

## Type 12

# Higher Limestone



This open and sometimes exposed, varied scale landscape is diverse in character, historic features, textures and has distinctive limestone characteristics. Improved pasture and heather moorland is abundant. Other land cover includes ancient woodland and parkland. On the higher ground limestone pavement, scars and grasslands are present; these have high ecological and conservation value. Carboniferous Limestone forms the dominant geology in this area with a small intrusion of Shap Granite near Shap.

This type is found along the edges of the Lake District National Park. It is identified as Upland Limestone Farmland in its Landscape character assessment. The National Park has not identified landscape character sub types.

Sub types:

**12a Limestone Farmland**

**12b Rolling Fringe**

**12c Limestone Foothills**

**12d Moorland and Commons**

# Limestone farmland

## Location

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This subtype is found to the east of the Lake District National Park between Shap and Kirkby Stephen. The sub type continues into the national park and is classified as Type I – Upland Limestone Farmland in the Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment. Most of this type meets the criteria for National Park designation and is being considered for designation in 2010/11.

## Key Characteristics

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- Rolling upland farmed landscape
- Distinctive limestone characteristics in the form of strong field patterns with high stone walls
- Land cover is dominated by improved or semi-improved pasture
- Small broad leaved, coniferous or mixed plantations provide variety and interest
- Historic features are often obvious and evoke a strong sensory response

## Physical character

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This sub type is dominated by Carboniferous limestone overlain by glacial till. In places outcrops provide high geological interest. Other areas of interest are associated with the till and fluvial glacial deposits exposed along Scandal Beck. This provides key evidence for interpreting late Quaternary stratigraphy.

This is a rolling upland farmed landscape found between 250-300m AOD. The area is intersected by small streams and rivers and has distinctive limestone characteristics. The area forms a transitional area with the higher Lakeland and Howgill Fells.

## Land cover and land use

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The underlying limestone geology is present through the strong pattern of fields bounded by high stone walls and other built stone features, such as lime kilns and traditional farm buildings. The matrix of walls emphasise the rolling landform.

Land cover is dominated by improved or semi-improved pasture. Tree clumps and small broadleaved, coniferous or mixed plantations often near farmhouses are typical features. In the Orton-Raisbeck area the scale of fields is larger with a pattern dominated by large allotments and more open moorland. Around some of the villages and hamlets there is smaller scale pasture with some long, narrow fields. At lower levels the patchwork of walls give way to hedges with some field boundary trees.

The local building vernacular is dominated by limestone with a mixture of discrete nucleated villages and dispersed farms. These are mainly connected by small roads that often follow the grain of the landscape.

In the western parts the M6 motorway, rail line, pylons and large quarries contrast with the pastoral characteristics and introduce discordant man made features in the landscape.

## Ecology

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This landscape supports some of the most species-rich hay meadows in Cumbria and is also notable for broad species-rich roadside verges. Where the limestone outcrop areas of limestone grassland are present and in places there are extensive species-rich springs and flushes with alpine bartsia and black bog-rush. Stands of upland ash woodland are present along gills and river valleys. The many small rivers that dissect this landscape support both otter and white-clawed crayfish.

## Historic and cultural character

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A landscape of nucleated villages with a variety of early and late enclosed fields all bounded by dry stone walls containing features such as hog holes and bee boles. The villages often have traditional village greens and traditional limestone built farm buildings within them. Isolated field barns also feature. The landscape has a variety of well preserved earthwork remains including ridge and furrow and lynchets. The boundaries of former late medieval deer parks are preserved within the modern field pattern. Archaeological remains include prehistoric stone circles and cairns, early medieval settlement remains and the remains of abandoned quarries and limekilns. The historic legacy is rich and discernable.

## Perceptual character

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This is a farmed landscape with a pastoral character. The bright greens of improved fields contrast with darker unimproved and more open land. At lower levels there is a sense of enclosure, which changes to a more open and expansive, feeling on more exposed areas. There are long, open views and mainly uncluttered views of the Lakeland Fells, the Howgills and the Northern Pennines. There is a strong sense of history derived from a wealth of historic features and a sense of remoteness in many parts. Changes in the weather can give an elemental feeling and accentuate feelings of exposure and remoteness.

