



THE COUNTY DURHAM LANDSCAPE

Tees Lowlands - Local Landscape Types



Carr farmland: open arable

Open flat arable farmland on the rich alluvial gleys and earthy peats of the lowland carrs. Crops are predominantly wheat and oil-seed rape. The land may be subject to seasonal flooding. Fields are typically large and field patterns generally fragmented by C20th amalgamations. Boundaries are a mixture of water-filled ditches and hedges. Hedgerow and boundary trees are absent or scarce. The land is drained by ditches, 'drains' or 'stells' which feed into engineered watercourses, sometimes flowing above field level and protected by levees.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

Areas of early enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular but usually heavily fragmented by field amalgamations so that their pattern is no longer legible

Surveyor Enclosed.

Areas of late, 18th or 19th century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight. Overall field patterns are often heavily fragmented by field amalgamations.

Carr farmland: open pasture

Open flat pastoral farmland on the poorly drained alluvial gleys and earthy peats of the lowland carrs. Pastures are a mixture of improved and wet rushy pasture. Fields vary in size, being large in the more extensive carrs but with some smaller pastures elsewhere. Boundaries are a mixture of water-filled ditches and hedges. Hedges tend to be thin, gappy and overgrown with few hedgerow trees, and field patterns are often heavily fragmented. The land is drained by ditches, 'drains' or 'stells' which feed into engineered watercourses, sometimes flowing above field level and protected by levees. Sporadic tree lines and patches of scrub follow the main drains as well as raised features like road and railway embankments. The dry meandering courses of old rivers and streams occur locally as do seasonal and permanent ponds.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

Areas of early enclosure. Field patterns are generally sub-regular. Ditches are often 'relatively straight' rather than 'ruler straight'.

Surveyor Enclosed.

Areas of late, 18th or 19th century enclosure. Field boundaries and ditches are 'ruler straight'.

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.

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. Smaller fields have often been amalgamated to create large irregular parcels.

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, river banks. In places floodplain pastures contain meandering minor watercourses and oxbow lakes, or 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.

The type.

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 larger scale cuttings, embankments and interchanges.

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

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.

Ornamental lake

Ornamental lakes of parklands and recreation grounds. Only larger features are mapped. Many similar features may be found within the Parkland and Parks and Recreation grounds local types. They typically have a designed but 'naturalistic' shape and may be planted with ornamental or native species depending on their context.

Lowland reservoir

Small water supply reservoirs in the lowlands and upland fringes. Reservoirs may be bordered by fringes of pasture or rough grassland, or flanked by areas of woodland or forestry. Dams, spillways, pump houses and other buildings, sometimes built of stone in a formal 'estate' style, are often notable features. Bare draw down zones may be prominent when water levels are low.

Subtypes

Reservoir.

Reservoir water body.

Reservoir fringes.

Areas of pasture, rough grazing or unmanaged grassland bordering the reservoirs & containing dams, spillways and other infrastructure.

Lowland woods

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

Subtypes

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.

Lowland woods: denes, bluffs & river terraces

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 washlands.

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

Permian limestone quarry

Large quarries worked primarily for road stone, chemical and refractory products. Quarry faces are of soft creamy yellow magnesian limestones. Crushing, screening and coating plant occupy parts of the quarry floor. Lime-rich quarry wastes, overburdens and lime heaps support a very diverse calcareous grassland flora including many stress tolerant species like orchids, and secondary woodlands of ash, elder, hawthorn, goat willow, grey willow and wild rose species which may colonise undisturbed areas.

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 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.

Open parkland arable.

Open parkland currently in arable use. Few parkland features other than the larger woodland pattern and occasional isolated trees usually survive

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 sites.

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.

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.

Playing fields & urban green space.

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

Race course

Race courses typically include a race track and associated building complex and car parking

Plain farmland: arable

Gently rolling or gently undulating arable farmland on the heavy clay soils of the Tees plain. Field boundaries are largely pre-inclosure hedges, usually dominated by hawthorn and trimmed fairly low, with scattered (locally abundant) hedgerow ash, oak and sycamore. Field patterns are sub-regular, often preserving the curving alignment of medieval strip fields, and are locally disrupted by field amalgamations.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Surveyor Enclosed.

Small tracts of late, 18th or 19th century enclosure. Field boundaries are straight and field patterns are regular grids.

