

**Extract from Lancashire County Council
Landscape and Heritage SPG, July 2006**

planning for landscape change

policy 20

POLICY 20: LANCASHIRE'S LANDSCAPES

LANCASHIRE'S LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES ARE IDENTIFIED ON MAP 13.* DEVELOPMENT MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE WITHIN WHICH IT IS SITUATED AND CONTRIBUTE TO ITS CONSERVATION, ENHANCEMENT OR RESTORATION, OR THE CREATION OF APPROPRIATE NEW FEATURES.

IN AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY, PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER. DEVELOPMENT MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY.

PROPOSALS WILL BE ASSESSED IN RELATION TO:

- (a) LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS;
- (b) THE CONDITION OF THE LANDSCAPE;
- (c) VISUAL INTRUSION;
- (d) THE LAYOUT AND SCALE OF BUILDINGS AND DESIGNED SPACES;
- (e) THE QUALITY AND CHARACTER OF THE BUILT FABRIC;
- (f) PUBLIC ACCESS AND COMMUNITY VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE;
- (g) HISTORIC PATTERNS AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE LANDSCAPE;

- (h) LANDSCAPE BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS;
- (i) SEMI-NATURAL HABITATS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LANDSCAPE TYPE;
- (j) REMOTENESS AND TRANQUILLITY;
- (k) NOISE AND LIGHT POLLUTION.

* This refers to map 13 in the Structure Plan. This is reproduced as map 2 in the SPG

planning framework and the landscape character approach

2.1

The approach to the identification of countryside character pursued in the Character of England project instituted by the Countryside Commission and English Nature was commended by the now replaced Planning Policy Guidance note 7 The Countryside, Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development (1997), and suggests that it should help in accommodating necessary change without sacrificing local character. The character approach differs from designation in providing a holistic approach, which recognises that all landscapes are of value.

Landscapes are classified according to their distinctive characteristics, which allow them to be identified as particular types or areas. The assessment of landscape character and classification allows strategies to be identified to guide change to be appropriate to a particular landscape. PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas supports the use of landscape character assessments.

2.2

In response to the Countryside Commission's (now the Countryside Agency) Character of England map (Map 1) and PPG7, the County Council has produced A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire (2001) using the Countryside Agency's most recent recommended methodology (Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, 1999 published in final version as Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland, April 2002). This Strategy uses the Character of England map as a starting point for its landscape assessment and incorporates as far as possible information from a number of earlier landscape assessments carried out across the County, as well as making reference to studies in adjacent areas.

2.3

The application of this approach has resulted in the identification of 21 landscape character types (also referred to as landscape types) across the Plan area. The map of landscape character types and urban landscape types (Map 2) is included in the adopted Joint Structure Plan. A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire identifies landscape character areas within each landscape type, and contains descriptions of character types and areas, identification of key environmental features and strategies and recommendations for each landscape

type. The amount of detail in the study precludes inclusion in the Structure Plan and an explanation of the method of classification, maps, descriptions, key environmental features and strategies and recommendations for the landscape types (but not the details of the landscape character areas) have therefore been published in this document.

2.4

It is envisaged that local plans will build on Policy 20, using the supplementary guidance in support by requiring that development be informed by local landscape character as described in Sections 2.20 to 2.231 and be appropriate to the landscape character type in which it is sited, following the guidance of the landscape strategies relevant to the character type.

2.5

It will be for local plan authorities to decide whether to use this information to develop detailed local landscape character assessments using the County Landscape Strategy as a framework. The Joint Structure Plan Authorities would support and encourage the production of detailed local assessments in line with the Strategy.

2.6

The statutory designation of the Forest of Bowland and Arnsdale/Silverdale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Map 3) is recognised and is complemented by the landscape character approach. The primary objective of the designation is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Development in AONBs, whether in settlements or open countryside, must therefore be consistent with and contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. Additional guidance relevant to

development in the AONBs is contained within the AONB management plans, published in April 2004.