## Sensitive characteristics or features

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The limestone vernacular from field walls, lime kilns and traditional farm and village buildings is sensitive to changes in land management and new development patterns and materials. Species rich hay meadows and roadside verges, and the matrix of walls that reinforce the rolling landscape grain and varied historic field patterns are sensitive to changes in land management. Small, traditional villages, with a rural character and village greens are sensitive to village expansion. Discrete rural roads winding along contours are sensitive to highway improvements. Archaeological remains and historic farm buildings and features are sensitive to changes in landscape management and village/farmstead

expansion. Long open views to the Fells, Pennines and Howgills are sensitive to large scale and prominent development that could significantly interrupt views.

## Vision

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### **This landscape will be conserved and enhanced.**

This well managed landscape will be fostered while the historic field and settlement pattern will be conserved and maintained retaining the open character of this landscape. Historic earthworks and other archaeological and features of historic interest will be conserved. Wildlife interest will be increased to help enhance this landscape. This will be achieved through conserving, restoring and extending small woods, flower-rich grassland and field boundary trees, increasing habitat diversity and enriching the less diverse areas. Farm buildings, roads and quarry extensions will be carefully controlled and designed. Development will be of high quality and complement the local vernacular in this sensitive landscape.

## Changes in the Landscape

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

### **Management Practices**

- Farming practices are the primary influence on the character of this distinctive landscape and changes in policy or grant funding regimes could effect the future management of landscape features both positively and negatively.
- Over the past few decades the tendency towards intensively managed grassland and silage production has produced 'clean' well-managed fields.
- A lack of grant money available to farmers and the terrain may influence their capability to diversify and, therefore, farm incomes could suffer significantly.
- Current grant regimes can help prevent the loss and neglect of stone walls, decline in botanical interest, neglect of woods and field boundary trees.
- Intensive grazing regimes and field improvements have reduced biodiversity and caused harm to historic features in the past.

### Development

- These 'transitional' landscapes are traditionally fragile in nature and new development may further exaggerate this trend eroding distinctive characteristics.
- The Government's commitment to renewable energy could see an interest in large scale wind energy schemes in this open area which could change key open views and the feeling of remoteness felt in parts of this area.
- The need to upgrade the national grid during the next decade could see changes in character where pylons already exist along the M6 corridor.
- The M6 corridor as an element in the landscape could have the potential to attract new large scale commercial development. Improvements to surfacing, lighting and information systems along the motorway could affect its appearance and people's awareness of it in the landscape.
- As agricultural practices shift they have been a move towards the erection of large scale farm buildings which – depending on their design - can be particularly intrusive in the higher open parts of this landscape.
- Planned and incremental expansions to villages may be needed to support the rural economy and agricultural diversification. This needs to be sensitive to the historic form, local topography and vernacular to prevent erosion of the landscape character.
- Maintain and enhance existing species rich grassland, meadow and flush.
- Support improvements to the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest that will enhance and support a more diverse landscape.
- Plant new field boundary trees or tagging selected saplings to replace maturing stock using indigenous or locally established species.
- Reinforce existing woods by appropriate management, natural regeneration, restocking and exclusion of stock.
- Establish new small to medium scale native broad-leaved, mixed plantations woods on improved farmland and along beck sides.
- Avoid new planting on species rich grassland, wetland and higher open landscapes or where it might obscure distinctive field patterns.

### Cultural Features

- Discourage field enlargement and 'ranching' that result in the loss of traditional field patterns and boundaries.
- Manage and restore walls and hedgerows in a traditional way
- Restrict introduction of fences to replace or 'gap-up' walls and hedgerows.
- Restore fenced boundaries to traditional walls and hedgerows
- Conserve historic artifacts including burial mounds, cairns, settlement earthworks, standing stones, through avoidance of damaging agricultural activities such as disturbance and removal of stones, levelling and excavation, planting trees, poaching, ploughing and tipping.
- Conserve and enhance historic structures such as limekilns and stone barns. This may include protection from stock, removal of trees or scrub or carrying out structural repairs with archaeological advice.
- Protect features such as long fields behind villages and funnel shaped intakes.

### Access and Recreation

- Public rights of way provide a network of routes that enable quiet appreciation and enjoyment of the countryside. Ongoing maintenance is needed to support this network in the future.
- Current farm stewardship grants provide the opportunity to develop more public access in the countryside. Future grant or other programmes may continue to support this.

