimate and enclosed. The landscape of the coalfield has been heavily influenced by urban and industrial development and its scattered mining towns and villages and busy roads give it a semi-rural or urban fringe character in places. In the less developed areas it retains a strongly rural quality.

## Broad Character Areas

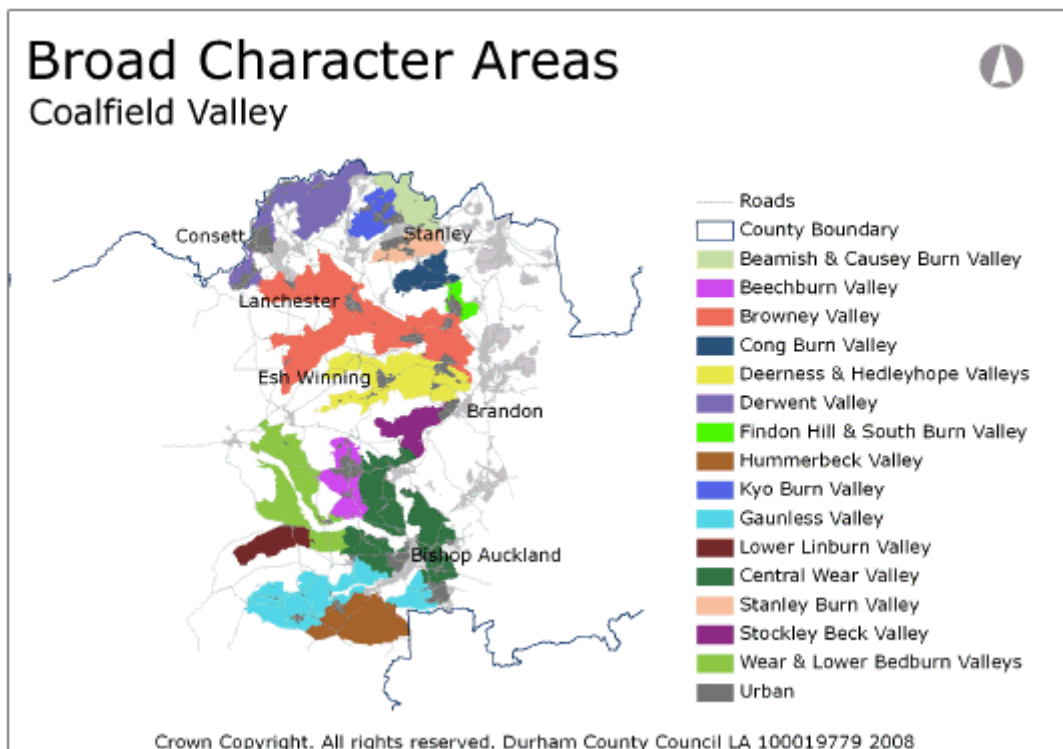
The Coalfield Valley landscape type is presented by fifteen Broad Character Areas.

**Beamish & Causey Burn Valley.** A broad valley in which the upper reaches of the River Team and its tributaries carve a winding course, incised in narrow steep-sided denes. In the west ancient oak woods lie in the denes between open, gently rolling, arable farmland. In the east lies the heavily wooded estate landscape of Beamish Hall which contains the Beamish Open Air Museum. The area is notable for its industrial heritage, with the remains of water-powered forges along the river, and Causey Arch, the world's oldest surviving railway bridge, spanning the deep wooded gorge of the Causey Burn. Areas of derelict colliery land and spoil heaps lie in the Wheatley Gill/Bobgins burn valley to the north near Marley Hill.

**Beechburn Valley.** A broad, settled valley running northwards from the Wear. Its western slopes are gently sloping. Its eastern slopes rise more steeply to a well-defined ridge running from Dowfold Hill to Rumby Hill. The town of Crook lies in the head of the valley. Smaller colliery villages are scattered across the valley. An open

pastoral landscape with some areas of arable cropping on the valley floor and ridge tops. Field systems are generally old with sub regular patterns of hedgerows and scattered hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore. Areas of parliamentary enclosure with regular field patterns and straight enclosure roads are found on the eastern ridge. There are scattered areas of reclaimed colliery land.

**Brownney Valley.** A broad branching valley in which the Brownney and its tributaries lie on narrow floodplains or in narrow, steep-sided denes. Valley sides are moderately sloping with occasional steeper bluffs. Arable and mixed farmland in the lower reaches of the valley gives way to pasture on higher ground. The valley is heavily wooded in places with large blocky conifer plantations, and broadleaved or mixed woodlands in areas of old parkland. Field systems vary in character with older hedges with scattered or abundant hedgerow trees in the valley bottoms, and areas of regular parliamentary enclosure on higher ground. Boundaries are mostly hedgerows with some dry stone walls in the upper reaches. Large villages lie along the valley floor and the lower valley sides. Restored opencast land is found in many places on the upper slopes, and areas of reclaimed colliery land are found around some mining villages.



**Cong Burn Valley.** A well defined valley lying between high ridges in which the Cong Burn lies in a narrow steep sided dene lined with ancient oak woods. Large blocks of conifers rise up the steep slopes of Charlaw Fell to the south. The gentler south facing slopes are predominantly arable with low hedges and few trees. Field patterns are mixed, with regular parliamentary enclosures and straight enclosure roads in places and older fields around the village of Holmside. There are several areas of restored opencast land.

**Deerness & Hedleyhope Valley.** The branching valley of the River Deerness and its tributaries. In its lower reaches the Deerness lies in an incised dene, a mosaic of woodland and pasture, between open gentle slopes of mixed farmland on which lie the mining villages of New Brancepeth and Ushaw Moor, and the parklands of Ushaw College and Eshwood Hall. Upstream, steep wooded bluffs south of the river overlook the village of Esh Winning. The upper reaches of the Deerness are pastoral and heavily wooded with large conifer plantations and a network of old hedges, with frequent oak trees, fragmented in places by opencast mining. The upper reaches of

the Hedleyhope valley are also well wooded with mixed farmland of old hedgerows and abundant oak and ash trees interspersed with broadleaved and mixed woodlands.

**Derwent Valley.** The broad valley of the River Derwent straddles the northern county boundary. The valley is heavily wooded, with ancient oak woods lying in branching denes and large coniferous or mixed plantations on the valley sides. Agricultural land use is largely pastoral with sub regular networks of old hedges with scattered, locally abundant, oak, ash, beech and sycamore trees. Mining villages are strung out along the valley and the large industrial town of Consett lies on the valley side falling from the southern ridge. The tributary valley of the Pont burn is more rural with thinly scattered farms. The valley is notable for its industrial heritage. The Derwent Valley walk follows a disused railway line with several landmark viaducts over wooded denes which have commanding views across the valley.

**Findon Hill & South Burn Valley.** The high ground of Findon Hill and Daisy Hill in the head of the Southburn Valley. The large mining village of Sacriston lies below steep wooded bluffs bordering Charlaw Fell. Agricultural land use is mostly arable with large fields bounded by low trimmed hedges and few trees. Field systems are regular and date from parliamentary enclosures or from more recent opencast coal mining.

**Hummerbeck Valley.** Gently rolling, in places almost flat, plateau of mixed farmland drained by the Hummer Beck and the Oakley Cross Beck. Field systems are generally pre-enclosure with sub-regular patterns of hedgerows, frequent hedgerow oak, ash & sycamore. Lines of trees follow the becks and there are scattered coniferous or mixed plantations. Some areas have been opencast for coal and contain young hedges and plantations and new stone walls. The area is sparsely settled with scattered farms served by narrow lanes.

**Kyo Burn Valley.** The broad valley of the Kyo Burn is encircled by settlements on the surrounding ridge tops. An open pastoral landscape of improved or wet rushy pasture with a fragmented network of old, often overgrown, hedgerows and few trees. Fragments of heathland and gorse scrub are found on steeper slopes. The Kyo burn is slightly incised in the valley floor with wooded sections containing ancient oak woods.