guidance

2.7

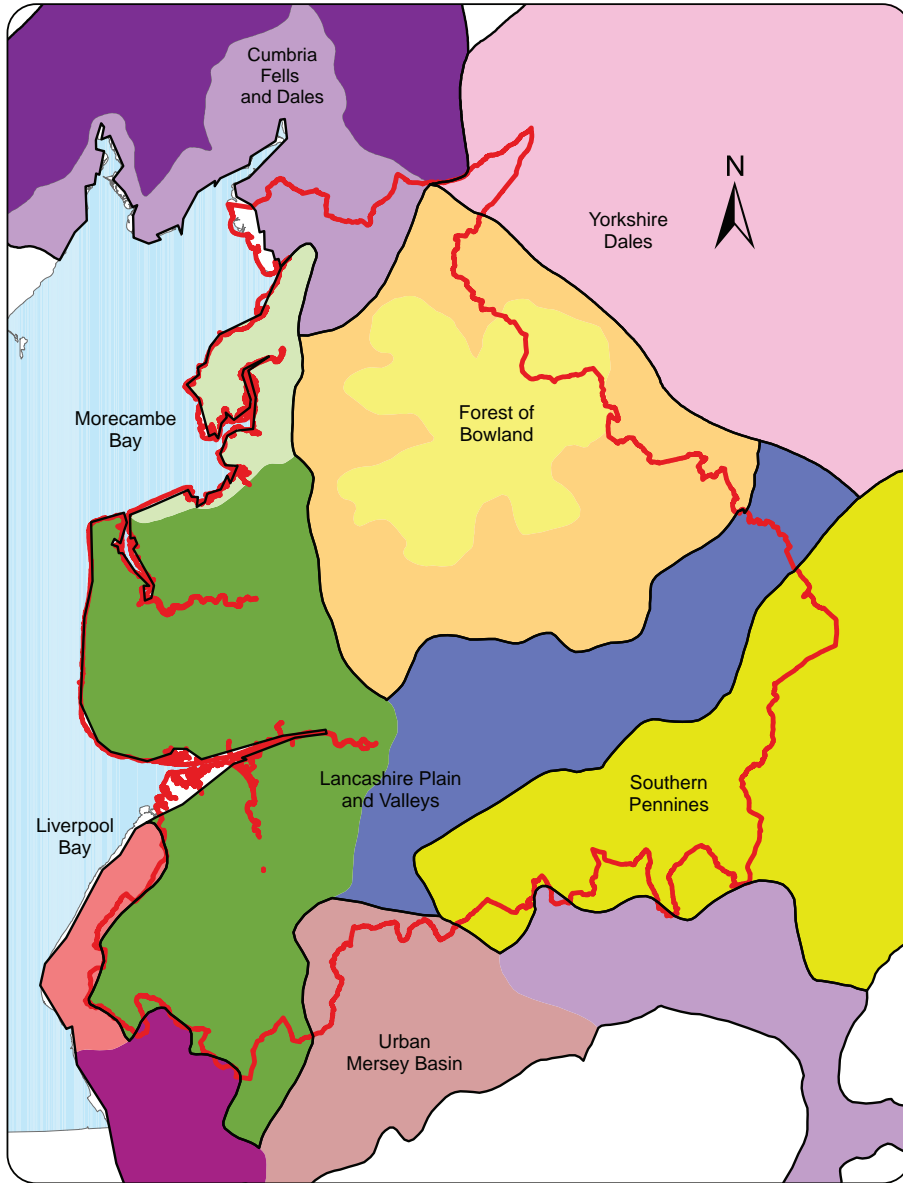
This guidance is in two parts. The first describes the key elements of the Lancashire Landscape Strategy and how, in broad terms, these should be used to guide decisions relating to the impact of development on the landscape. The second part gives details relating to each of the 21 landscape types within the County identified in the Strategy.