## Guidelines

### Natural Features

- Restrict further agricultural improvement of existing semi-improved pastures and meadows, including ploughing, fertilising, herbicide spraying, reseeding and liming. Restore areas lost to improvements where possible.

### Development

- Avoid development in the transitional, fragile and exposed areas that will degrade their character, specifically tall or vertical energy infrastructure developments such as large scale wind turbines and pylons.
- Avoid siting large scale wind energy, other vertical structures such as telecommunications masts,



pylons and overhead transmission lines in open and prominent areas where it could degrade the rural character of the area.

- Retain the rural character of the M6 corridor by resisting large scale commercial development and ensuring new motorway infrastructure such as information signs and necessary lighting is sited to minimise adverse effects on open parts of the landscape. Noise pollution should be mitigated against through careful selection of surface materials.
- Protect settlement fringes from unsympathetic development.
- Ensure new development respects scale, form and distinctive character of villages.
- Enhance through sensitive environmental improvements to entrances, village greens and planting etc.
- Conserve and maintain traditional farm buildings.
- New farm buildings, structures, tracks and access ways should be sympathetic to their surroundings. This can be achieved by careful siting; integration with existing buildings, breaking down mass, choice of sympathetic colours and non-reflective finishes and appropriate planting.

### ***Access and Recreation***

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

## Sub type 12b

# Rolling Fringe

## Location

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This subtype is found around the fringe of the Lake District National Park, near Ullock in the west, from Tallentire to Caldbeck in the north and from Stainton to Drybeck in the east. The sub type continues into the national park and is classified as Type I – Upland Limestone Farmland in the Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment.

## Key Characteristics

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- Large-scale undulating topography
- Large fields of improved pasture
- Stone walls mainly in the east, occasional hedges and fence boundaries
- Very sparse tree cover
- Some large scale conifer plantations
- Small streams and rivers cut through the rolling topography

## Physical character

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This sub type is dominated by Carboniferous limestone overlain by glacial till. In the east this type is transitional between the true limestone landscape and the glacial and valley types. In the north it forms the fringe of the northern Lake District fells. It mainly comprises large scale, rolling or undulating topography at altitudes of 150-300m AOD with some high points reaching around 380m AOD. Small streams and rivers provide variation in topography.

## Land cover and land use

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Although a limestone landscape limestone features are mostly absent, with limestone crags be found in just a few places.

Land cover consists of large, often rectangular, fields of improved pasture divided by stone walls, fences or occasional hedges. Walls are a strong feature in the east, but sparse in the north. Here hedges criss cross the landscape and form a strong feature. Areas of rough pasture with moorland and moss can be found at higher elevations and add interest to the area.

Tree cover is generally sparse apart from extensive, but isolated coniferous plantations in the north, and occasional woodland clumps in lower areas and on knolls.

Settlements are generally nucleated with dispersed farms throughout the landscape. Roads often cut across the topography, and are often enclosed by strong hedge and wall boundaries.

Included in the sub-type is an area further to the south at a slightly lower elevation (100-200m AOD). The northern part of this has some natural limestone features, which are absent elsewhere. This is a fairly simple landscape, with clear views to the Lakeland Fells.

## Ecology

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This is a landscape of improved grassland with only occasional hedgerows. Areas of semi-natural vegetation are scarce, but include occasional areas of limestone grassland, particularly around the Orton Fells, and small upland ash woods. A few species-rich roadside verges are also present. The main feature of ecological interest in this landscape is a disused quarry which hosts a large great crested newt population of international importance.

## Historic and cultural character

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Features of historical interest abound. In the east the landscape features nucleated villages surrounded by early enclosed field systems featuring fossilised strips. There is

a variety of well preserved earthwork remains including ridge and furrow and lynchets. In the north it is still a discrete village landscape but with fewer fossilised strips in the surrounding field pattern. Here late enclosed outfields are a feature of the field system. Archaeological remains include Viking Age artefacts in Allerdale and in all areas there is widespread evidence of quarrying, lime kilns and lime burning.

## Perceptual character

This is largely a simple, open landscape, with a more intimate feel in the valleys, and a contrasting feel of wildness in the moorland areas. This can be accentuated in poor and stormy weather. Views are often expansive across to the Lakeland Fells, but on the eastern side are dominated by television transmission masts. Otherwise the landscape has a pastoral feel with some tranquillity and a sense of peacefulness.