Plain farmland: open arable

Open, gently rolling or gently undulating arable farmland on the heavy clay soils of the Tees plain. Field boundaries are largely pre-inclosure hedges, usually dominated by hawthorn and trimmed fairly low. Field sizes are large and the sub-regular patterns of former field systems are heavily disrupted by field amalgamations. Hedgerow trees are absent or infrequent.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Plain farmland: open pasture

Open, gently rolling or gently undulating farmland of improved and semi-improved pasture on the heavy clay soils of the Tees plain. Fields are often large and bounded by low clipped thorn hedges or wire fences. Hedgerow trees are absent or infrequent. Older pastures often preserve relics of medieval rigg and furrow and deserted or shrunken medieval villages.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Reclaimed land

Small areas of reclaimed landfill. Open, poor quality pasture lacking mature landscape features.

Plain farmland: pasture

Open, gently rolling or gently undulating farmland of improved and semi-improved pasture on the heavy clay soils of the Tees plain. Fields boundaries are hawthorn hedges, clipped in places and tall and overgrown in others, with scattered, locally abundant, hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore. Field patterns are sub-regular, often preserving the curving alignment of medieval strip fields. Older pastures often preserve relics of medieval rigg and furrow and deserted or shrunken medieval villages. Small field ponds are common.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Plain farmland: wooded arable

Gently rolling or gently undulating wooded arable farmland on the heavy clay soils of the Tees plain. Field boundaries are largely pre-inclosure hedges, usually dominated by hawthorn and trimmed fairly low, with scattered (locally abundant) hedgerow ash, oak and sycamore. Field patterns are sub-regular, often preserving the curving alignment of medieval strip fields, but heavily disrupted by field amalgamations in places.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Surveyor Enclosed.

Small tracts of late 19th century enclosure. Field boundaries are generally straight.

Plain farmland: wooded estate arable

Undulating wooded arable farmland. Field boundaries are pre-inclosure hedges, usually dominated by hawthorn and trimmed fairly low, with scattered (locally abundant) hedgerow ash, oak and sycamore. Field patterns are sub-regular, occasionally preserving the curving alignment of medieval strip fields, but more often disrupted by field amalgamations. Small copses, coverts 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.

The type.

Plain farmland: wooded estate pasture

Undulating wooded pastoral farmland. Fields of improved and semi-improved pasture are bounded by low, clipped thorn hedges or wire fences with scattered hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore. Field patterns are sub-regular. Small copses, coverts and shelterbelts are common along with other elements of the estate landscape: designed farmsteads, lodges, gatehouses, mortared stone walls and entrance gates. Older pastures often preserve relics of medieval rigg and furrow. Field ponds are common in poorly drained hollows.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Plain farmland: wooded pasture

Wooded, gently rolling or gently undulating farmland of improved and semi-improved pasture on the heavy clay soils of the Tees plain. Fields are often large and bounded by low, clipped, often gappy thorn hedges or wire fences with scattered, locally abundant hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore. Field patterns are sub-regular, occasionally preserving the curving alignment of medieval strip fields. Older pastures may preserve relics of medieval rigg and furrow and deserted or shrunken medieval villages. Small field ponds are common.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

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, and Alder – are common. River banks may be engineered in places, occasionally with low flood-protection levees.

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.

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).

Vale floor farmland: arable

Gently rolling or gently undulating arable farmland on the fertile brown earths and heavy clay soils of the Tees Vale. Field boundaries are pre-inclosure hedges, usually dominated by hawthorn and regularly trimmed, with abundant hedgerow ash, oak and sycamore. Field patterns are sub-regular, preserving in places the curving alignment of medieval strip fields.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Vale floor farmland: open arable

Gently rolling or gently undulating arable farmland on the fertile brown earths and heavy clay soils of the Tees Vale. Field boundaries are pre-inclosure hedges, usually dominated by hawthorn and regularly trimmed. Field patterns are generally sub-regular, often with large fields or field patterns disrupted by hedgerow removal. There are few trees.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Surveyor enclosed.

Areas of C19th and C20th field rationalisation with straight hedgerows in fairly regular patterns though traversed by winding lanes and with the occasional older hedges.

Vale floor farmland: open pasture

Rolling pastoral farmland on the fertile brown earths and heavy clay soils of the Tees Vale. Pastures are mostly improved but with isolated pockets of semi-improved pasture or meadow. Field systems are a mixture of early post-medieval enclosures and later rationalisations, and boundary networks are often fragmented. Field boundaries are hedges, usually dominated by hawthorn though often containing other species (holly, blackthorn). Hedges are generally trimmed, though sometimes tall and overgrown. There are thinly scattered hedgerow ash, oak and sycamore.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type.