*Sabden,
Forest of
Bowland
AONB in
winter*



*Woodland
in the
Arnside
and
Silverdale
AONB*

map 1: the character of england map

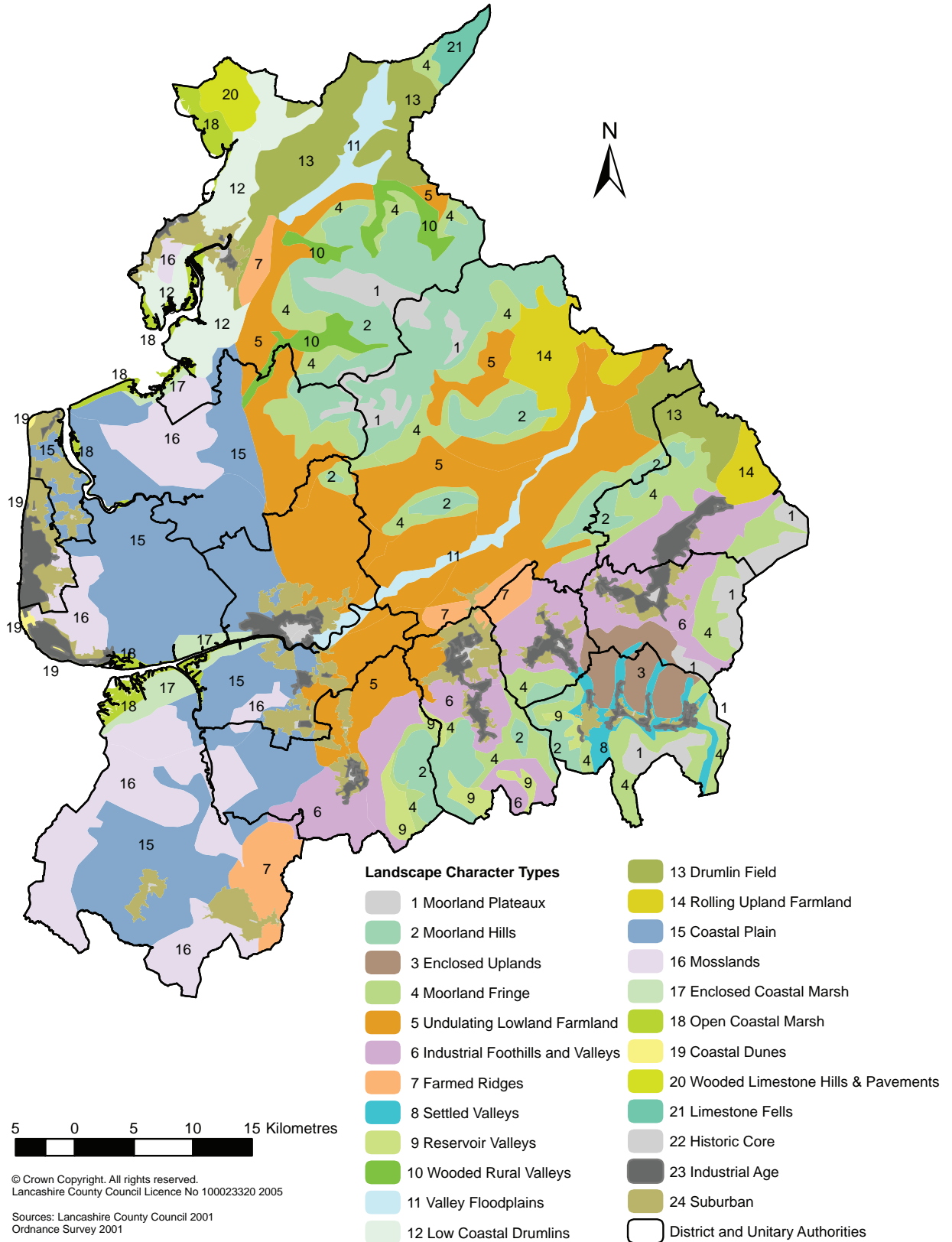


- Natural Areas (English Nature)
Countryside Character Areas (Countryside Agency)
- Cumbria Fells and Dales**
 - South Cumbria Low Fells
 - Morecambe Bay Limestones
- Forest of Bowland**
 - Bowland Fells
 - Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill
- Lancashire Plain and Valleys**
 - Lancashire Valleys
 - Lancashire and Amounderness Plain
 - Morecambe Coast and Lune Estuary
- Urban Mersey Basin**
 - Lancashire Coal Measures
 - Manchester Pennine Fringe
 - Merseyside Conurbation
 - Sefton Coast
- Southern Pennines**
 - Southern Pennines
- Yorkshire Dales**
 - Yorkshire Dales
- Joint Structure Plan Area**

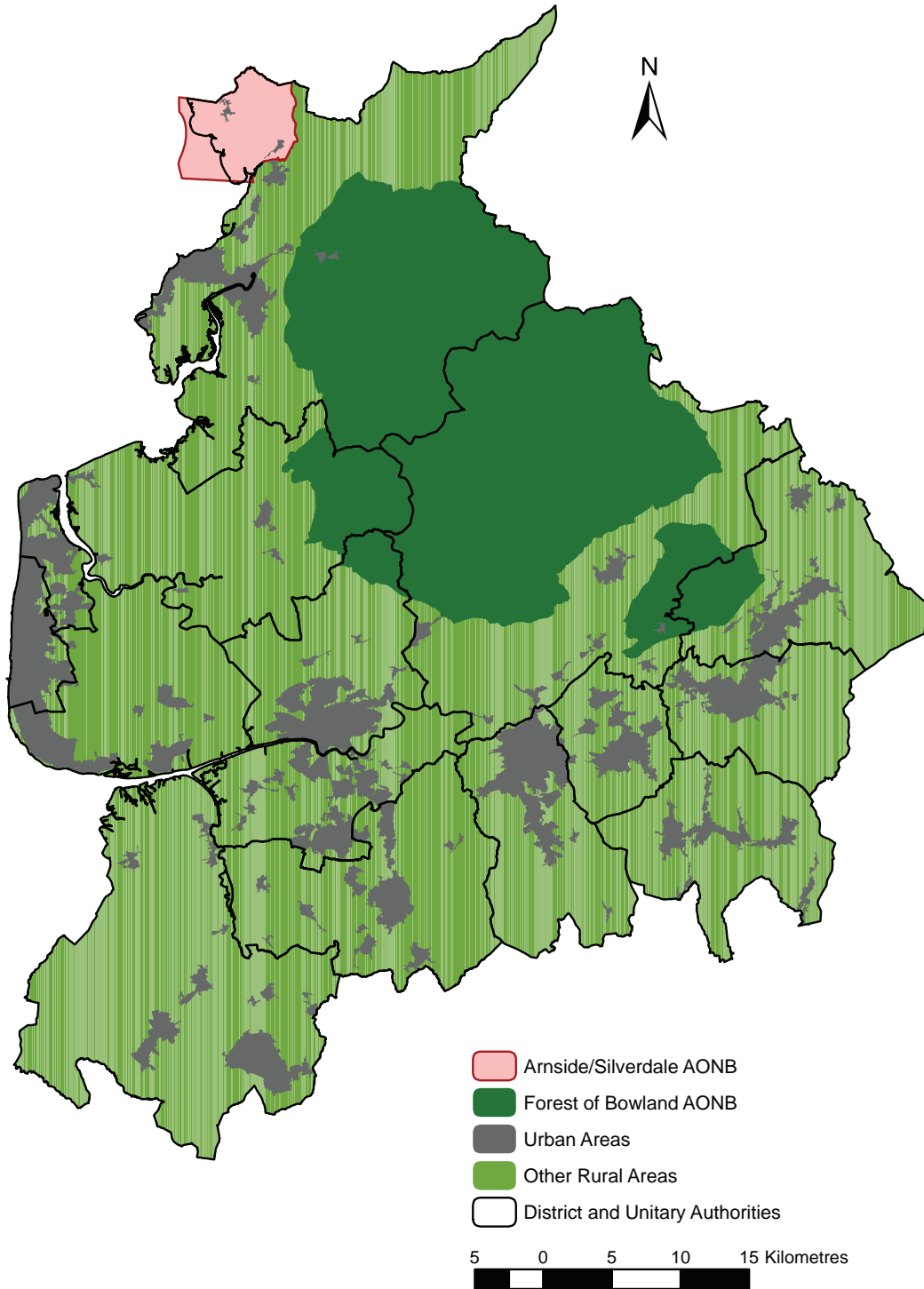
5 0 5 10 15 Kilometres

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Sources: Lancashire County Council 2001
Ordnance Survey 2001

map 2: landscape character types



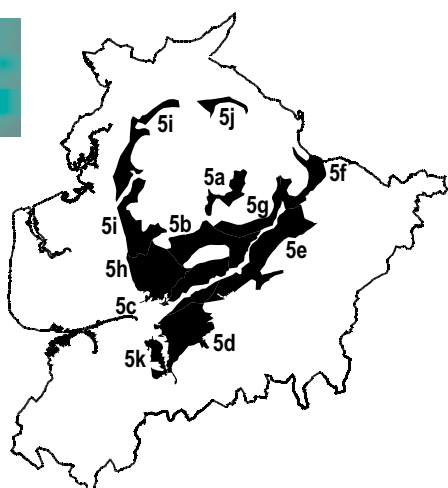
map 3: areas of outstanding natural beauty