## Sensitive characteristics or features

Walls and hedge mosaics to improved pasture are sensitive to changes in land management. Nucleated and discrete vernacular villages reinforce the farmland character and are sensitive to village expansion. Scarce limestone outcrops, features and grassland provide important interest and biodiversity and are sensitive to changes in land management. Open, uninterrupted views across moorland to a backdrop of hills are sensitive to large prominent infrastructure or other development.

## Vision

**This landscape will be enhanced through restoring and creating new features.** Hard edges of conifer plantations will be softened to reflect the topography. New planting with a diversity of tree species will take place. Field boundaries will be strengthened while retaining the open and unfenced character of this landscape. Historic and ecological features will be restored and enhanced. In order to avoid intrusion into this landscape, development will be strictly controlled particularly where it could affect key views into the Lake District National Park.

## Changes in the Landscape

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

### *Management Practices*

- The loss of tree cover and similar features.
- The neglect of hedgerows leading to the loss of traditional characteristics.
- Farming practices are the primary influence on the character of this distinctive landscape and changes in policy or grant funding regimes could effect the future management of landscape features both positively and negatively.
- A lack of grant money available to farmers and the terrain may influence their capability to diversify and, therefore, farm incomes could suffer significantly.
- Current grant regimes can help prevent the loss and neglect of stone walls, decline in botanical interest, and neglect of hedges.
- Intensive grazing regimes and field improvements have reduced biodiversity and need to be better managed in the future.

### *Development*

- These 'transitional' landscapes are traditionally fragile in nature and new development may further exaggerate this trend eroding distinctive characteristics.
- The Government's commitment to renewable energy could see an interest in large scale wind energy schemes in this open area which could change key open views and the feeling of wildness felt in parts of this area.
- The M6 corridor as an element in the landscape could have the potential to attract new large scale commercial development. Improvements to surfacing, lighting and information systems along the motorway could affect its appearance and people's awareness of it in the landscape.
- The need to upgrade the national grid during the next decade could see changes in character where pylons already exist along the M6 corridor.
- As agricultural practices shift they have been a move towards the erection of large scale farm buildings which – depending on their design - can be particularly intrusive in the higher open parts of this landscape.
- Planned and incremental expansions to villages may be needed to support the rural economy and

agricultural diversification. This needs to be sensitive to the historic form, local topography and vernacular to prevent erosion of the landscape character.

### **Access and Recreation**

- Public rights of way and open access land provide a network of routes that enable quiet appreciation and enjoyment of the countryside. Ongoing maintenance is needed to support this network in the future.
- Current farm stewardship grants provide the opportunity to develop more public access in the countryside. Future grant or other programmes may continue to support this.
- Avoid siting large scale wind energy, other vertical structures such as telecommunications masts, pylons and overhead transmission lines in open and prominent areas where they could degrade the rural character of the area.
- Retain the rural character of the M6 corridor by resisting large scale commercial development and ensuring new motorway infrastructure such as information signs and necessary lighting is sited to minimise adverse effects on open parts of the landscape. Noise pollution should be mitigated against through careful selection of surface materials.
- Protect settlement fringes from unsympathetic development.
- Ensure new development respects scale, form and distinctive character of villages.
- Enhance through sensitive environmental improvements to entrances, village greens and planting etc.
- Conserve and maintain traditional farm buildings.
- New farm buildings, structures, tracks and access ways should be sympathetic to their surroundings. This can be achieved by careful siting; integration with existing buildings, breaking down mass, choice of sympathetic colours and non-reflective finishes and appropriate planting.

## **Guidelines**

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### **Natural Features**

- Ameliorative measures to help integrate conifer plantations into the landscape and aid in the re-wooding of areas that have lost tree cover.
- Planting of mixed woods on improved agricultural land, avoiding areas of mossland and moor.
- Introduce more small woodlands, tree groups and feature trees using typical limestone species e.g. Ash while maintaining essential openness.
- Reinforce existing woods by appropriate management and additional planting.
- Create focal points within woodland and encourage informal recreation.