**Gaunless Valley.** The River Gaunless meanders across a narrow floodplain, its banks lined with willow and alder. Tributary streams lie in narrow wooded denes. Ancient oak woodlands of Crag Wood lie on steep slopes overlooking the river. Agricultural land use is mixed with tracts of open arable farmland and improved or semi-improved pasture, and open moor of grass and bracken at Cockfield Fell. Field systems vary in character with areas of regular parliamentary enclosure, early post-medieval field systems around older villages, and large areas of restored opencast land with young hedges, shelterbelts and plantations. A settled rural landscape with old agricultural villages, enlarged during the industrial period, and numerous scattered farms and building clusters. The valley is notable for its mining heritage, and particularly on Cockfield fell where C19th railways lie alongside medieval bell pits and Iron Age settlements.

**Linburn Valley.** A simple broad valley in which the Linburn Beck winds across the valley floor, its banks lined with willow and alder, occasional incised in shallow wooded denes. A pastoral landscape of improved and semi-improved pastures bounded by old hedges with frequent hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore. Scattered farms are served by narrow roads.

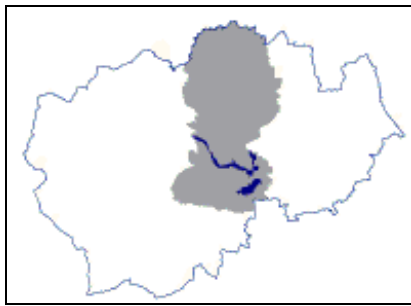
**Central Wear Valley.** A broad winding valley with moderate slopes falling to steeper bluffs beside the floodplain of the River Wear. A settled landscape with the large town of Bishop Auckland on the valley floor and numerous small mining villages scattered across the valley sides. Agricultural land use is mixed with tracts of open arable farmland and improved pasture bounded by old hedges with scattered, locally abundant, hedgerow trees. Tributary burns are incised in narrow wooded denes. The wooded parklands of Auckland Park lie to the north of Bishop Auckland. Older villages are served by a network of narrow lanes. Busy modern roads radiate out from the town. The area is notable for its Roman remains at Binchester.

**Stanley Burn Valley.** A broad valley dominated by the town of Stanley which lies on its northern flanks. Ancient oak woods lie in the dene of the Stanley Burn which winds between moderately sloping valley sides of open arable farmland. Field systems are largely pre-enclosure with fragmented patterns of low clipped hedges and few hedgerow trees. There are scattered coniferous plantations. The landscape of the valley has a very settled character with prominent mining villages and areas of recreational land. Fragments of heathland survive on the southern ridge in South moor Golf Course.

**Stockley Beck Valley.** The narrow valley of the Stockley Beck broadens as it approaches the valley terraces of the Wear Lowlands. The beck lies within a broad dene clothed in coniferous woodland. The upper valley is open pasture with regular grids of parliamentary enclosure walls and hedges and few trees. Parts of the area have been opencast and contain young hedges and new walls. The broader flanks of the lower valley have fragmented field systems of older hedges around arable fields and improved pastures which are interspersed by scattered conifer plantations. Scattered farms are served by narrow roads.

**Upper Wear & Bedburn Valleys.** The broad valley of the Wear and its tributary the Bedburn are well wooded, with frequent plantations, wooded denes, and areas of wooded parkland and estate farmland on valley slopes overlooking the Wear floodplain. Agricultural land use is mixed with a mosaic of improved pasture and arable cropping. Field systems are largely pre-enclosure with sub-regular patterns of hedgerows and occasional dry stone walls with scattered, locally abundant, hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore. Scattered farms are served by narrow roads and tracks. Old villages lie on high ground along the valley.

## Coalfield Valley Floodplain



- Coalfield Upland Fringe
- The West Durham Coalfield
- County Boundary



### Key characteristics

- Flat, narrow floodplains fringed in places by low, steep-sided bluffs.
- Meandering rivers with alternating riffles and pools.
- Alluvial soils.
- Large arable fields protected from flooding in places by low levees.
- Smaller pastures of improved or semi-improved wet pastures bounded by low thorn hedges with scattered hedgerow oak, ash and alder.
- Ancient woodlands of oak and birch on steep bluffs.
- Narrow riparian woods or tree lines of alder, oak, ash and willow on river banks.
- Semi-improved pastures on steeper bluffs with scattered scrub of gorse or hawthorn.
- Occasional small ponds and ox-bow lakes and larger wetlands in abandoned or restored gravel workings.
- Few farms or farm buildings.
- Occasional relics of corn or fulling mills or later iron-working mills – including mill races and buildings.
- Occasional industrial land or sewerage works bordering larger settlements.
- A diverse landscape. Enclosed and intimate in scale in wooded areas but more open, and reading as part of the wider valley landscape, in others.

### Description

The floodplains of the larger coalfield valleys are generally narrow (200 – 500m), bordering onto the moderate slopes of the wider valley or fringed by low, steep-sided bluffs. Rivers are meandering with alternating shallow, quick flowing riffles and broader slow moving reaches. There are occasional small natural ponds and ox-bow lakes and larger wetlands in flooded gravel workings.

The flat and fertile alluvial soils of the floodplain support arable cropping of cereals and oil-seed rape on land protected from flooding by low levees. Elsewhere land use is pastoral, with improved grasslands and areas of less improved wet or marshy pasture.

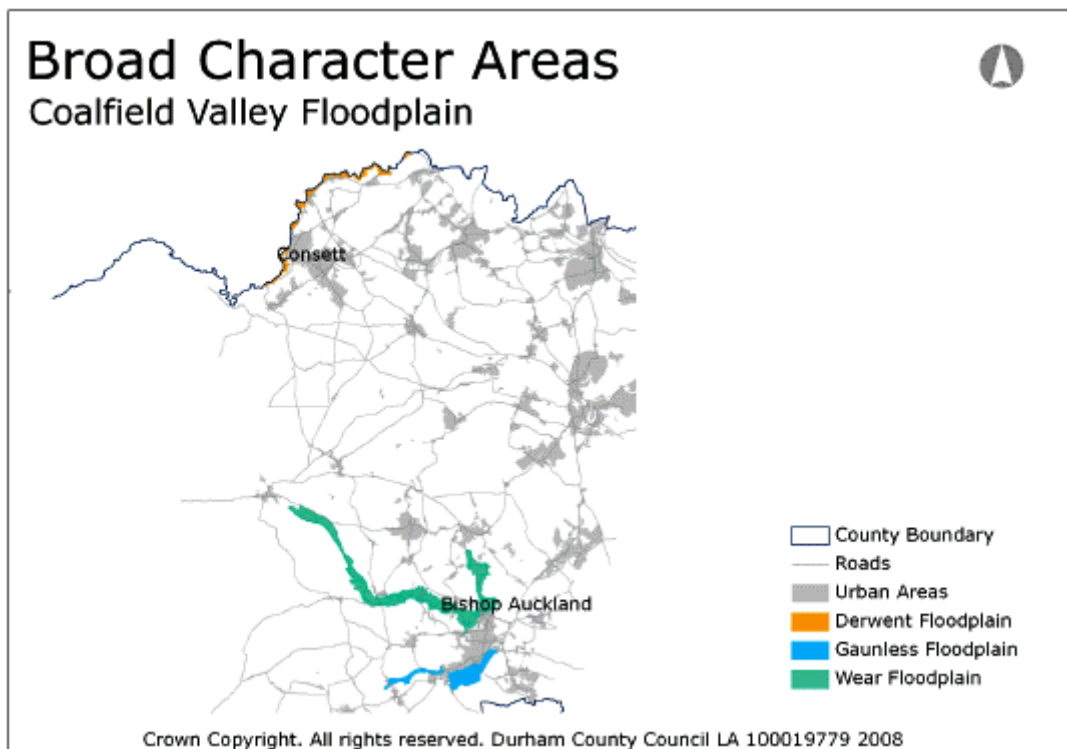
Field systems on the 'haughs' or 'flatts' of the floodplain are generally irregular or sub-regular in pattern, dating from the enclosure of common meadows and pastures in and around the C17th century. In arable areas many of these enclosures have been amalgamated to form large, open fields. In pastoral areas fields are smaller and bounded by low hawthorn hedges with scattered hedgerow oak, ash and alder. On the steeper slopes of the floodplain bluffs, pastures that have always been difficult to manage or improve are scattered with gorse or hawthorn scrub.