Surveyor enclosed.

Areas of C19th and C20th rationalisation.

Vale floor farmland: pasture

Rolling pastoral farmland on the fertile brown earths and heavy clay soils of the Tees Vale. Pastures are mostly improved but with pockets of semi-improved pasture or meadow. Field systems are early post-medieval enclosures, much of it being enclosure of the town fields of the vale's many small villages. Field systems are generally sub-regular in pattern, occasionally preserving the curving linear shape of arable strips. Hedges may be hawthorn dominated but often contain a wider range of species. Holly is present in many hedges and hazel in the oldest hedges such as those on township boundaries. Hedges are regularly trimmed, though occasionally tall and overgrown. Hedgerow oak, ash and sycamore are common, and locally abundant. Relics of the medieval landscape – deserted villages, rigg and furrow, old mill races etc. occur locally.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

The type

Surveyor Enclosed.

Areas of late, 18th or 19th century enclosure, or later rationalisations. Field boundaries are straight and field systems are regular grids.

Vale floor farmland: wooded estate arable

Gently undulating wooded arable farmland. The landscape is largely unenclosed with fields defined by crop margins and tracks or woodland edges, with occasional old hedges. Woodlands include medium to large scale mixed plantations, generally with curving boundaries, and smaller copses and coverts.

Subtypes

Old Enclosure.

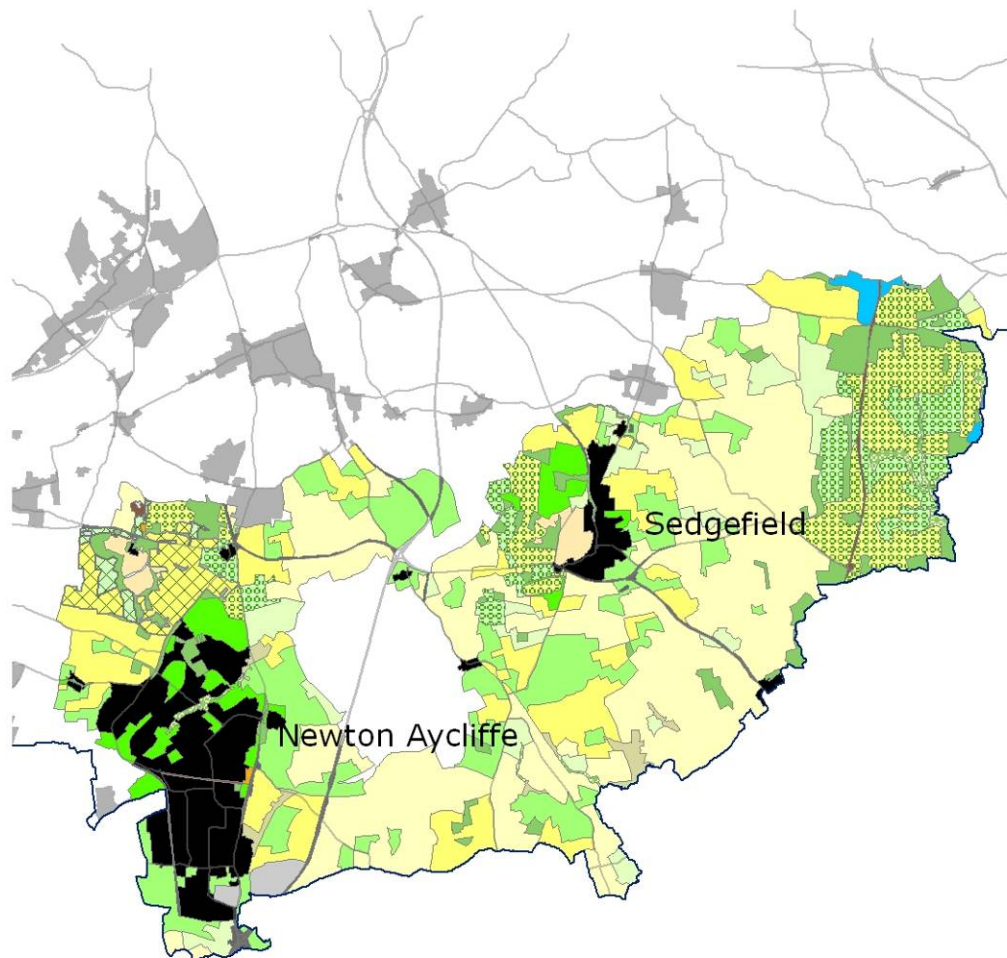
The type

Piecemeal enclosure

Areas of C19th and C20th rationalisation.