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Sources: Lancashire County Council 2001
Ordnance Survey 2001

**A Strategy for Lancashire: Landscape Character Type 5e, the
Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn),
'Undulating Lowland Farmland', 2000**



UNDULATING LOWLAND FARMLAND

Character Areas

- 5a Upper Hodder Valley
- 5b Lower Hodder and Loud Valley
- 5c Lower Ribble
- 5d Samlesbury-Withnell Fold
- 5e Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn)
- 5f Lower Ribblesdale (Gisburn to Hellifield)
- 5g South Bowland Fringes
- 5h Goosnargh-Whittingham
- 5i West Bowland Fringes
- 5j North Bowland Fringes
- 5k Cuerden-Euxton

Landscape Character

Generally below 150m, the Undulating Lowland Farmland lies between the major valleys and the moorland fringes. The underlying geology is largely masked by heavy boulder clays and hedgerows predominate over stone walls. This lowland landscape is traversed by deeply incised, wooded cloughs and gorges. There are also many mixed farm woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees, creating an impression of a well wooded landscape from ground level and a patchwork of wood and pasture from raised viewpoints on the fells. Some of the most picturesque stone villages of the county occur within this well settled landscape type. The towns of Longridge and Clitheroe also occur within this type, but are not typical of the settlement pattern. The area also has many country houses whose boundary walls and designed landscapes add to the species diversity and visual appeal. There is a high density of farms and scattered cottages outside the clustered settlements, linked by a network of minor roads. Typical view - photo 19 below.



Physical Influences

The Undulating Lowland Farmland forms a transitional zone between the low lying plains of soft glacial deposits and the high fells of Bowland, formed from Millstone Grit. To the west of the Forest of Bowland, running along the line of the M6, a substantial fault separates the soft Triassic rock of the lowlands from the harder Carboniferous rocks of the fells. The Clitheroe Reef Knolls SSSI, located between Worston and Downham, comprise an important geological feature. This is one of several Reef Knolls which support species-rich calcareous grassland.

This landscape type, whether composed of limestone, grit, shale or sandstone, is of gentle topography when compared to the fells and hills. Glacial action has accentuated the differences by further tempering the relief of the low-lying areas by the deposition of glacial drift. Deep drift is conspicuous where hedges predominate over stone walls, as quarrying is only possible where the drift is sufficiently thin.

Many of the woodlands which survive on the steep slopes of the deep cloughs and valley sides are of ancient origin and represent a rich natural resource. They include alder and ash woods on the base-rich soils of the valley floors grading through to lowland oakwoods and upland oak woods on the upper valley sides. Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods, situated east of Preston between Ribbleson and Grimsargh are classified as SSSI's and are important for their extensive examples of ash-wych elm woodland and alder woods. Hedges and hedgerow trees are also important as habitats in an otherwise intensively managed landscape.

Standing bodies of water are important habitats within the area; especially for birds. Rough Hey Wood, located south east of Garstang is designated as a SSSI and contains one of Britain's largest heronries.

Human Influences

The landscape proved more favourable to early settlers than the nearby uplands. At Portfield above Whalley, large earthworks of Iron Age date defend the neck of a steep-sided promontory whose flat top had been utilized since the Neolithic period. The presence of a large aisled barn of probably

18th century date points to an earlier, perhaps medieval, successful farmstead, attesting to the favourable nature of the site.

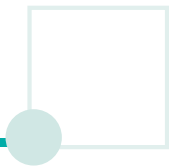
By the Roman period it is probable that much of this landscape type was already settled fairly densely and the fort established at Ribchester is known to have had some civilian government functions. Whilst Roman remains (besides roads) outside the immediate area of the forts are poorly represented in the record, the presence of Roman Kilns at Quernmore show that they exploited the natural resources of the area.

Medieval population pressures, which saw the utilisation of small areas of the mosslands elsewhere in Lancashire also led to the continuation of small woodland clearances along the Ribble and the Lune. This created a small scale intimate landscape of scattered farms linked by winding roads with irregular fields and patches of surviving woodland on stream and field edges, a landscape which has remained intact to this day.

The majority of enclosure dates from the medieval period and has created a landscape of small fields which are mostly hedged although stone walls are evident where geology lies close to the surface.

Country houses are a feature of the area and are often surrounded by parklands and well managed estates. They are evidence of the developing industrial enterprise and increasing wealth between the 16th and 19th centuries. Architecturally distinctive yeoman and gentry houses are also characteristic of this type and date from the 17th century onwards.

During the 17th century lime was used for land improvement in these lowland fringe areas and many small farm kilns remain in the landscape, along with the larger industrial kilns and quarries of the 19th and 20th century. The mining of Millstone Grit also proved to be important in this landscape type. Where suitable stone was available, querns and millstones could be quarried and manufactured to meet the needs of the population. Remains of 19th century millstone production near Quernmore can still be seen on the flanks of Clougha Pike. Lead and Silver were extracted in Rimington from the 17th century and mined and manufactured in places such as at Quernmore to meet the demands of the rapidly industrialising county.