The landscape is well wooded. Ancient woodlands of oak and birch lie on steep bluffs overlooking the haughs and narrow riparian woods or tree lines of alder, oak, ash and willow line the riverbanks.

There are few farms or farm buildings on the floodplain itself though they occur occasionally on isolated pockets of higher ground. On parts of the floodplain bordering larger towns, the flat land has been developed for industry or for sewerage works. Relics of water mills – for grinding corn, preparing cloth or working iron and steel – in the form of dams, mill races and mill buildings are scattered across the more settled floodplains. Parts of the floodplain have been worked for sand and gravel leaving flooded gravel pits, some of which have been restored as fishing lakes or nature reserves.

A very diverse landscape, enclosed and intimate in scale in its narrower and more heavily wooded sections but more open, and reading as part of the wider valley landscape, in others.

### Broad Character Areas



The Coalfield Valley Floodplain landscape type is represented by three Broad Character Areas.

**The Derwent Floodplain.** The narrow floodplain of the River Derwent is largely pastoral with open improved or semi-improved pastures on the flat haughs either side of the river. Low bluffs define the floodplain, clothed in broadleaved or mixed woodland or semi-improved pasture and scrub. The river is followed by narrow riparian woods or tree lines of willow, alder, ash and oak. The valley floor of the Derwent is settled in places and urban fringe recreation grounds, playing fields and sewerage works are found along the floodplain. The valley was



important for steel making in the early industrial revolution and there are remains of a number of old water powered forges (most notably at Derwentcote), as well as old water mills and tile works.

**The Gaunless Floodplain.** The River Gaunless meanders slowly across flat haughs of wet pasture with oxbow lakes and low river terraces marked by sporadic tree lines.

**The Wear Floodplain.** The River Wear meanders across a broad floodplain, defined in places by low bluffs of broadleaved woodland or steep pasture with scattered scrub. Narrow riparian woodlands of willow, alder, oak and ash follow the river. The farmland of the floodplain is mixed, with areas of improved pasture and arable cropping divided in places by straight hawthorn hedges. Parts of the floodplain have been worked for sand and gravel. Some abandoned gravel pits have naturally re-vegetated and are now managed for nature conservation; others have been restored as fishing lakes.



## Local Landscape Types

Dene pastures

Disturbed land

Floodplain farmland: arable

Floodplain farmland: pasture

Heaths and fells

High ridge and valley farmland: open arable

High ridge and valley farmland: open pasture

High ridge and valley farmland: pasture

High ridge and valley farmland: walled arable

High ridge and valley farmland: walled pasture

High ridge and valley farmland: wooded arable

High ridge and valley farmland: wooded pasture

Infrastructure

Lakes & ponds

Lowland woods

Lowland woods: denes & bluffs

Lowland woods: floodplain & riverside

Mineral working

Nurseries & market gardens

Parkland

Parks and recreation grounds

River: middle reaches

Upland woods

Upland woods: denes & bluffs

Upland woods: forest

Urban

Valley farmland: arable

Valley farmland: open arable

Valley farmland: open pasture

Valley farmland: pasture

Valley farmland: wooded arable

Valley farmland: wooded estate arable

Valley farmland: wooded estate pasture

Valley farmland: wooded pasture

## Dene pastures

Incised denes and steeply sloping bluffs of improved or semi-improved pasture or rough grazing. Steeply sloping pastures are often difficult to manage or improve and tend to be more diverse than the surrounding farmland. Tree cover is very variable. Hedgerow oak and ash are locally common. Steeper slopes may support areas of bracken, or scrub of hawthorn or gorse.

### Subtypes

#### Old enclosure.

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns may be irregular or sub-regular and tend to reflect the underlying topography. Boundaries are typically hedgerows. In places relics of ridge and furrow or cultivation terraces may be found.

#### Open heath.

Areas of open, heathy pasture, with bracken and gorse.

#### Reclaimed land.

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings or the reclamation of derelict land. Field patterns tend to be regular. Boundaries may be hedges or fences and are lacking in mature hedgerow trees.

#### Surveyor enclosed.

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field patterns are regular grids of hedges or walls which often ignore the underlying topography.

## Disturbed land

A variable type made up largely of abandoned mineral workings and railway lines.

### Subtypes

#### Old clay pits & gravel workings

Abandoned clay pits and gravel workings. A variable type but generally comprising ponds or lakes formed from flooded extraction areas surrounded by areas of disturbed ground, rough grassland or secondary woodland. Water bodies tend to be relatively deep and steep-sided with only narrow fringes of marginal vegetation (often reedbed). Secondary woodland and scrub colonising areas of disturbed ground is dominated by pioneer species like birch, alder and goat or grey willow.

#### Old colliery workings

Abandoned colliery workings. A variable type but often including areas of bare colliery wastes, rough grassland and scrub or secondary woodland. Structures like coal tipplers, coke ovens, waggonways and derelict buildings survive in places. Acidic colliery spoils often support diverse acid grasslands or heath and secondary woodland or scrub of birch, alder, aspen, hawthorn, gorse and goat willow.

#### Old railway

Abandoned railway lines survive as narrow linear features running through other landscapes. Most are made up of alternating cuttings and embankments. Many structures survive along their routes including bridges and viaducts, culverts, tipplers and station platforms. Some associated buildings like station houses and railway

cottages have been converted to other uses. Most abandoned lines have been colonised by natural regeneration and support a diverse grassland and woodland flora which reflects the range of naturally occurring or imported materials found in cuttings and embankments. Pioneer or ruderal species are particularly characteristic. Many old railway lines have been adopted as recreational multi-user routes.

#### **Old sandstone quarry.**

Abandoned sandstone quarry. Typical elements include extraction faces, spoil mounds and haul roads, softened by varying degrees of natural regeneration. Some quarries contain small ponds or larger areas of standing water. Quarry faces are horizontally bedded Carboniferous Sandstone varying in colour from buff to grey. Base-poor sandstone wastes and overburdens often support an acid-loving flora and are typically colonised by pioneer tree and shrub species like birch, alder, goat willow, hawthorn, gorse, broom and dog rose.

#### **Reclaimed grassland**

Land reclaimed from former mineral workings or industrial use to rough grassland.

### **Floodplain farmland: arable**

Low lying arable farmland on the fertile alluvial soils of the flat 'haughs' of the river floodplains. Fields tend to be large and bounded by hedges or fences, and may be subject to seasonal flooding or protected by artificial levees.

#### **Subtypes**

##### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular and bounded by hedges with occasional hedgerow trees - ash, oak and alder. Hedges are generally dominated by hawthorn but often contain holly and blackthorn, and sometimes hazel in the oldest features. Smaller fields have often been amalgamated to create large irregular parcels.

##### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure, usually piecemeal rather than part of larger parliamentary enclosure systems. The relatively small scale of the floodplains, and the loss of boundaries in areas of field amalgamation, means that the regular patterns typical of this period of enclosure rarely occur. Field boundaries are straight hawthorn hedges but otherwise the subtype differs little from the Old enclosure subtype.

