

# Valley Corridors

## Location

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This sub type is found in a high section of the Lune Valley running south from Tebay to Lowgill.

## Key Characteristics

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- Narrow gorge between high fells
- Steep sides with pasture and woodland
- Meandering river along valley bottom
- M6 motorway, railway and pylons dominate the valley

## Physical character

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The underlying rocks are Silurian mudstones and sandstones overlain by till and gravel fluvial glacial deposits. The river runs through a steep deep gorge that is strongly enclosed by the Shap and Whinash Fells to the west and Howgill Fells to the east. The valley height varies from 175 - 200m AOD

## Land cover and land use

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The valley has a managed pastoral character that is dominated by transport infrastructure. Sloping pastures along the lower valley sides and floodplain form a patchwork of fields bounded by stone walls and hedges. These are interspersed with woodlands and copses and isolated trees. The woodland is often found along the edge of the river course. This provides contrast with the unenclosed rough grazing, bracken and rocky outcrops found on the valley sides and the enclosing fells.

At the northern end of the Lune Gorge there is the former railway village of Tebay. Otherwise settlement is sparse and limited to dispersed farmsteads that shelter in the valley bottom.

As the gorge forms a gap between the fells it has been a vital transport route over the centuries. A Roman road runs along the eastern side, and a dismantled railway and associated features can still be found. More recently a modern railway line and M6 motorway were built along the western side. Earthworks associated with this have resulted in a number of artificial cliff features of which have a high geological interest. The motorway is the dominant feature running through the gorge despite it curving along the valley contours carefully. This is largely due to its scale and the noise and movement associated with it. The railway line adds to the noise and movement in the landscape.

## Ecology

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The river valley supports areas of upland oak and wet woodland, scrub, rush pasture and floodplain grazing marsh and provide habitat for bats, otter, sand martin and Atlantic salmon.

## Historic and cultural character

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The Lune gorge is especially characterised by the route-ways going through it from a Roman road with an associated fort, through to a 19th century railway and the M6 motorway. Farmland is predominantly ancient enclosure with some former common arable land and unenclosed moorland.

## Perceptual character

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The Lune Gorge at Tebay is a large scale, dramatically enclosed landscape with discordance between its rough and wild texture and the presence of heavy motorway traffic. The noise of traffic detracts from the quiet enjoyment of the valley and nearby fells. Nevertheless this landscape is considered to be both invigorating and beautiful and is arguably the most dramatic section of

motorway in the country. The weather influences the experience of the area as poor weather can obscure the containing fells.

## Sensitive characteristics or features

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The strong undeveloped enclosures of the Tebay, Howgill Grayrigg, Lambrigg Fells and Commons are sensitive to changes in land management. The unenclosed moorland that contrasts with lower level farms and fields is sensitive to changes in land management. The strong linear transport links that curve along the lower valley sides are sensitive to unsympathetic expansion.

## Vision

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**This valley will be enhanced where possible and development intruding on the traditional characteristics will be resisted.** Enhancement will come in the form of strengthened natural features and landscape structure, contrasting wooded valley sides and open pastoral flood plains. Farmland structures will be restored and cultural or historic features will be carefully conserved and enhanced. The valley will remain a predominantly rural corridor with contained and managed road and rail infrastructure. The tourism resource in the Lune Valley for activities such as kayaking and walking will be managed and strengthened.

## 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*

- Changes in approaches to flood risk management could provide an opportunity for some floodplain areas to become wetter in future.

### *Management Practices*

- Hedges and walls could be damaged by increased run off from the enclosing fells due to an increase in rainfall and extreme weather events.
- Intensive farming practices could affect the condition and extent of wetter areas associated with the

floodplain and lower valley sides.

- Older hedges and hedgerow trees could be susceptible to disease as they age.

### *Development*

- The M6 corridor as an element in the landscape could have the potential to attract new large scale commercial development, particularly around Tebay. 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 provide more renewable energy sources could result in an interest for large scale wind energy development and small scale hydro electric schemes.
- Rail, road and other infrastructure improvements, including pipelines and pylons could be routed along the valley.
- Extensions to farmsteads with modern farm buildings could affect the pastoral character of the valley.

### *Access and Recreation*

- Visitor numbers could increase in areas adjacent to the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks and from programmes encouraging people to access the countryside around where they live.
- 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

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### *Climate Change*

- Opportunities should be taken to create new areas of wetland in response to changes in flood risk management.

### *Management Practices*

- Encourage catchment sensitive farming and reductions in diffuse pollution from fertilisers and other agricultural treatments.

**Natural Features**

- Reinforce and extend existing broad-leaved and mixed woods on valley sides by appropriate management and new planting.
- Conserve important riverside trees.
- Protect and enhance marshes, wet meadows and pasture, off-stream ponds, reed beds, willow and alder, carr and bank side trees. This may involve for example, sensitively timed light grazing, maintenance of water levels, protection from livestock or control of invasive vegetation.

**Cultural Features**

- Restore hedgerows involving replanting and renovation of gappy overgrown hedges.
- Manage hedgerows in a traditional way involving a cycle of hand laying and trimming.
- Plant new hedgerow trees to replace maturing stock using indigenous species, or tagging selected saplings.
- Conserve historic earthworks through avoidance of damaging agricultural activities such as disturbance and removal of stones, leveling and excavation, tree planting, poaching by cattle, ploughing and tipping.
- Repair and maintain historic buildings which may include removal of trees and scrub to keep views of them open from the riverside.

**Development**

- Minimise the impact of infrastructure development by careful siting avoiding open valley floors, obstruction of corridor views and relating them to existing structures. Seek high standards of landscape treatment including restoration of semi-natural components.
- Large scale wind energy schemes should avoid enclosed valleys where they could appear dominant.
- Hydro electric schemes should be sited and designed to be discrete elements in the landscape and not harm nature conservation interests.
- 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.
- Reduce the impact of new farm buildings by careful siting, 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 character of this sub type.
- Seek opportunities to enhance access to farmland through farm stewardship or other schemes.
- Promote and enhance existing recreation routes and riverside footpaths and bridleways by improving waymarking, providing appropriate surfacing, gates and gaps and interpretation.
- Protect neighbouring farmland and sensitive habitats by careful routing and maintenance of boundaries.