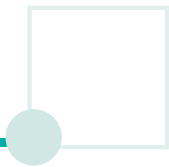


CHARACTER AREAS - UNDULATING LOWLAND FARMLAND

Undulating Lowland Farmland occurs on the lower fringes of the uplands, below about 150m AOD, across the whole study area.

Local	Character Areas	Description
5a	Upper Hodder Valley	<i>This is a unique hidden area of settled farmland enclosed by shale and limestone uplands and the grit moorland of the Bowland Fells. It is a lush oasis in the middle of a bleak landscape. The landscape is centred around the upper River Hodder and its tributaries and is well wooded. The underlying geology is largely overlain by boulder clays although the underlying limestone is evident as outcrops known as 'Reef Knolls' as well as in the white stone walls, bridges and limestone built villages, such as Slaidburn. The Reef Knolls are particularly characteristic of this area as are stands of beech which are often visible on hill tops.</i>
5b	Lower Hodder and Loud Valley	<i>This area forms part of the Undulating Lowland Farmland to the south of the Forest of Bowland and includes the deeply incised wooded course of the Hodder below Whitewell and its tributary, the River Loud, as far as its confluence with the Ribble. The underlying bedrock is limestone which is overlain by good soils, providing lush green pastures and good tree growth. The course of the Hodder is particularly well wooded and the pattern of incised minor wooded tributaries is distinctive to this character area. The area is little affected by modern development and the picturesque limestone villages of Chipping and Waddington have retained their vernacular character.</i>
5c	Lower Ribble	<i>The Lower Ribble is an area of lowland gritstone farmland between Longridge Fell to the north and Mellor Ridge to the south. It has a distinctive broad valley landform; the north and south valley sides are separated by a flood plain which contains the meandering course of the River Ribble. There is a particularly distinctive pattern of wooded cloughs which descend the valley sides, their streams emptying into the Ribble. A complex pattern of hedges and woodland form links to these wooded cloughs, giving an overall impression of a well wooded landscape. Although a rural valley, the area is well settled; a dense network of winding country lanes and tracks link the large number of stone farm buildings. Other features of this area are the country houses and designed landscapes, for example Stonyhurst College, Huntingdon Hall and Showley Hall. The Roman settlement of Ribchester is sited at an historic crossing point of the Ribble, a tranquil village in the centre of the valley.</i>
5d	Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	<i>An area between the Ribble Valley to the north and the Industrial Foothills to the south. It is underlain by millstone grit and sandstone, but the landscape is influenced by the mantle of glacial till which covers the surface, producing a gently undulating landscape of large lush green pastures divided by low cut hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Dramatic steep sided wooded valleys wind their way through the landscape carrying the River Darwen and its tributaries. Designed landscapes and parkland associated with Samlesbury Hall, Woodfold Hall, Pleasington Old Hall and Hoghton Tower add to the overall woodland cover in this lowland landscape and Witton Country Park provides a countryside resource on the edge of Blackburn. It is also influenced by infrastructure (major road</i>

Local	Character Areas	Description
		<i>and rail routes), industrial works, the airfield at Samesbury and built development on the edges of Preston.</i>
5e	Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn)	<i>This area forms the southern valley side of the Ribble, between Copster Green and Gisburn, on the lowland fringes of Pendle Hill. It is a particularly well settled area and provides a corridor for communication routes along the Ribble Valley. The A59(T) runs the length of the area, linking the settlements of Copster Green, Whalley, Clitheroe, Chatburn and Gisburn. The railway links the valley to Blackburn and Yorkshire. This communication structure has encouraged built development and industry; the large cement works at Clitheroe is a prominent visual landmark for miles around. This character area is underlain by limestone and has some good examples of limestone reef knolls, particularly around Clitheroe; Clitheroe Castle is located on top of one of these knolls.</i>
5f	Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn)	<i>This character area follows the upper reaches of the River Ribble between Bolton-by-Bowland and Long Preston on limestone geology. It occurs on the fringes of the Slaidburn Rolling Upland Farmland between 100 and 150m AOD. It is a highly rural area which is dominated by lush green pastures divided by hedgerows with many hedgerow trees. The mixed plantation woodlands associated with estates of Bolton Hall and Halton Place and the ancient woodlands along the Ribble itself contribute to the wooded character of this landscape character area.</i>
5g	South Bowland Fringes	<i>This character area forms the lowland fringes of Waddington Fell, to the south of the Forest of Bowland. It is a well wooded area whose limestone slopes are particularly notable for their pattern of wooded cloughs - the tributaries which descend the valley side before feeding into the Ribble. The villages of Waddington, West Bradford, Grindleton and Holdon are located at the foot of wooded cloughs. Browsholme Hall has an influence over landscape character; shelter belts and beech hedges are features of the area around Cow Ark.</i>
5h	Goosnargh-Whittingham	<i>The undulating lowland farmland on the north-east fringes of Preston forms a transitional landscape between the upland landscape of the Bowland Fells to the north-east and the agricultural Amounderness Plain to the west. It is an historically interesting area on the fringe of the Forest of Bowland AONB. The landform gently descends from 150m at the moorland fringe of Beacon Fell to the 30m contour (approximately) which defines the edge of the sandstone agricultural plain of the Fylde. However, this is not a clear boundary and the visual transition from one to the other occurs across a broad area between the M6 and main Preston to Lancaster railway line. As a result of this gradual transition it demonstrates characteristics of both the Fylde and the Bowland fringes. It is a pastoral landscape which is relatively open and intensively farmed with much hedgerow loss and few trees or woodlands although hedgerows along the network of lanes are important landscape features. There are often clear views over the plain below. The area is under pressure from built development as a result of its proximity to Preston. Vernacular buildings are of local stone, although a number of incongruous materials are seen throughout the area. The area is rich in evidence for Roman occupation.</i>



