

Sandy Knolls and Ridges

Location

This sub type is found in a small swathe running south from Brampton towards Castle Carrock.

Key Characteristics

- Regular knolls and ridges
- The land cover is generally pasture
- Field patterns are irregular
- Significant amounts of woodland cover in the form of hanging woods, coniferous plantations and semi natural woods

Physical character

The prominent ridges and knolls are formed from glacial alluvium and overlie Permo Triassic sandstone rocks. A distinctive feature in this sub type is a 'kame' ridge formed of gravel from glacial meltwater which stretches for 4 km to the east of Brampton. The landscape is similar to Rolling Lowlands (sub-type 5c) but has greater variation in topography due to the knoll and ridge features.

Land cover and land use

The predominant land cover is pasture with irregular field patterns. Fields are usually bounded by hedges, with hedgerow trees. There is significant woodland cover throughout the landscape which varies from coniferous plantations, semi-natural woodlands, parkland, such as that at Naworth, and dramatic hanging woods along the River Gelt.

Buildings are generally in a vernacular tradition and limestone built outside of the Georgian town of Brampton.

Pylons, the A69 and the railway line cut across the area. These are sometimes discrete features hidden by changes in topography and woodland cover.

Ecology

This is a landscape of improved pasture with species-rich hedgerows and frequent upland oak woodland, particularly along the River Gelt. Otters are present along the River Gelt and other rivers.

Historic and cultural character

The area has been a popular location for a variety of artists such as Ben Nicholson, Winifred Nicholson, George Howard, Christopher Wood and Donald Wilkinson.

The settlement pattern consists of small nucleations surrounded by recently modified traditional field systems containing some fossilised strips. There is some planned enclosure south of Brampton. The medieval castle of Naworth lies close to Brampton and dates back to the early 14th century, although there is evidence of an earlier fortification in 1270. There is some parkland associated with major estate centres such as Naworth Castle. The principal archaeological features are the route of the Roman road known as the Stanegate, a variety of medieval castles and The Mote (Brampton) and Written Rack of Celt, Torte (Naworth).

Perceptual character

This is a pleasant farmed landscape. It is a generally small to medium scale, enclosed landscape which opens out on the edges. The combination of knolls and ridges with mature woodland and pasture creates an enclosed parkland like appearance. Most views are framed by woodland or topography. There are some longer vistas northwards from the ridges near Brampton.

Sensitive characteristics or features

Semi natural woodlands, hanging woodlands and parkland are sensitive to changes in land management. Traditional vernacular villages are sensitive to unsympathetic expansion.

Vision

This varied well-composed landscape will be conserved and enhanced. Hedges and other boundary features, small and medium scale woodlands and individual trees will be managed and restored with the help of farmers and landowners. Large-scale changes in agricultural management or major increases in woodland will be discouraged. Small-scale development will be carefully sited and landscaped to exploit the natural potential for visual containment. Residential development, mineral extraction and recreation development will be carefully controlled.

Changes in the Landscape

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

Management Practices

- Symptoms of agricultural change include neglect or removal of some hedges.
- Continued quarrying is likely in this area.

Development

- Residential development and barn conversions within existing villages.

Recreation

- Visitor numbers could increase due to its proximity to the North Pennines and programmes encouraging people to access the countryside around where they live. Some of the woodland areas are currently managed for conservation with public access but otherwise there are few facilities for recreation.

Guidelines

Natural Features

- Manage existing woods by appropriate cutting, natural regeneration, restocking and exclusion of stock.

- Institute programmes of replacement planting of hedgerow trees using indigenous species or tagging selected saplings.
- Encourage the creation of small to medium size new native woodlands.
- Ensure the natural topography of the ridges and knolls is maintained and not degraded.

Cultural Features

- Encourage traditional management of hedgerows and maintenance of the existing pattern of field boundaries.
- Encourage the restoration of gappy hedgerows and the replacement of fences with hedges.
- Encourage the restoration and conservation of dry stone walls and other boundary features.
- Conserve historic features in their landscape setting and encourage interpretation/visitor management.
- Consider the potential for interpretation, controlled access and additional facilities in consultation with English Heritage.

Development

- Conserve and protect historic villages and hamlets and ensure all new development reflects the scale and character of the existing settlement.
- Encourage additional planting to soften and screen existing large scale or eyesore developments.
- Ensure mineral extraction is carried out in a manner that does minimal damage to distinctive landscape features.

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.
- Manage interest for both formal and informal recreation by encouraging access to areas able to sustain the impact without detriment.
- Encourage the development of footpath, bridleway and cycleway networks where appropriate combined with additional hedgerow and tree planting to provide interest.