### **Floodplain farmland: pasture**

Low lying pastoral farmland on the flat 'haughs' of the river floodplains including both productive improved pasture and poorly drained or seasonally flooded, wet rushy pasture. Pastures may border directly onto the river or be separated from it by narrow riparian woodlands or fenced, often tree lined, riverbanks. In places floodplain pastures contain meandering minor watercourses and oxbow lakes, and relics of watermills and associated features. Pastures are generally divided by hedgerows, but in areas subject to regular flooding and more dynamic, shifting, watercourses the floodplain may remain open.

#### **Subtypes**

##### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular and bounded by hedges with occasional hedgerow trees – ash, oak and alder. Hedges are generally dominated by hawthorn but often contain holly and blackthorn, and sometimes hazel in the oldest features.

#### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings. Field patterns tend to be regular. Boundaries may be hedges or fences and are lacking in mature hedgerow trees. The landform may have an engineered character.

#### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. The relatively small scale of the floodplains means that the regular patterns typical of this period of enclosure rarely occur. Field boundaries are straight but otherwise the subtype differs little from the Old enclosure subtype.

### **Heaths and fells**

Areas of lowland and mid-altitude heath and open fell. This very variable type includes both small commons and stinted pastures, areas of parliamentary enclosure in the upland fringes which have reverted to heath, and fragments of heathland vegetation that have survived elsewhere or regenerated naturally on disturbed land.

#### **Subtypes**

##### **Blanket bog.**

Blanket bog on upland peat.

##### **Enclosed heath.**

Heathland vegetation surviving or regenerating in marginal areas of late parliamentary enclosure.

##### **Grass fell.**

Vegetation dominated by acid grassland.

##### **Heathland.**

Vegetation dominated by shrub-heath, or mosaic of heath and acid grassland

##### **Raised bog.**

Lowland raised bog on valley peat.

##### **Reclaimed fell.**

Heath restored following mineral extraction. Largely dominated by species poor acid grassland.

### **High ridge and valley farmland: open arable**

Pockets of open arable farmland in the otherwise predominantly pastoral landscape of the upland fringe. Fields are often large and bounded by low clipped thorn hedges or a mixture of hedges and walls. Hedgerow trees are absent or infrequent.

#### **Subtypes**

##### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular but often disrupted by field amalgamations.

##### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings. Field patterns tend to be regular.



**Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns regular but often disrupted by field amalgamations.

**High ridge and valley farmland: open pasture**

Open pastoral farmland of the higher ridges and valley heads of the upland fringes. Grasslands are mostly improved pasture, with pockets of semi-improved or wet, rushy pasture. Field boundaries are typically regular grids of hedges or dry stone walls dating from 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosures, crossed in places by straight enclosure roads. Hedges are often sparse and overgrown or grazed through or supplemented by wire fences. Hedgerow trees are absent or infrequent.

**Subtypes**

**Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field systems are generally sub-regular although the pattern has often been disrupted by the removal or decline of hedgerows.

**Reclaimed Land.**

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings. Field patterns tend to be regular and geometric and there are few mature landscape features.

**Surveyor Enclosed.**

The type. Areas of 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field systems regular although the pattern has often been disrupted by the removal or decline of field boundaries.

**High ridge and valley farmland: pasture**

Pastoral farmland of the higher ridges and valley heads of the upland fringes. Grasslands are mostly improved pasture, with pockets of semi-improved or wet, rushy pasture. Field boundaries are typically regular grids of hedges or dry stone walls dating from 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosures, crossed in places by straight enclosure roads. Field systems are relatively intact, though hedgerows are often overgrown and grazed through or supplemented by wire fences. Hedges are largely species-poor and dominated by hawthorn. Older hedges tend to be slightly more diverse and may contain holly planted for winter fodder. Hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore are common.

**Subtypes**

**Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field systems are generally sub-regular in pattern, occasionally preserving the shape of arable strips. Areas of medieval or later rigg and furrow occur locally.

**Surveyor Enclosed.**

The type. Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field systems regular grids.

**High ridge and valley farmland: walled arable**

Tracts of open arable farmland on high ridges in the upland fringe. Fields are bounded by low dry stone walls. Hedgerow trees are absent.

## Subtypes

### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular but disrupted in places by field amalgamations.

### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings. Field patterns are regular and geometric.

### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular grids, disrupted in places by field amalgamations.

## **High ridge and valley farmland: walled pasture**

Open pastoral farmland of the high ridges and valley heads of the upland fringe. Grasslands are a mixture of improved pasture, semi-improved pasture and wet rushy pasture. Field boundaries are regular grids of dry stone walls dating from late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosures, crossed in places by straight enclosure roads. Hedgerow trees are generally absent.

## Subtypes

### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular in pattern with occasional old hedgerows and boundary trees.

### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings. Field patterns are regular and geometric. Mature trees are generally absent. There may be occasional small coniferous copses or shelterbelts.

### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

The type. Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular grids of walls. Field and boundary trees are generally absent though the verges of straight enclosure roads may be lined with trees or scrub.

## **High ridge and valley farmland: wooded arable**

Tracts of wooded arable farmland on high ridges in the upland fringe. Fields are bounded by low hawthorn hedges or border onto large conifer plantations. Hedgerow trees are absent.

## Subtypes

### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas restored following opencast coal mining. Field patterns are regular and geometric. Fields are bounded by young hedges or wire fences.

### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight with low clipped hawthorn hedges.

## **High ridge and valley farmland: wooded pasture**

Wooded pastoral farmland of the high ridges and valley heads of the upland fringe. Grasslands are a mixture of improved pasture, semi-improved pasture and wet rushy pasture. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular grids of hawthorn hedges and dry stone walls. Hedgerow trees are absent or scarce. There are networks of straight enclosure roads and scattered blocky softwood plantations.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular in pattern with occasional old hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

#### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings. Field patterns are regular and geometric. Mature trees are generally absent. There may be occasional small coniferous copses or shelterbelts.

#### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

The type. Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular grids of walls. Field and boundary trees are generally absent though the verges of straight enclosure roads may be lined with trees or scrub.

## **Infrastructure**

A variable local type covering a range of different forms of infrastructure.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Highway**

Only major roads are mapped and only where the scale of development is significant. The Highway subtype therefore covers the larger scale sections of carriageway, major cuttings, embankments and interchanges.

#### **Landfill**

Active landfill or other waste management facilities. Most feature voids – usually left from prior mineral extraction – currently being infilled. Tipping activities and litter trap fencing may be prominent.

#### **Railway**

Only major railways are mapped and only where the scale of development is significant. The Railway subtype therefore covers larger scale cuttings, embankments and sidings.

#### **Water treatment works**

Sewerage or water treatment works. Only features in rural or urban fringe situations are mapped; others are subsumed within the Develop: urban type. Treatment works are typically made up of large concrete reservoirs, water tanks, filtration beds, lagoons, and ancillary buildings. Most are surrounded by security fences.

## **Lakes and ponds**

A variable type covering a range of natural and man made water bodies.

### **Subtypes**

### **Fishing lake**

Artificial water bodies created as still-water fisheries. These typically have an obviously engineered landform with shallow margins which are generally clear of vegetation and timber jetties, piling and fishing platforms. Waters are usually turbid and nutrient-rich. Other subtypes including flooded clay pits & gravel workings may be in use as fisheries and share similar features.

### **Flooded clay pits & gravel workings.**

The water bodies of abandoned or restored clay pits, sand and gravel working. Abandoned features tend to have an irregular form with steep bank sides and fairly deep water, surrounded by areas of semi-natural vegetation, rank grassland, secondary woodland and scrub made up of species such as willows, alder and downy birch. Restored water bodies have a more designed form with shallower margins.

### **Lowland lakes & ponds**

Natural lakes or ponds. These are typically shallow features with irregular margins set in open pastures. Those mapped appear to have arisen from subsidence or water table rebound on the coal measures and the magnesian limestone, or from impeded field drainage. They may be fringed with marginal emergent vegetation (common reed, Reedmace) or be grazed to the water's edge. Submerged fences and other field boundaries may occur in the more recently developed features. Only larger water bodies are mapped. Smaller ponds are subsumed within the larger tracts in which they occur.