Local Landscape Types

Lowland Plain

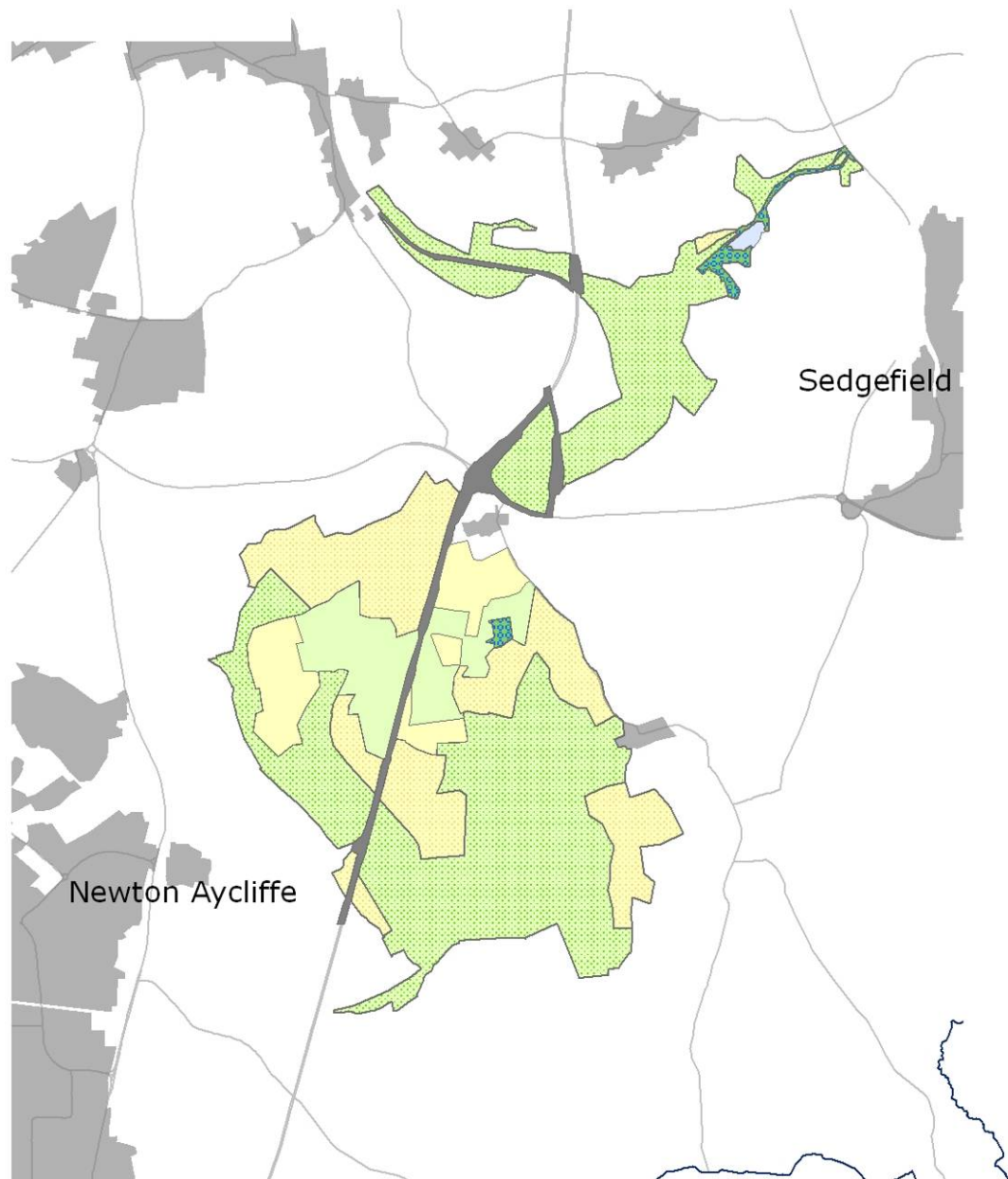


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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| County Boundary | Lowland woods: floodplain & riverside |
| Settlements | Nurseries & market gardens |
| Roads | Parkland |
| Urban | Parks & recreation grounds |
| Infrastructure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