Local	Character Areas	Description
5i	West Bowland Fringes	<i>A transitional landscape between the gritstone scarps of the Bowland Fells and the coastal plain of Amounderness. A fault line provides a corridor along which the motorway, road and railway run and provides a transition to the agricultural plain. However, this transition is softened by glacial deposits, for example at Galgate where the lowland farmland merges imperceptibly with the low drumlin fields. However, at Quernmore, there is a dramatic wooded ridge (7c) which forms a definite boundary between the grit lowland fell edges and the adjacent glacial landscape to the west. The transition from fringe to fell is quite striking, particularly to the north-west below Claughton Moor where it occurs over a short distance. The valleys of the Brock, Calder and Wyre are also relatively dramatic, descending from the fells in deeply incised wooded valleys. There are exceptional views of the Amounderness Plain from the hillsides and the scarps of the Bowland fells are never far away.</i>
5j	North Bowland Fringes	<i>The north-facing gritstone slopes, known as the Forest of Mewith, is an area of undulating marginal farmland on the northern edges of the Bowland Fells. It is bordered by a drumlin field to the north which influences the landform of the lowland fringe; the broadly undulating landform contrasts with the steep scarps of west Bowland. This is a rural area which is crossed by a dense network of footpaths and farm tracks; a number of small stone farm holdings are found at the end of these dead-end farm tracks.</i>
5k	Cuerden-Euxton	<i>The rural character of this landscape is largely obscured by built development which has taken place since the late 1970s. Motorways and motorway junctions dominate the northern sector. The principal landscape feature is Cuerden Valley Park, based upon the woodland and valley of the river Lostock. The park is managed for nature conservation and recreational use and is an important local resource. Pockets of farmland and vernacular buildings survive as a reminder of earlier land use and settlement pattern.</i>

**Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment,
September 2009**

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE H: UNDULATING LOWLAND FARMLAND WITH SETTLEMENT AND INDUSTRY

Key Characteristics

- 1 Gently undulating farmland, divided by a network of drystone walls and hedgerows.
- 2 Towns and some heavy industrial sites which are associated with main transport corridors.
- 3 Backdrop of Moorland Hills provides a sense of enclosure and contributes to recognisable sense of place within views.



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4.9 H: UNDULATING LOWLAND FARMLAND WITH SETTLEMENT AND INDUSTRY

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Location

- 4.9.1 The Undulating Lowland Farmland with Settlement and Industry Landscape Character Type occurs in three locations in the southern part of the Study Area. This Landscape Character Type is generally located adjacent to other lowland LCT's, and is bordered along its northern edge by the Valley Floodplain Landscape Character Type.

Landscape Character Description

- 4.9.2 Undulating Lowland Farmland with Settlement and Industry Landscape Character Type generally occurs below 150m within the Study Area (outside the boundaries of the AONB). It encompasses a patchwork of pastoral fields that are punctuated by main transport corridors and relatively large urban areas (including Clitheroe and Whalley). This landscape is generally viewed against either the backdrop of Moorland Hills (looking northwards) or Pendle Hill (looking southwards).
- 4.9.3 The pastoral fields are enclosed by an intricate network of hedgerows, which often contain hedgerow trees and provide texture to the landscape; and post and wire fences. These fields surround the towns of Clitheroe and Whalley, providing the setting for a combination of Victorian and later buildings within the built up areas. A number of major road corridors and a main railway line also dissect this Landscape Character Type, disturbing the overall sense of tranquillity and remoteness.
- 4.9.4 Pockets of industry including farmac works, cement works and industrial estates also punctuate the surrounding pastoral landscape. The scale and form of these buildings provides a strong visual contrast with the buildings and settlement patterns of adjacent Landscape Character Types.

Key Environmental Features

Physical

- 4.9.5 Similarly to the Undulating Lowland Farmland Landscape Character Type (E), this LCT generally occurs below 150m and is underlain by a combination of soft glacial tills which separate the higher fells of Bowland to the north (formed from Millstone Grit) from Pendle Hill to the south. At Clitheroe, these are quarried for rock and used in cement manufacture. Where these deposits are located close to the surface, they are visible within the landscape in the form

of small, isolated hills or reef knolls, such as at Worston at the western edge of Pendle Hill. In its lowland position adjacent to the relatively wide meandering course of the River Ribble, this Landscape Character Type has flat to gently undulating topography. Within this landscape, Coplow, Salthill and Bellmanpark quarries have been designated as SSSI for their geological interest.

Ecological

- 4.9.6 Within the Lowland Farmland with Settlement and Industry Landscape Character Type the key ecological habitats include small stream corridors, hedges and hedgerow trees. Intensive farming practices, interspersed with industrial and urban land uses, however, limit the nature conservation value of this area.