## **Lowland woods**

A variable type covering the diverse woodlands of lowland valleys, plains and plateaux.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Ancient woods.**

Ancient semi-natural woodlands. On the base-poor glacial drift that covers much of the lowlands the predominant woodland type is a lowland mixed broadleaved woodland with Common or Sessile Oak the major canopy species (NVC W10). Some Oak-birch woodlands (NVC W16) occur on less fertile sandy soils, and stands of Alder (NVCW5) woodland are found on flushed slopes or wet ground. Some woodlands show signs of having been managed as coppice in the past.

#### **Modified ancient woods.**

This subtype includes re-planted ancient woodland sites and ancient woods that have been heavily modified by the introduction of commercial or exotic species, or species not native to the locality.

#### **Old wood pasture.**

Ancient woodlands that have long been managed as wood pasture. A mosaic of open woodland, scrub and neutral grassland containing ancient and veteran trees.

#### **Plantation.**

Planted woodlands of very variable character, including hardwood plantations of species such as Beech, Oak and Sycamore often planted as part of parkland or estate landscapes, and plantations dominated by softwoods – some planted historically for pit-wood, others under taxation incentives in the late C20th or as part of the reclamation of derelict land and opencast coal workings.

#### **Secondary woods and wood pasture.**

Secondary semi-natural woodlands dominated by pioneer species (Birch, Ash, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Sallows, Gorse) that have colonised areas of disturbed land such as railway embankments and colliery tips, or unmanaged pasture or heath.

### **Lowland woods: denes & bluffs**

Woodlands of incised denes and steeply sloping valley-side or escarpment bluffs. Woodland plant communities are diverse and reflect the range of underlying parent rocks and drift materials that occur – often within a single wood.

#### **Subtypes**

##### **Ancient woods.**

Ancient semi-natural woodlands. On the base-poor glacial drift into which many lowland denes are incised the predominant woodland type is a lowland mixed broadleaved woodland, with Common or Sessile Oak the major canopy species (NVC W10). Similar woodlands occur on river terrace gravels and rocky gorges on carboniferous sandstones and shales. On poorer soils, and particularly in the west, these woodlands may be transitional in character with upland Oak woods (NVC W11). On the more acidic strata of the coal measures they often occur along-side Oak-birch (NVC 16) communities. On the limestone escarpment, and in the coastal denes where limestones are exposed, lowland Ash woodland communities (NVC W8) are found, with occasional stands of pure Yew (W13) on the thinnest soils. Ash communities transitional in character with upland Ash woods (NVC W9) are found where carboniferous limestones are exposed in the west. Stands of Alder-Ash woodland (NVC W7) and Alder carr (NVC W5) occur on flushed slopes or waterlogged ground. Some woodlands show signs of having been managed as coppice in the past. Woods on the coal measures often contains relics of drift mining – pit-falls, waggonways and small spoil mounds. Some dene woods also contain relics of small scale quarrying activities.

##### **Modified ancient woods.**

This subtype includes re-planted ancient woodland sites and ancient woods that have been heavily modified by the introduction of commercial or exotic species, or species not native to the locality.

##### **Old wood pastures.**

Ancient woodlands that have long been managed as wood pasture. A mosaic of open woodland, scrub and neutral grassland containing ancient and veteran trees.

##### **Plantation.**

Planted woodlands of very variable character, including hardwood plantations of species such as Beech, Oak and Sycamore often planted as part of parkland or estate landscapes, and plantations dominated by softwoods – some planted historically for pit-wood, others under taxation incentives in the late C20th or as part of the reclamation of derelict land and opencast coal workings

##### **Secondary woods and wood pastures.**

Secondary semi-natural woodlands dominated by pioneer species (Birch, Ash, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Sallows, Gorse) that have colonised areas of disturbed land such as railway embankments and colliery tips, or unmanaged pasture or heath.

### **Lowland woods: floodplain & riverside**

Narrow corridors of woodland on riverbanks and river terraces, usually semi-natural in character and made up of

native species, particularly Oak, Ash, Alder, Aspen, Birch and Willows. Many are ancient woods; others are secondary semi-natural woods that have followed the shifting course of the river.

## Subtypes

### **Ancient woods.**

Ancient semi-natural woodlands. The predominant woodland type on drier ground is a lowland mixed broadleaved woodland with Common or Sessile Oak the major canopy species (NVC W10), with Alder-Ash (NVC W7) and Alder (NVC W6, W5) woodlands on wetter ground and wash lands.

### **Plantation.**

A variable subtype of planted woodlands including old broadleaved plantations, softwood plantations, poplar plantations and more recent new native woodlands on river floodplains and carrs.

### **Secondary woods & wood pastures**

Secondary semi-natural woodlands, often containing similar species to ancient woods, but which have naturally colonised the shifting riverbank environment and are therefore dominated more by pioneers like Alder, Aspen, Birches and Willows.

## Mineral working

A diverse type made up of active or dormant mineral workings ranging from hard-rock quarries to opencast coal sites, gravel pits and clay workings. Typical common elements include extraction voids and faces, soil mounds, overburden and waste heaps, haul roads, buildings and processing plant.

## Subtypes

### **Clay pit**

Clay pits worked for brick-shales and fireclays, and usually associated with adjoining brickworks. Extraction areas tend to be deep voids with steeply sloping sides of grey clays, mudstones and sandstones. There are usually large un-vegetated materials stockpiles either within the void or on adjacent land. The neutral or base poor clays, overburdens and wastes may support areas of diverse acid or neutral grassland and secondary woodland or scrub of birch, alder, aspen, hawthorn, gorse and goat willow where they have been undisturbed.

## Nurseries and Market gardens

Commercial nurseries, garden centres and market gardens, typically including extensive areas of greenhouses, car parking and storage areas. Some include areas of intensive horticulture, growing trees, herbaceous plants or fruit bushes.

## Parkland

The designed landscapes of ornamental parks typically include formal gardens together with larger areas of open pastoral parkland. Veteran native and exotic trees are scattered across the park or arranged in formal avenues. Clumps of trees, copses and larger woodlands are deployed for their aesthetic effect. Other ornamental features – lakes, ponds, cascades and follies may be present. Buildings – gatehouses, lodges and farms – are typically designed in a formal style to compliment the main house. The park may be visually open, often with boundary ha-has to maintain an open character, or enclosed by boundary fences or hedges and particularly in areas away from the parkland core. The park as a whole is often bounded by a high mortared stone wall.

## Subtypes



**Enclosed parkland arable.**

Enclosed ornamental farmland currently in arable use. Parkland trees may survive as isolated features within the crop. The parkland character often survives largely in the woodland pattern.

**Enclosed parkland pasture.**

Enclosed ornamental farmland currently under pasture. Field systems may date from earlier enclosures or may be contemporary with the layout of the park. The parkland character often survives largely in the woodland pattern although field or avenue trees may also be present.

**Golf courses.**

Older parkland developed as a golf course. Parkland features survive along side familiar elements of the modern golf course – bunkers, greens, fairways, roughs and ponds – as well as new tree planting usually of a 'parkland' character.

**Open parkland pasture.**

Open pastoral parkland. grasslands may be improved or semi-improved and often contain relics of the medieval landscape including rig and furrow and building platforms. Veteran parkland trees – both native and exotic - are scattered across the parkland, sometimes in great numbers. Other parkland relics – avenues, ornamental water bodies, small copses, ha-has etc may be present.

**Ornamental gardens.**

Ornamental gardens are very diverse but often include walled vegetable gardens, bordered walks and formal parterres.

## **Parks & Recreation Grounds**

A varied type incorporating a large range of recreational landscapes.