### **Cultural Features**

- Encourage the restoration of fenced boundaries to traditional walls or hedgerows.
- Encourage the planting of new hedgerows in more sheltered locations and traditional management.
- Encourage the management and restoration of stone walls and other field boundary features.
- Discourage the expansion of well preserved traditional settlements. Where development is necessary to support viable communities expansion should be discrete and respect the preserved character.

### **Development**

- Avoid development in the transitional, fragile and exposed areas that will degrade their character, specifically tall or vertical energy infrastructure developments such as large scale wind turbines and pylons.

### **Access and Recreation**

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



# Limestone Foothills

## Location

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This sub type is found around Greystoke and the Lake District National Park. The sub type continues into the Mungrisedale Valley in the national park and is classified as Type I – Upland Limestone Farmland in the Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment.

## Key Characteristics

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- Rolling undulating topography with occasional plateaus
- Limestone pavements, crags and other rock outcrops are rare
- Areas of unimproved and improved pasture
- Stone walls and hedges reinforce the pastoral features
- In the south, small pasture fields with the presence of both disused and active quarries
- Ancient woodland and parkland
- Large forestry plantations

## Physical character

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This sub type is dominated by Carboniferous limestone overlain by glacial till. Some rocky outcrops form notable local features. The land rises to the adjacent Lakeland fells at an elevation of 220-360m AOD. The rolling undulating topography is occasionally steep and sometimes appears plateau-like.

## Land cover and land use

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The sub type is dominated by large forestry plantations around Greystoke and Johnby. The large blocks of forest and other woodland are the main features in this type. Elsewhere the land cover is largely characterised by unimproved pasture, areas of ancient woodland and parkland. Deciduous shelterbelts often edge coniferous plantations and help integrate them better with the rolling topography.

Field sizes are a mixture of large allotments and smaller fields. These are mainly bounded by stone walls or hedgerows. These can be tall and strong alongside roads. Pavements, crags and other rock outcrops are rare.

In the southern part of this sub type, the dominant characteristics come from small pasture fields, bounded by stone walls. The fields are interspersed with the pockmarks of old and active quarries. This contrasts with the large scale features found elsewhere.

Settlements are generally dispersed with a mixture of limestone and sandstone vernacular.

## Ecology

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One of the most notable features of this landscape are the broad roadside verges which support species-rich stands of tall herbs, neutral grassland, limestone grassland and rush pasture. Small areas of limestone grassland are also found around small outcrops of limestone and species-rich springs and flushes are also occasionally present. Small areas of upland ash woodland are sometimes present, but one of the main woodland features is the wood pasture and veteran trees of Greystoke Park. The landscape also supports barn owls and red squirrels.

## Historic and cultural character

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The settlement pattern features nucleated villages with limestone built traditional buildings. The field systems are mainly planned enclosure on former medieval wastes and feature dry stone walls and fossilised strips. Evidence of deer parks as at Greystoke Castle, are preserved within existing boundaries. Earthwork remains relating to medieval habitation and farming are associated with the villages but many have been removed in recent years.

## Perceptual character

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This is a large scale, open landscape which becomes smaller and more intimate in the wooded areas and in the southern part. This landscape is tranquil and peaceful, and has a strong relationship with the Lake District fells and national park. The changes in characteristics provide interest and the Parkland (eg Greystoke Park) is considered beautiful by many. In the more open parts of the west and north there are clear views of the Lake District fells which reinforce a sense of remoteness. Changes to the weather can accentuate the feeling of remoteness, especially when windswept and wet, or the feeling of tranquility on dry and still days.

## Sensitive characteristics or features

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Ancient woodland and parkland landscapes are sensitive to large scale development or significant plantation expansion. The matrix of walls and hedges reinforcing farmland and enclosing rural roads are sensitive to changes in land management. Ecologically sensitive roadside verges are vulnerable to road improvements and access to development. Small scale vernacular villages of limestone and sandstone and medieval earthworks and remains around settlements are sensitive to settlement expansion and new building design and materials' use. The sense of remoteness that is reinforced by the proximity to Lakeland Fells is sensitive to large scale agricultural, tourism or wind energy development.