Cultural and Historical

- 4.9.7 The landscape proved much more favourable to early settlers than the nearby uplands to the north and south, probably due to its position adjacent to the corridor of the main River Ribble. By the Roman period it is probable that much of this Landscape Character Type was already settled fairly densely and the fort established at Ribchester (outside the southern boundary of the AONB) is known to have had some civilian government functions. The origins of urban settlement in this landscape date to the 12th Century, when the market town of Clitheroe received its first charter in 1114. Similarly, settlement is known to have existed in Whalley to the south, in 1296, when an Abbey was founded. Clitheroe is dominated by a partially ruined Norman castle (situated on a limestone crag above the town). Despite modern expansion, the town retains much of its historic character, encompassing a winding main street which is lined in places by white fronted Georgian houses. The majority of enclosure within this type dates from the medieval period and has created a landscape of small fields which are mostly hedged although stone walls are evident where geology lies close to the surface. In the middle of the 18th century, rapid changes in the large-scale application of technology resulted in a move towards an industrialised society. To the east and of Clitheroe and west of Chatburn, limestone quarries, (associated with rich surface geological deposits) became prosperous and are still in operation today, providing local employment and introducing industrial features into the landscape.

Development, Settlement and Buildings

- Settlement pattern is dominated by the large towns of Clitheroe (containing a mixture of historic and more modern houses, shops, hospitals and schools) and Whalley to the south;
- Houses within these towns are often terraced and display a range of local building materials including limestone and gritstone;
- To the north of the area the large village of Chatburn, once a mill village associated with the cotton industry, contains rows of terraced stone cottages;

- Outside these towns and villages, settlement pattern consists of occasional, scattered, isolated farmsteads;
- Clitheroe Castle is a key landmark buildings within views across this landscape;
- The imposing Hall at Standen (erected in the 15th century and rebuilt in 1757) is also a key built feature within the landscape;
- Modern industrial buildings and chimneys associated with cement workings and tarmac works introduce a dominant human element within this landscape and are visible within most views across the Landscape Character Type.

Landscape Character Areas

4.9.8 Landscape Character Areas within this Landscape Character Type include:

Landscape Character Area H1: Clitheroe and Chatburn



- Landscape pattern within this Landscape Character Area is dominated by the large town of Clitheroe, which is situated at the convergence of major road and railway corridors;
- These corridors introduce a source of noise and visual intrusion and disturb the overall sense of tranquillity;
- Clitheroe contains an assortment of housing (much of which is terraced and built from local stone) and commercial buildings;
- The tower of Clitheroe Castle (situated on a limestone outcrop above the town) is a landmark within views towards this area;
- At the eastern edge of the area, the small village of Chatburn, with its rows of terraced cottages, further contributes to settlement pattern;
- Large-scale quarries and associated works (including tall vertical chimneys) to the east of Clitheroe and west of Chatburn are a dominant human influence within views to this landscape from surrounding Landscape Character Types and Areas;
- Views northwards, across the corridor of the River Ribble are dominated by the rising mass of the central Moorland Hills and Plateau, whilst Pendle Hill contributes to recognisable sense of place within views southwards;
- At the edges of the urban development, patchworks of predominantly pastoral fields are delineated by, in places remnant, hedgerows, with frequent hedgerow trees.

Landscape Character Area J2: Ribble



- Open, flat, fertile plain encompassing a patchwork of pastoral fields which are delineated by a combination of hedgerows, wooden fencing, post and wire fencing or stone walls;
- The gently meandering course of the river Ribble is defined by the steep wooded bluffs and terraces which enclose the floodplain;
- Lush green fields of semi-improved pasture are grazed by sheep and cattle. The large regular fields are defined by gappy hedgerows;
- Mature floodplain trees are notable features in this Landscape Character Area; ash and oak stand in the floodplain, their silhouettes striking against the open landscape;
- General absence of settlement within the floodplain itself, but a number of large farms and country halls are positioned along the edges of the floodplain;
- There are a number of historic crossing points which coincide with these settlements where old stone bridges are important historic features of the floodplain;
- Panoramic, open views towards the central Bowland Moorland Hills and Plateaux to the north and Pendle Hill to the south;
- In the south of the area, the small village of Great Mitton is nestled within the valley corridor, at the point at which a minor road corridor crosses the river;
- There is a relatively strong sense of remoteness within much of the river corridor, which is slightly interrupted when it meanders around the northern edge of Clitheroe;
- Buildings associated within the Castle Cement works are dominant landmarks within views to and across this area.

CURRENT AND FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Forces for Change

Past Landscape Changes

4.10.9 Observable changes in the past include:

- Loss of open floodplain views and riparian habitat by fencing out of river corridors, sometimes associated with tree planting;
- Eutrophication of the rivers as a result of high levels of nutrient input from surrounding pastoral farmlands;
- Decline of prominent scattered floodplain trees due to over-maturity;
- Loss of semi-natural wet meadow habitats due to agricultural intensification and amalgamation of farm units.

Current Landscape Condition

4.10.10 The overall condition of the Valley Floodplain Landscape Character Type is considered to be good to moderate, resulting from survival of the mosaic of linear freshwater and wetland habitats and remnant areas of neutral grassland, wet meadows, domed mosses, areas of standing water and marshland; and the mature landscape structure of woodland and field trees. There are some elements showing decline in places, particularly the loss and poor maintenance of occasional hedgerows, which have been supplemented in sections by post and wire fencing; and the loss of species-rich hay meadows.

Future Landscape Changes and Opportunities

4.10.11 In the short-term (5 years) it is likely that there will be positive changes in the form of managing important habitats through nature reserves and key landscape features in the wider landscape, such as hedgerows at field boundaries, woodland and field trees. However, negative changes are likely to include an increasing pressure on the quality of the landscape from tourist-related developments. Increasing traffic problems may also lead to highway improvements that detract from the rural character of some roads and reduce tranquillity.