### **Subtypes**

**Allotment gardens.**

Allotment gardens vary in character but are typically laid out in regular plots which may be open or surrounded by individual fences. Some allotments contain many buildings & structures – sheds, greenhouses, poultry houses, frames etc – often made out of reclaimed materials.

**Caravan site.**

Permanent caravan sites, sometimes with touring pitches. Often located within areas of woodland. Most contain a permanent infrastructure of roadways and service buildings.

**Churchyards, cemeteries & crematoria.**

The designed amenity landscapes of churchyards, cemeteries and crematoria.

**Country parks.**

Formal recreational facilities in the countryside usually with areas of amenity grassland, car parks and other facilities.

**Golf courses.**

Extensive areas of amenity grassland with bunkers, greens, fairways, roughs and ponds with individual trees, tree groups and copses in varying degrees of maturity. Some contain elements surviving from the previous

landscape – veteran trees, hedgerows and woodlands, or fragments of heath.

**Monuments.**

Ancient monuments and their grounds - usually including areas of amenity grassland, car parks and other facilities.

**Playing fields & urban green space.**

Open spaces of amenity grassland including sports pitches and areas of informal public open space.

**River: middle reaches**

The middle reaches of major rivers meandering across narrow floodplains or running through incised denes or larger gorges. Where they cross floodplains the river banks are fenced from the adjacent farmland which is occasionally protected by low artificial levees. The river banks are often lined with narrow **Riverside woods**.

**Subtypes**

**River.**

Rapidly flowing watercourses with alternating pools and riffles, shingle banks and occasional islands.

**River bank.**

River banks fenced from adjacent pasture, or left unfenced from adjacent arable, support rough unmanaged grassland with native riverside species like Butterbur and, in places, introduced species like Himalayan Balsam, Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed. Bank side trees - Crack Willow, White Willow, Purple Willow, Alder – are common. River banks may be engineered in places, occasionally with low flood-protection levees.

**Upland woods**

A variable type covering many of the diverse woodlands of the upland dales and upland fringes.

**Subtypes**

**Ancient woods.**

Ancient semi-natural woodlands. The base-poor glacial drift of the dales and the drift-free carboniferous sandstones and shales of the upland fringes and moorland fringes support Oak (NVC W11) and Oak-birch (NVCW17) woodlands. Ash woodland communities (NVC W9) occur on limestone outcrops and Alder-Ash (NVC W7) on flushed slopes.

**Modified ancient woods.**

This subtype includes re-planted ancient woodland sites and ancient woods that have been heavily modified by the introduction of commercial or exotic species, or species not native to the locality.

**Plantation.**

Planted woodlands of very variable character, including small plantations of species like Scot's Pine, Larch, Beech and Sycamore, often planted for shelter, and larger plantations usually dominated by conifers such as Scots Pine, Larch, Norway Spruce and Sitka Spruce.

**Secondary woods and wood pasture.**

Secondary semi-natural woodlands dominated by pioneer species. Birch is often dominant in woodlands colonising unmanaged heath. A broader range of species (Birch, Ash, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Sallows, Gorse)

occurs in woodlands on disturbed land such as old quarries, lead workings and railway embankments.

## **Upland woods: denes & bluffs**

Woodlands of incised denes and steeply sloping valley-side bluffs in the upland fringes.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Ancient woods.**

Ancient semi-natural woodlands. The base-poor glacial drift and drift-free carboniferous sandstones and shales of the upland fringes support Oak (NVC W11) and Oak-birch (NVCW17) woodlands. Stands of Alder-Ash woodland (NVC W7) and Alder carr (NVC W5) occur on flushed slopes or waterlogged ground.

#### **Modified ancient woods.**

This subtype includes re-planted ancient woodland sites and ancient woods that have been heavily modified by the introduction of commercial or exotic species, or species not native to the locality.

#### **Plantation.**

Planted woodlands of very variable character, including hardwood plantations of species such as Beech, Oak and Sycamore often planted as part of parkland or estate landscapes, and plantations dominated by softwoods – some planted historically for pit-wood, others under taxation incentives in the late C20th or as part of the reclamation of derelict land and opencast coal workings

#### **Secondary woods and wood pastures.**

Secondary semi-natural woodlands dominated by pioneer species (Birch, Ash, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Sallows, Gorse) that have colonised areas of disturbed land such as railway embankments and colliery tips, or unmanaged pasture or heath.

## **Upland woods: forest**

Large scale Forestry Commission plantations in the moorland fringes. Relatively uniform tracts of conifers with regular grids of rides and tracks. Sitka Spruce is the dominant species, with areas of Scots Pine, Larch and other softwoods.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Plantation.**

The type.

## **Urban**

A variable type which covers a broad range of urban development - housing, industry, retail and commerce, community facilities and public open space. The landscape character assessment does not identify variations in character within the urban landscape at any level of detail but does identify a small number of basic subtypes.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Industrial and retail estates**

Industrial and retail estates typically have a planned layout, often with significant areas of structure planting and amenity planting. Buildings are generally large in scale and industrial in character. There may be significant areas of open operation land or vacant land awaiting development. Smaller areas of land in industrial or

commercial use are generally subsumed within the Urban subtype.

### **Gypsy and traveller site**

Small developments, often in rural or urban-fringe locations, with a planned layout of roads, hard-standings and utility blocks.

### **Institutions**

A variable subtype including schools, hospitals, colleges and other institutions in rural situations. Large individual buildings or building complexes set in areas of open green space and amenity planting.

### **Urban**

The type. Urban land including built development, gardens and public open spaces together with areas of recreational land (unless separately identified as **Parks & recreation grounds local landscape type**) and industrial/ commercial land (unless separately identified as **Industrial and retail estates subtype**).

## **Valley farmland: arable**

Arable farmland on the heavy clay soils of the valley landscapes of the exposed coal measures. Field systems are sub-regular enclosures of early post-medieval origins and remain largely intact. Field boundaries are clipped hedges, usually dominated by hawthorn. Hedgerow Ash, Oak and Sycamore trees are common.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Old Enclosure.**

The type.

## **Valley farmland: open arable**

Open arable farmland on the heavy clay soils of the valley landscapes of the exposed coal measures. Fields are often large and bounded by low clipped thorn hedges, or, more rarely, dry stone walls. Hedgerow trees are absent or infrequent.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular but disrupted in places by field amalgamations.

#### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings. Field patterns are regular and geometric.

#### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular grids, disrupted in places by field amalgamations.

## **Valley farmland: open pasture**

Open pastoral farmland of the coalfield valleys. Large fields of improved pasture with some pockets of semi-improved pasture or rough grazing, occasionally with patchy gorse or hawthorn scrub. Field boundaries are typically species poor hawthorn hedges, or a mixture of hedges and fences. Hedges are often sparse and overgrown or grazed through and supplemented by wire fences. Hedgerow trees are absent or infrequent.

Patches of rigg & furrow survive from medieval agriculture and later periods of improvement. Small field ponds, some being 'subsidence flashes' caused by underground workings, are fairly common.

## Subtypes

### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field systems are generally sub-regular although the pattern has often been disrupted by the removal or decline of hedgerows.

### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas of C20th enclosure following the restoration of mineral workings. Field patterns tend to be regular and geometric and there are few mature landscape features.

### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field systems regular although the pattern has often been disrupted by the removal or decline of hedgerows.

## **Valley farmland: pasture**

Pastoral farmland of the coalfield valleys. Pastures are mostly improved. Pockets of semi-improved pasture or meadow and wet, rushy pasture occur locally. Field systems are a mixture of early post-medieval enclosures and parliamentary enclosures in regular or sub-regular patterns and are generally relatively intact. Field boundaries are typically hawthorn dominated hedges. Older hedges tend to be slightly more diverse. Hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore are common.

## Subtypes

### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field systems are generally sub-regular in pattern, occasionally preserving the shape of arable strips. Areas of medieval or later rigg and furrow occur locally.

### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field systems regular grids.