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Local Landscape Types

Lowland Carrs

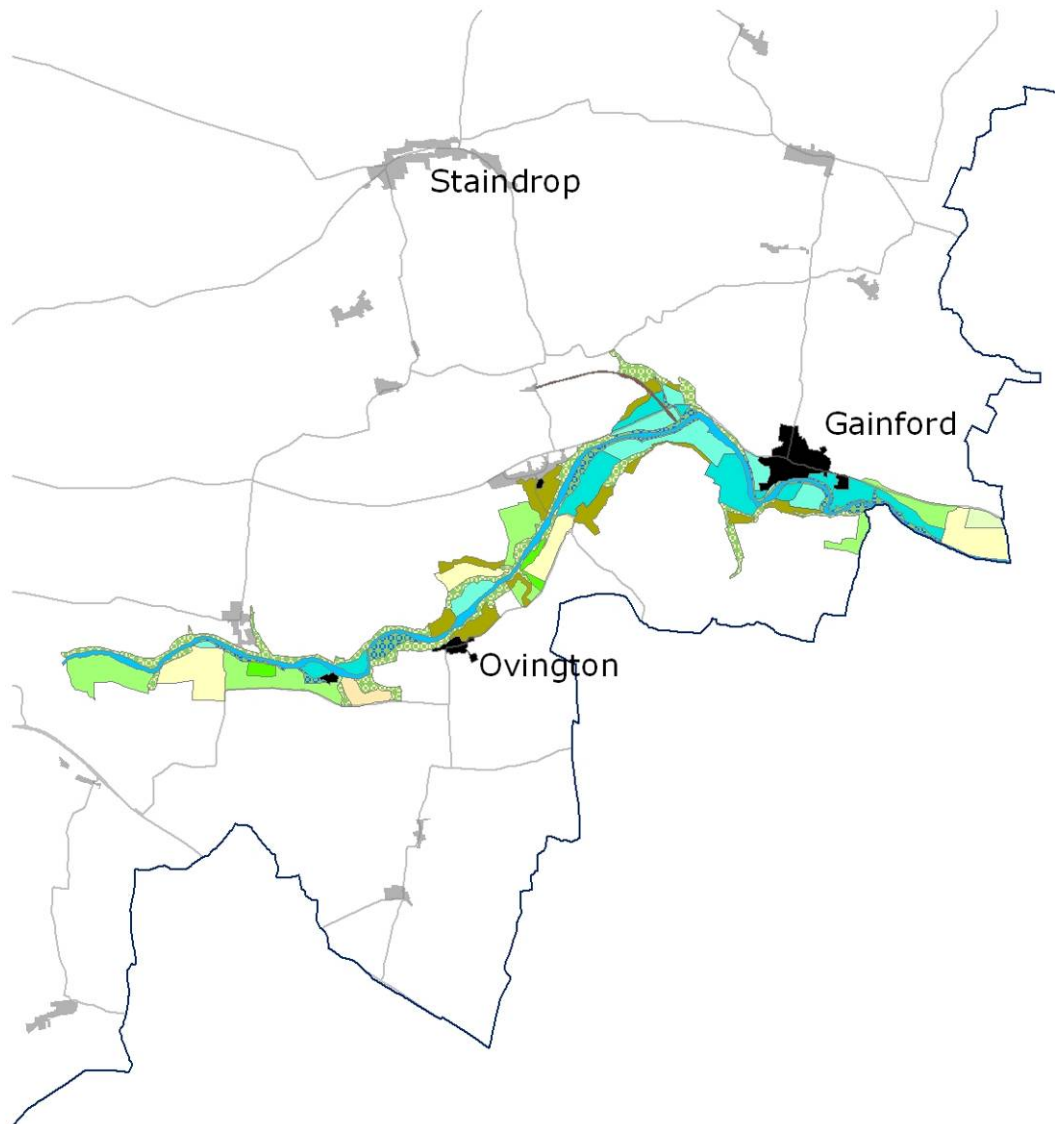


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|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| County Boundary | Carr farmland: open pasture |
| Settlements | Lakes & ponds |
| Roads | Lowland woods: floodplain & riverside |
| Infrastructure | Plain farmland: open arable |
| Carr farmland: open arable | Plain farmland: open pasture |

