

Sub type 12b

Rolling Fringe

Location

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

- 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

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

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

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

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 has been a more 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.

Guidelines

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.

- 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.

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.