## **Valley farmland: wooded arable**

Wooded arable farmland of the valley landscapes of the exposed coal measures. Fields are bounded by low hawthorn hedges or border onto woodlands. The pattern of woodland is very variable, being typically a combination of small ancient broadleaved woodlands in narrow denes and along watercourses, and larger blocky plantation of mixed or coniferous species.

## Subtypes

### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular but disrupted in places by field amalgamations. Field boundaries are trimmed hedgerows, usually dominated by hawthorn but sometimes more diverse, with scattered hedgerow ash and oak.

### **Reclaimed Land.**

Areas restored following opencast coal mining. Field patterns are regular and geometric. Fields are bounded by

young hedges or wire fences with few hedgerow trees.

**Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular grids of trimmed hawthorn hedges, occasionally walls, disrupted in places by field amalgamations. Hedgerow trees are scarce.

**Valley farmland: wooded estate arable**

Wooded arable estate farmland of the valley landscapes of the exposed coal measures. Fields are bounded by trimmed hedges or estate fencing, or border onto woodlands. Small copses, spinneys and shelterbelts are common along with other elements of the estate landscape: designed farmsteads, lodges, gatehouses, mortared stone walls and entrance gates.

**Subtypes**

**Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular but disrupted in places by field amalgamations. Field boundaries are trimmed hedgerows, usually dominated by hawthorn but sometimes more diverse, with scattered hedgerow ash and oak.

**Reclaimed Land.**

Areas restored following opencast coal mining. Field patterns are regular and geometric. Fields are bounded by young hedges or wire fences with few hedgerow trees.

**Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular grids of trimmed hawthorn hedges, occasionally walls, disrupted in places by field amalgamations. Hedgerow trees are scarce.

**Valley farmland: wooded estate pasture**

Wooded pastoral estate farmland of the valley landscapes of the exposed coal measures. Fields are bounded by trimmed hedges or estate fencing, or border onto woodlands. Small copses, spinneys and shelterbelts are common along with other elements of the estate landscape: designed farmsteads, lodges, gatehouses, mortared stone walls and entrance gates. Areas of older rig and furrow may survive in less improved pastures.

**Subtypes**

**Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular. Field boundaries are hedgerows, usually dominated by hawthorn. Mature hedgerow or parkland trees occur locally.

**Reclaimed Land.**

Areas restored following opencast coal mining. Field patterns are regular and geometric. Fields are bounded by young hedges or wire fences with few hedgerow trees.

**Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular. Mature hedgerow or parkland trees occur locally.



## **Valley farmland: wooded pasture**

Wooded pastoral farmland of the valley landscapes of the exposed coal measures. Fields are bounded by hedges or, less frequently, by dry stone walls. The pattern of woodland is very variable, being typically a combination of small ancient broadleaved woodlands (oak and oak-birch) in narrow denes and along watercourses, and larger blocky plantations of mixed or coniferous species.

### **Subtypes**

#### **Old Enclosure.**

Areas of early, often piecemeal, enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular but in places retain the curving alignment of medieval strip fields. Field boundaries are usually hedgerows, generally dominated by hawthorn but often containing holly, blackthorn and sometimes hazel in the oldest features. Hedgerow trees, oak and ash, are locally abundant. In areas bordering onto the upland fringes there are occasional tracts of dry stone walls constructed of thinly bedded carboniferous sandstones. Areas of rig and furrow survive in less improved pastures.

#### **Reclaimed Land.**

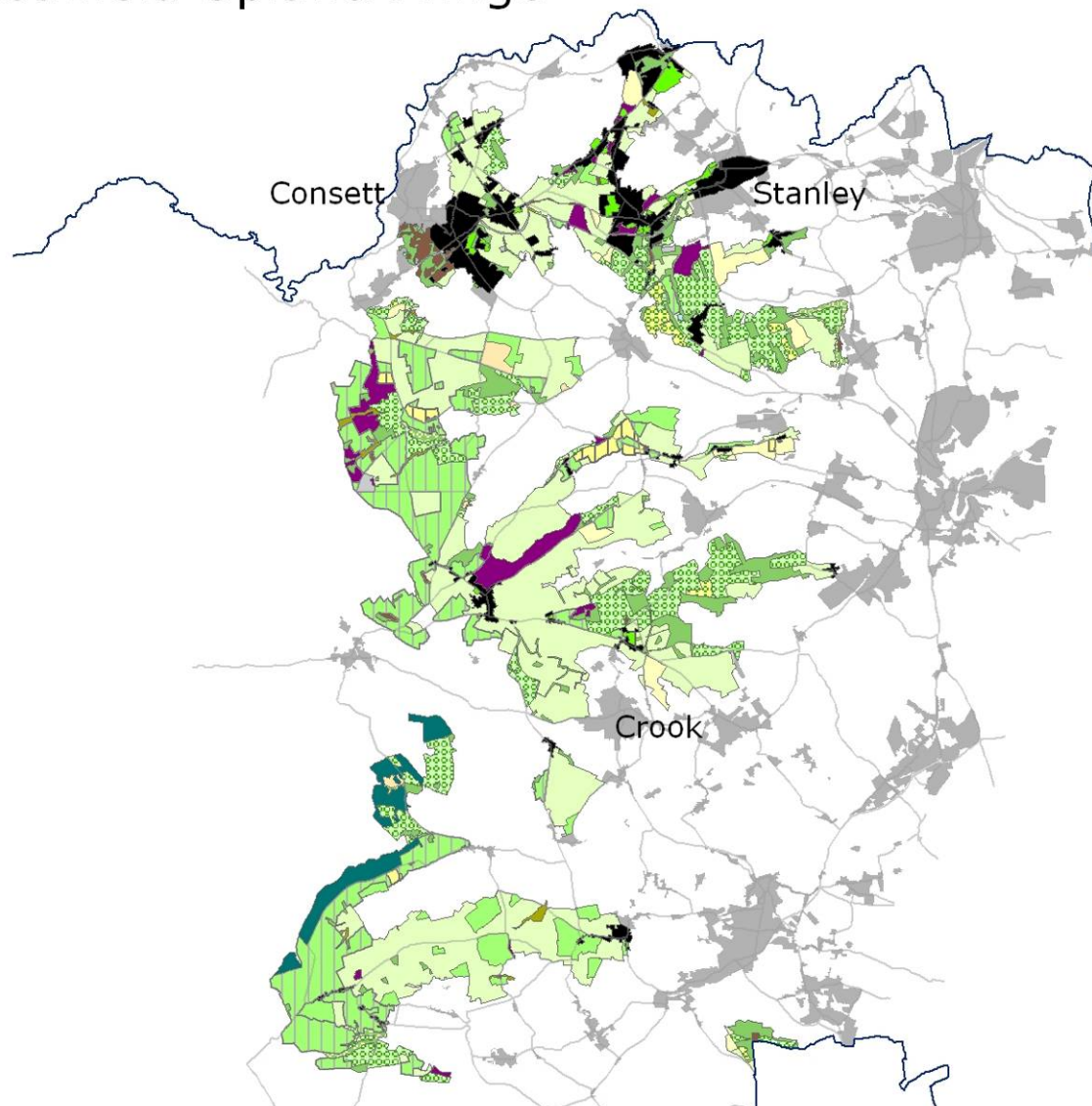
Areas restored following opencast coal mining. Field patterns are regular and geometric. Fields are bounded by young hedges and wire fences with no mature hedgerow trees. Small shelterbelts and copses, often of softwoods, are common.

#### **Surveyor Enclosed.**

Areas of late, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Field patterns are regular grids of 'ruler-straight' hawthorn hedges. Hedgerow trees are usually scarce although oak, ash, beech and sycamore may be locally abundant. In areas bordering onto the upland fringes there are occasional tracts of dry stone walls constructed of thinly bedded carboniferous sandstones.