## Vision

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**The high quality elements of this landscape will be conserved and enhanced.** Key components such as the strong pattern of limestone walls and hedgerows will be conserved and enhanced. Rare components such as species rich meadows, hay meadows and historic features such as lime kilns especially where associated with limestone pavement will be conserved, enhanced or extended. The extensive blankets of coniferous forest will be improved so that they relate more closely to the rolling topography while scattered patterns of woodland copses associated with hill tops and farm buildings will be developed to enrich the landscape and provide a diverse array of habitats. Intrusive development will be mitigated

where possible while inappropriate development and residential extensions to villages will be strictly controlled.

## Changes in the Landscape

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

### *Climate Change*

- Climate Change could result in agricultural practices moving towards mixed farming and ploughing up pasture in order to plant crops e.g. vegetables to biofuels. Climate Change could also lead to increased storm events and summer droughts impacting on trees and woodland.

### *Management Practices*

- Farming and forestry practices are the primary influence on the character of this distinctive landscape and changes in policy or grant funding regimes could effect the future management of landscape features both positively and negatively.
- A lack of grant money available to farmers and the terrain may influence their capability to diversify and, therefore, farm incomes could suffer significantly.
- The loss of native and ancient tree cover and similar features through changes in farming practices.
- Current grant regimes can help prevent the loss and neglect of stone walls and the decline in botanical interest. The replacement of walls with wire fences has begun to erode the distinctive character of the area.

### *Development*

- These 'transitional' landscapes are traditionally fragile in nature and new development may further exaggerate this trend eroding distinctive characteristics.
- The Government's commitment to renewable energy could see an interest in large scale wind energy schemes in this open area which could change key open views and the feeling of remoteness felt in parts of this area.
- As agricultural practices shift there has been a move towards the erection of large scale farm buildings which – depending on their design - can be particularly intrusive in the higher open parts of this landscape.

- Planned and incremental expansions to villages may be needed to support the rural economy and agricultural diversification. This needs to be sensitive to the historic form, local topography and vernacular to prevent erosion of the landscape character.
- Mineral or other industrial development could take place where there are mineral resources in the southern part, and closer to large settlements.

### **Access and Recreation**

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

## **Guidelines**

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### **Natural features**

- Manage and enhance species rich grassland in marginal farmland and roadside verges through appropriate management including restricting the use of fertilisers.
- Areas of limestone pavement should be subject to sympathetic grazing management and the surrounding grassland should be targeted for restoration or enhancement.
- Ameliorate existing coniferous stands taking account of the impact of forestry practices from surrounding viewpoints.
- Adopt rotational cropping of forested areas in coupe sizes and shapes that generate a pattern of cleared areas, open spaces and newly planted areas and identify suitable species for long term retention, thereby creating a more natural appearance harmonious with the landform.
- Use of broadleaf native species to enhance ecological and landscape value.
- Establish woodland copses in association with hill tops or new farm and residential developments to soften their impact and remain in character with traditional buildings.

### **Cultural features**

- Restrict field enlargement or major change to the existing pattern of field boundaries.
- Conserve and restore existing walls and hedgerows.
- Restrict introduction of fences to replace or 'gap-up' walls and hedgerows.
- Reinstate roadside walls to strengthen the traditional interdependent pattern of roads and field boundaries.
- Plant new field boundary and feature trees to replace maturing stock using indigenous stock typically Ash.

### **Development**

- Avoid development in the transitional, fragile and exposed areas that will degrade their character, specifically tall or vertical energy infrastructure developments such as large scale wind turbines and pylons.
- Ensure new development associated with villages and farmsteads respects scale, form and distinctive character of villages.
- Enhance through sensitive environmental improvements to entrances, village greens and planting etc.
- Conserve and maintain traditional farm buildings.
- New farm buildings, structures, tracks and access ways should be sympathetic to their surroundings. This can be achieved by careful siting; integration with existing buildings, breaking down mass, choice of sympathetic colours and non-reflective finishes and appropriate planting.
- Minimise the impact of minerals or other development by careful siting, design and high standard of landscape treatment, particularly where public views are affected.
- Use traditional materials to define site boundaries, roads and access points.

### **Access and Recreation**

- Public rights of way and access to open access land should be well maintained to allow quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the areas.
- Seek opportunities to enhance access to farmland through farm stewardship or other schemes.
- Promote and enhance existing recreation routes by improving waymarking, providing appropriate surfacing, gates and gaps and interpretation.
- Ensure any recreational developments are contained within a robust landscape structure to ensure the character of the existing landscape is not harmed.