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Local Landscape Types

Lowland River Terraces

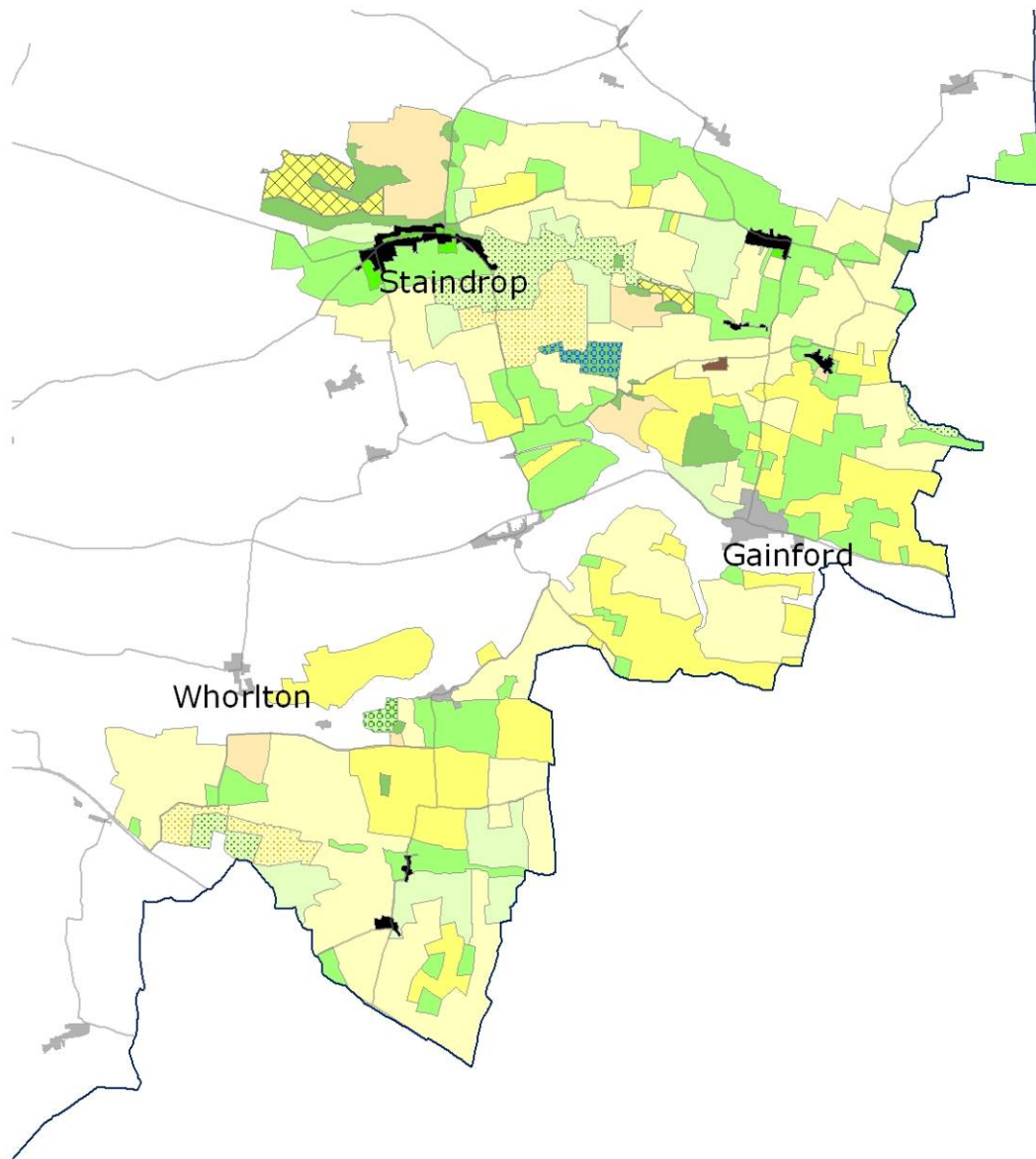


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|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| County Boundary | Lowland woods: denes & bluffs |
| Roads | Lowland woods: floodplain & riverside |
| Settlements | Parkland |
| Urban | Parks & recreation grounds |
| Disturbed land | River: middle reaches |
| Dene pastures | Vale floor farmland: open arable |
| Floodplain farmland: arable | Vale floor farmland: open pasture |
| Floodplain farmland: pasture | Vale floor farmland: pasture |

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Local Landscape Types

Lowland Vale



- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| County Boundary | Parks & recreation grounds |
| Roads | Urban |
| Carr farmland: open arable | Vale floor farmland: arable |
| Carr farmland: open pasture | Vale floor farmland: open arable |
| Disturbed land | Vale floor farmland: open pasture |
| Lowland woods | Vale floor farmland: pasture |
| Lowland woods: floodplain & riverside | Vale floor farmland: wooded estate arable |
| Parkland | Vale floor farmland: wooded pasture |
| | Settlements |

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