4.10.12 Longer-term changes (20+ years) will be dependent on prevailing incentives and policies and it is therefore challenging to be prescriptive. The AONB Management Plan will provide a key tool in managing change and ensuring a positive future for the area. Potential longer-term changes and key guidelines within this Landscape Character Type are outlined below:

- *Agricultural Change and Land Management* – The amalgamation of farms and increased drive for efficient farm businesses or farms being sold as farmers and their families leave the industry; all have a direct impact on how the land is managed. As the key characteristics of

the area are significantly influenced by agricultural practices, change in the industry could lead to an encroachment on the woodland lining the river corridors. This may have a knock on effect on the maintenance of key landscape features, in particular boundary features and species rich pasture and floodplain habitats.

- *Climate Change* – Increasing temperatures may encourage expansion of tourist-related activities, putting further pressure on limited resources. Water quality in rivers may also be affected, having a negative effect on aquatic habitats and expansion of alien species into upper catchments. There may also be an increased incidence of flooding. Open grown-trees and some woodland may be at risk from a combination of summer drought and increased severity and frequency of storm events.
- *Development* – The built environment is predominantly in the vernacular style and is currently a distinct element of the landscape fabric. A loss of traditional skills and a reduction in the use of appropriate local materials will erode this distinct characteristic of the landscape, with increasing pressure on the landscape around towns from residential and other development. Features are vulnerable to highway improvements, expansion of villages and tourism facilities. Potential large-scale renewable energy developments and overhead transmission lines on the skyline of the valley sides may erode key views. Increasing traffic associated with tourism and recreation pressurising the road system may lead to inappropriate highway improvements, increased provision for car parking on undeveloped land and reduced tranquillity from noise and movement. Increased tourism and growth in holiday developments will lead to a loss of pasture or estate land developments.

Sensitivities and Capacity for Change

- 4.10.13 Overall visual sensitivity within the Valley Floodplain Landscape Character Type is considered to be high, as a result of the generally strong intervisibility with surrounding higher Landscape Character Types and the strong sense of openness within views along the valleys. A diverse patchwork of linear freshwater and wetland habitats remnant areas of neutral grassland, wet meadows, domed mosses, areas of standing water and marshland contribute to overall high ecological and landscape character sensitivity. In addition to this, there is a strong cultural pattern of hedgerows and stone walls which delineate field boundaries and contribute to overall high cultural sensitivity. As a result of the above factors, this Landscape Character Type is considered to have limited capacity to accommodate change without compromising key characteristics.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING LANDSCAPE CHANGE

4.10.14 The overall strategy for the Valley Floodplain Landscape Character Type is to conserve the diverse pattern of standing water, floodplain hay meadows, mature floodplain trees and the network of hedgerows and dry stone walls. The strong intervisibility with surrounding Landscape Character Types should also be conserved and key landscape features appropriately enhanced where in decline. Where lost, the natural river form should be restored and conserved (referring to Environment Agency guidance).

4.10.15 Specific guidelines include:

Physical Character

- **Ensure** effective catchment management to sustain water quality;
- **Encourage** the creation of new woodland along appropriate riverbanks, which complements the existing woodland pattern;
- **Conserve** the natural form of the rivers by avoiding engineered solutions to water management, such as canalisation, bank hardening and river straightening;
- **Conserve** natural river floodplain features, such as meanders, oxbows, old river channels, ponds and islands.

Ecological Character

- **Conserve** valuable floodplain habitats by encouraging low intensity grazing in the remaining semi-natural habitats (which include mire, fen, flushes, marshy grassland and wet meadow);
- **Link** woodlands on the fringes of the floodplain with those on valley sides forming strong ecological linkages⁶⁰;
- **Allow** natural regeneration through grazing restrictions wherever possible⁶¹;
- **Frame** strategic views from higher ground and bluffs⁶²;
- **Bring** all woodlands into active management to secure their long-term future⁶³;
- **Ensure** that settlements encroachment does not threaten the existing woodland resource⁶⁴;
- **Preserve** long, open views of the valley plains through careful selection of planting sites and species⁶⁵;
- **Ensure** that woodland creation does not adversely affect existing areas of ecological value⁶⁶;
- **Restore** and **enhance** wetland habitats;

⁶⁰ Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission, TEP.

⁶¹ Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission, TEP.

⁶² Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission, TEP.

⁶³ Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission, TEP.

⁶⁴ Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission, TEP.

⁶⁵ Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission, TEP.

⁶⁶ Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission, TEP.

- **Target** agri-environment scheme support for management of broadleaved woodland, wetland pasture and meadow habitats;
- **Encourage** conservation of existing key habitats and landscape features and expand the resource through habitat restoration and re-creation guided by ecological networks;
- **Ensure** that UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats are appropriately managed.

Cultural and Historic Character

- **Encourage** use of local materials and vernacular styles in developments to strengthen local character, including limestone and gritstone;
- **Conserve** and **enhance** the distinct pattern of stone walls and hedgerows delineating field boundaries in order to maintain landscape structure;
- **Conserve** historic and archaeological sites in the Valley Floodplains and consider the setting of historic and archaeological sites when planning and implementing all landscape management action;
- **Ensure** that highway improvement schemes respect and reflect local character and **encourage** the use of traditional signage where possible;

Aesthetic and Perceptual Character

- **Conserve** open views along and across the valley floodplains towards adjacent Landscape Character Types.