# Moorland and Commons

## Location

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This sub type runs in a north west to south east direction from Shap to the south of Kirkby Stephen. The sub type continues into the national park and is classified as Type I – Upland Limestone Farmland in the Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment. All of this type meet the criteria for National Park designation and is being considered for designation in 2010/11.

## Key Characteristics

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- Broad, open grazing common with heather moorland
- Limestone pavement, scars and scree
- Western intrusion of granite
- Some large coniferous plantations
- Wide views of the Lake District and Howgill Fells

## Physical character

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This sub type is mainly Carboniferous limestone, but the western fringe is underlain by Shap granite. Glacial erosion and weathering has exposed limestone pavements, scars and scree. Limestone pavements and scars are dominant in many areas particularly on Orton and Ashy Scars.

## Land cover and land use

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Land cover is dominated by open common grassland or remnant heather moorland with some coniferous woodland and occasional tree clumps. Although streams and rivers are limited, sink holes and springs can be found throughout.

The edges of the open commons and lower fields are bounded by strong limestone walls. These, along with the exposed rocks, pavements and scars form distinctive features in the area. The walls and outcrops often form rectilinear and linear patterns across the landscape. The

stone walls which form the boundary of the commons are of historic interest. The area is an important limestone habitat and a number of the scars, pavements and grasslands have been designated.

The extreme western and eastern parts of the area are affected by industrial and urban influences, including the M6 motorway and highway depot, A685, and mineral extraction and processing. Despite this the majority of the rest of the landscape retain an open and undeveloped character.

## Ecology

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This landscape is dominated by internationally and nationally important and protected limestone pavements, upland heathland and acid grassland moorland. Associated with these are species-rich springs and flushes, roadside verges, purple moor-grass and limestone grassland. The distinctive clints and grykes of the pavements support interesting flora. The limestone grasslands and flushes support a range of rare and uncommon species, including Geyer's whorl snail, bird's-foot sedge, bird's-eye primrose and slender green feather-moss. Birds of interest include Lapwing, Reed Bunting, Curlew and Skylarks.

## Historic and cultural character

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There is little settlement and much unenclosed common land. What enclosure exists is late. The few settlements that date from the first half of the 19th century are situated in either planned enclosure or the edge of assarts. Small areas of plantation woodland exist in an area of medieval deer park around Ravenstondale. These areas are especially important for prehistoric remains which include boundary walls, settlements and cairns. In addition they contain features peculiar to upland farming such as bields and widespread evidence of quarrying and lime burning.

## Perceptual character

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The landscape is largely open and exposed with expansive panoramic views to the Lakeland and Howgill Fells and the North Pennines. There is tangible sense of remoteness because of the lack of settlements and development. Its open character has a strong relationship with the adjacent higher fells whose uncluttered skyline contributes to a sense of tranquillity and relative wildness. This can be accentuated by changes in the weather. Pockets of heathland and limestone outcrops provide added interest to the open moorland and seasonal contrasts. The sense of tranquillity is largely intact despite the busier developed edges around Shap and Kirkby Stephen.

## Sensitive characteristics or features

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Extensive areas of unenclosed commons bounded by limestone walls, the linear grain of walls and rock exposures and prehistoric remains and distinctive historic land use patterns could be sensitive to agricultural or other development. Open uncluttered skylines and rough untamed commons provide a sense of remoteness and wildness and are sensitive to large scale energy and infrastructure development. Limestone pavements, scree and scars expose the underlying geology and, along with a mosaic of limestone grassland and heathland, are sensitive habitats that could be vulnerable to unsympathetic changes in land management.

## Vision

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**The open rough, unspoilt limestone pavement and moorland character and its ecological and historic interest will be conserved and enhanced.** The heather and species rich grassland of the commons, limestone and other natural features will be conserved and enhanced to reinforce landscape distinctiveness and improve ecological interest. The commons boundary walls will be maintained to maintain the distinction between common and enclosed land. Historical features will be protected and managed. New infrastructure or other development will only be supported if it does not erode the intrinsic character of the area. Large conifer plantations will be better integrated in the landscape through the introduction of

more diverse tree species and through a softening of straight edges. Large extensions will be resisted if they are likely to detract from local characteristics.