# Local Landscape Types

## Coalfield Upland Fringe

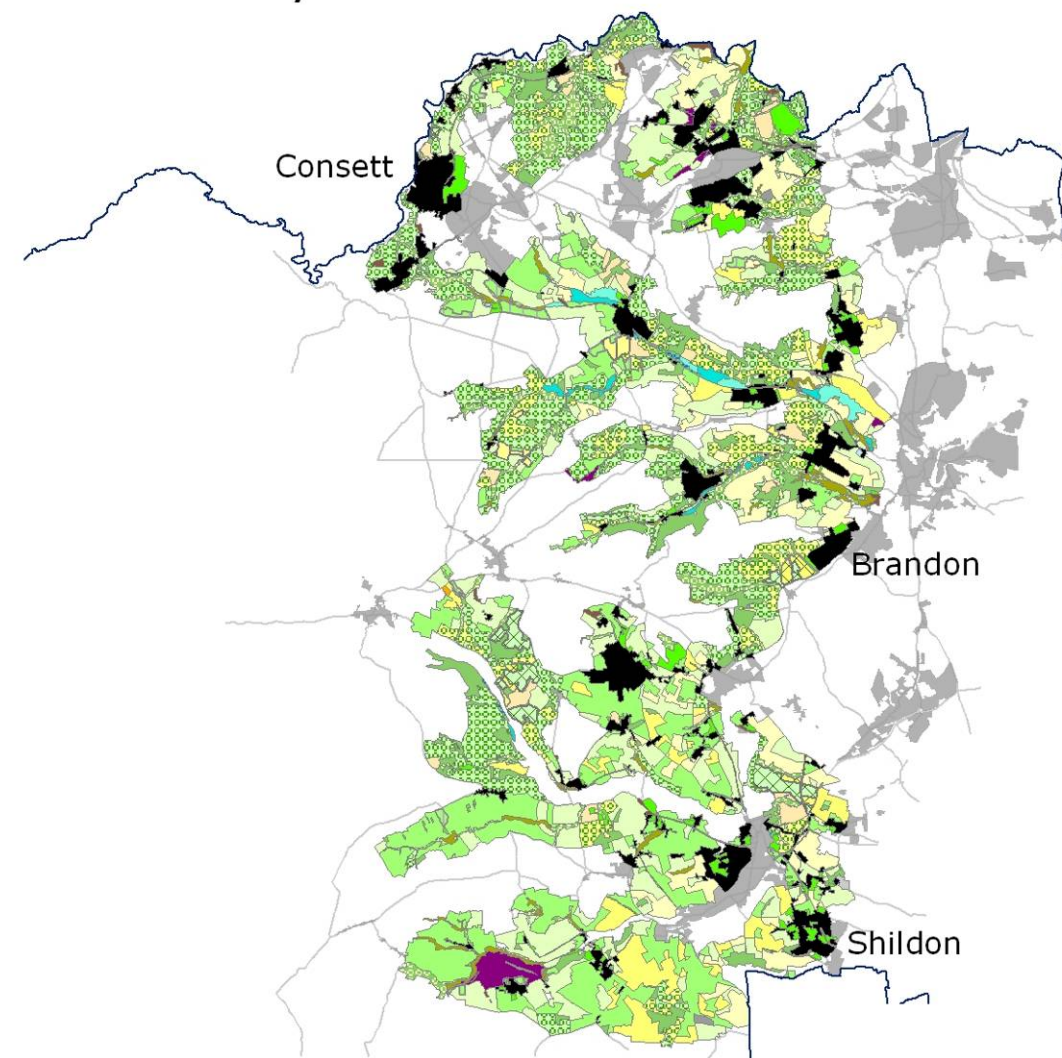


- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| County Boundary            | Upland woods                                 |
| Roads                      | Upland woods: denes & bluffs                 |
| Settlements                | Upland woods: forest                         |
| Urban                      | High ridge & valley farmland: open arable    |
| Infrastructure             | High ridge & valley farmland: open pasture   |
| Disturbed land             | High ridge & valley farmland: pasture        |
| Dene pastures              | High ridge & valley farmland: walled arable  |
| Heaths & fells             | High ridge & valley farmland: walled pasture |
| Lakes & ponds              | High ridge & valley farmland: wooded arable  |
| Parkland                   | High ridge & valley farmland: wooded pasture |
| Parks & recreation grounds |  |

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# Local Landscape Types

## Coalfield Valley



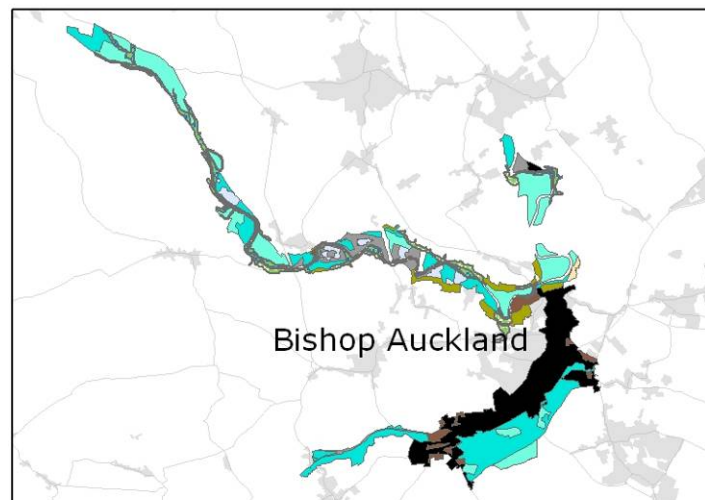
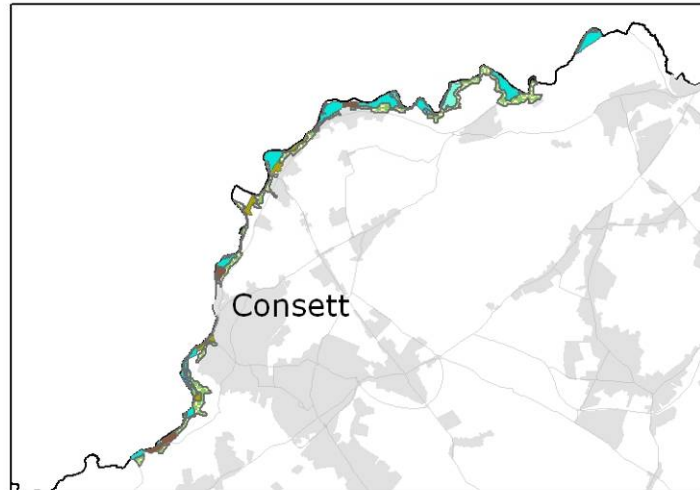
- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| County Boundary               | Lowland woods: floodplain & riverside  |
| Settlements                   | Nurseries & market gardens             |
| Roads                         | Parkland                               |
| Urban                         | Parks & recreation grounds             |
| Infrastructure                | Valley farmland: arable                |
| Disturbed land                | Valley farmland: open arable           |
| Mineral working               | Valley farmland: open pasture          |
| Dene pastures                 | Valley farmland: pasture               |
| Floodplain farmland: arable   | Valley farmland: walled arable         |
| Floodplain farmland: pasture  | Valley farmland: walled pasture        |
| Heaths & fells                | Valley farmland: wooded arable         |
| Lakes & ponds                 | Valley farmland: wooded estate arable  |
| Lowland woods                 | Valley farmland: wooded estate pasture |
| Lowland woods: denes & bluffs | Valley farmland: wooded pasture        |

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# Local Landscape Types

## Coalfield Valley Floodplain



- |                             |                                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| County Boundary             | Floodplain farmland: pasture          |
| Settlements                 | Lakes & ponds                         |
| Roads                       | Lowland woods: denes & bluffs         |
| Urban                       | Lowland woods: floodplain & riverside |
| Disturbed land              | Parkland                              |
| Dene pastures               | Parks & recreation grounds            |
| Floodplain farmland: arable |                                       |

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