



11 Valley Floodplains

Landscape Character Description 2.123

The broad, flat, open floodplains on the valley floors of the larger lowland rivers are subject to periodic flooding and their rich alluvial drift deposits support fertile grazing land for cattle and sheep. Although part of the wider landscape of the valleys, the floodplains have distinctive landscape patterns and land use pressures. They are characterised by large river meanders, eroded bluffs and terraces, standing water and steep wooded banks, which enclose the floodplain and determine its edge. Large fields are divided by post and wire fencing, hedgerows or stone walls and mature floodplain trees are characteristic of the pastoral landscape.

Key environmental features: 2.124

Open, flat floodplains, subject to periodic flooding which provide fertile grazing land. Steep wooded bluffs and terraces enclose the floodplain and provide sheltered habitats for wildlife. Valley plain features such as meanders, levees, weirs, and islands provide visual interest and variety in the floodplain landscape, as well as being of historic and nature conservation interest. Mature spreading floodplain trees are distinctive elements of the floodplain, they provide shelter for grazing animals and are an important source of dead wood.

Landscape Strategy and Recommendations for the Valley Floodplains;

Conserve valuable floodplain habitats.

2.126 Conserve a natural river form:

- avoid 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.

2.128 -

Enhance woodland planting on the outer fringes of the Valley Floodplains:
 - consider opportunities to extend and link woodlands on the fringes of the floodplain with existing woodlands on the valley sides.

2.129 -

Enhance opportunities for maintaining the distinctive character of the floodplain trees;
 - initiate a programme of tree planting to ensure a new generation of locally native floodplain trees;
 - encourage planting of native black poplar on the floodplain;

2.31 -

Restore wetland habitats in areas where they have been lost or degraded;
 - investigate feasibility of restoring seasonal inundation to grasslands alongside water courses;
 - seek opportunities for wider creation on the valley floor.

5 Undulating Lowland Farmland

Landscape Character Description 2.59

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. 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. There is a high density of farms and scattered cottages outside the clustered settlements, linked by a network of minor road.

Key Environmental Features: 2.60

Wooded river corridors provide a sense of enclosure, sheltered habitats and distinctive patterns on the valley sides.

Hedgerow and hedgerow trees define the field pattern. They also provide sheltered habitats which are important wildlife links between the wooded cloughs and outlying woodlands.

Small mixed woodlands provide important habitats and cover for wildlife and contribute to the overall appearance of a 'wooded' farmland.

KEY

Development Site

THE CHARACTER AREAS OF ENGLAND

32 Lancashire & Amounderness Plain

33 Bowland Fringe & Pendle Hill

35 Lancashire Valleys

Key characteristics:

- intensely urban character derived from main towns;
- profusion of communication routes along the valley bottom including the M6 motorway;
- numerous large country houses with associated parklands particularly on northern valley sides away from major urban areas;
- remnants of agricultural land fragmented by industry and scattered development;
- field boundaries, regular to the west and irregular to the east are degraded around the urban areas, formed of hedges with few hedgerow trees and, at higher elevations, of stone walls and post & wire fences;
- small woodlands are limited to cloughs on valley sides.

This area is bounded in the north-west by the rural valley of the river Ribble and the Millstone Grit outcrop of Pendle Hill in the Bowland Fringe.

This is a visually contained landscape which would have once shared many characteristics with the rural valley of the river Ribble in the north. However the development of industry and settlements has created a landscape with an intensely urban character. The remnants of agricultural land are now fragmented by industry and scattered development which severely disrupt the continuity of the field pattern. Field boundaries on the urban fringe are hedgerows that are generally degraded with an overall absence of hedgerow trees.

Woodland is limited to small woods, with areas of grassland flushes and wetland comprising oak, alder & sycamore which extend along steep-sided narrow cloughs.

JOINT LANCASHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN CHARACTER TYPES

5 Undulating Lowland Farmland

24 Suburban (1930 onwards)

Biological Heritage Sites

11 Valley Floodplains

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