## Changes in the Landscape

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

### *Management Practices*

- Farming practices are the primary influence on the character of this distinctive landscape and changes in policy or grant funding regimes could effect the future management of landscape features both positively and negatively.
- A lack of grant money available to farmers and the terrain may influence their capability to diversify and, therefore, farm incomes could suffer significantly.
- The erosion of distinctive character in some areas due to losses of heather moorland and species rich grassland.
- Blocks of conifer planting have interrupted the openness and rough uniformity of the commons.
- An increase in improved and semi-improved pasture has changed the character of some fringe areas.
- Overgrazing can effect limestone pavement, grassland and wet flushes, and under grazing can result in scrub encroachment and the reduction in ecological interest.

### *Development*

- The M6 corridor as an element in the landscape could have the potential to attract new large scale minerals, industrial, infrastructure or other commercial development, particularly on the western fringes around Shap due to the relationship of the M6 and several quarries. Improvements to surfacing, lighting and information systems along the motorway could affect its appearance and people's awareness of it in the landscape.
- Energy infrastructure developments and associated vertical structures such as, communication masts, pylons or large scale wind turbines could erode the open and remote character of the landscape.

### *Access and Recreation*

- Public rights of way and areas of open access land provide a network of routes that enable quiet



appreciation and enjoyment of the countryside. Ongoing maintenance is needed to support this network in the future.

## Guidelines

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### *Natural Features*

- Regenerate heather through management programmes including reduction of stocking levels, control of bracken, phased cutting and burning.
- Manage limestone grassland to improve the variety of flowering plants through appropriate stocking levels and control of scrub, bracken and rushes.
- Restrict localised agricultural improvement particularly of isolated fields within the moorland including application of organic manure or fertiliser, liming or herbicide treatment.
- Avoid planting of coniferous blocks on the open moorland and consider restoration of moorland on clearance and felling of existing blocks.
- Help retain the open and unspoiled qualities of this landscape by reducing existing blocks of coniferous plantations and discouraging additional plantation blocks.
- Protect and enhance tarns and wetlands through carefully controlling drainage schemes to safeguard water quality and levels, through regenerating water margin vegetation by preventing overgrazing or poaching by stock, and by controlling scrub encroachment.
- Protect and enhance limestone pavements and scars and associated features such as glacial erratics (e.g. around Shap) by preventing removal or disturbance and setting suitable grazing levels. This may involve the local exclusion of sheep outside areas of commons.
- Reinforce existing tree clumps on the fringes of the commons in field corners and next to farmsteads and tarns by appropriate management, natural regeneration, restocking with indigenous species and exclusion of stock.
- Support steps to move SSSIs into favourable condition, including the use of temporary fencing in open areas, as this will enhance the landscape character and ecological interest in the long term.

### *Cultural Features*

- Discourage introduction of permanent fences on the Commons; temporary fencing may be acceptable in

order to assist heather regeneration and to improve the condition of SSSIs.

- Manage common and allotment boundary walls in a traditional way.
- Conserve historic sites such as burial mounds, cairns and settlement earthworks avoiding damaging agricultural or other activities.
- Conserve the geological, historic or ecological importance of disused quarries.

### *Development*

- Avoid development in remote, undeveloped, prominent and exposed areas that would degrade the landscape character. Particular developments that could cause harm include telecommunications masts, pylons, large scale wind turbines, and overhead transmission lines and telephone lines. Small scale wind turbines may be accommodated if visually and functionally related to and in proportion with existing used buildings.
- Resist the construction of new access tracks and roads that compromise the relative wildness of the landscape.
- Resist expansion of major developments such as quarrying and industry. Where this is unavoidable minimise the impact by careful siting, design and high standards of landscape treatment.
- Retain the rural character of the M6 corridor by resisting large scale commercial development and ensuring new motorway infrastructure such as information signs and necessary lighting is sited to minimise adverse effects on open parts of the landscape. Noise pollution should be mitigated against through careful selection of surface materials.

### *Access and Recreation*

- Public rights of way and access to open access land should be well maintained to allow quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the areas.
- Seek opportunities to enhance access to farmland through farm stewardship or other schemes.
- Promote and enhance existing recreation routes by improving waymarking, providing appropriate surfacing, gates and gaps and interpretation.