LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE F:
UNDULATING LOWLAND FARMLAND WITH WOODED BROOKS

Key Characteristics

1. A patchwork of pasture fields which are deeply incised by wooded troughs and gorges
2. A network of hedgerows and stone walls delineate field boundaries
3. Several scattered cottages and clustered villages
**F: UNDULATING LOWLAND FARMLAND WITH WOODED BROOKS**

**CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

**Location**

1.1.1 The Undulating Lowland Farmland with Wooded Brooks Landscape Character Type occurs in four different locations at the periphery of the Study Area. There is also one occurrence on the Pendle Hill outlier. This Landscape Character Type is generally located adjacent to other lowland LCT’s, rather than the higher Moorland Plateaux, Unenclosed and Enclosed Moorland Hills.

**Landscape Character Description**

1.1.2 Undulating Lowland Farmland with Wooded Brooks is a lowland landscape generally below 150m, encompassing a patchwork of pastoral fields incised by wooded brooks and river gorges, which provide a sense of enclosure, sheltered habitats and distinctive landscape patterns.

1.1.3 Sinuous broadleaved woods, following the courses of hidden brooks, are often filled with wild garlic and bluebells in the springtime: the colour, texture and smells of which create a strong sense of place. A network of minor lanes criss-cross the landscape, with stone hump backed bridges a key feature within the wooded valleys where the roads cross the brooks. The small fields are enclosed by hedges and trees, and herb rich verges line many of the lanes in this area. The valleys provide a strong contrast with the small enclosed fields, and they often house historic industrial sites which were located in order to harness water power generated by the swift flowing brooks.

1.1.4 The clough woodlands are often of ancient origin, they have survived due to their steepness and inaccessibility and are often important wildlife habitats, housing roe deer and badgers. The birdsong and tranquillity of these woods are distinctive features.
Key Environmental Features

Physical

1.1.5 Similar to the Undulating Lowland Farmland Landscape Character Type (E), this LCT generally occurs below 150m and forms a transitional zone between the low lying plains of soft glacial deposits and the high fells of Bowland, formed from Millstone Grit. This Landscape Character 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.

Ecological

1.1.6 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 ecological 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. In addition, remnant species-rich grassland is often also a feature of the steep slopes. Flushes, fens and marshy grassland are also present within this landscape. To the north of Bolton-by-Bowland, New Ing Meadow has been designated as a SSSI. It forms one of the few remaining herb-rich hay meadows which were once typical of this part of Lancashire (and have been almost completely destroyed as a result of agricultural intensification).

Cultural and Historical

1.1.7 The landscape proved more favourable to early settlers than the nearby uplands. 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. 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. In the middle of the 18th century, rapid changes in the large-scale application of technology resulted in a move towards an industrialised society. This was represented within the landscape by the development of cotton weaving mills at Calder Vale, Caton and Sabden. Lappet Mill at Calder Vale was built in 1835 and is powered by the River Calder.

Development, Settlement and Buildings
- Pattern of small, linear villages such as Calder Vale and larger, nucleated villages, such as Caton;
- Calder Vale is a model industrial village that was created by the Jackson family to improve the industrial potential of nearby Oakenclough. They built two cotton mills and terraced housing for the workers. One of these, Lappet Mill, built in 1835, is still a working cotton mill;
- Calder Vale predominantly consists of gritstone terraced cottages (displaying a combination of white, brown and green painted window and door frames) which overlook the river corridor, with Lappet Mill on the opposite riverbank.
- Caton contains a mixture of traditional, predominantly gritstone cottages, which are centred around the church and Black Bull pub; and more modern houses;
- Scattered, isolated farmsteads, which display typical gritstone vernacular building materials and styles are also a feature of this Landscape Character Type.

Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Areas within this Landscape Character Type include:
F1 Calder Vale & Brock Valley
F2 Bolton by Bowland to Waddington
F3 New Row
F4 Caton
F1: Calder Vale and Brock Valley

- Two distinctive wooded river corridors, following the courses of the Rivers Calder and Brock, which are lined with mature, mixed, deciduous woodland (parts of which are ancient, semi-natural);
- This woodland has a striking pattern when viewed from the surrounding pastoral farmland – highlighting the linearity of the brook corridors;
- In Spring, carpets of bluebells within the various woodlands (including Calder Vale woods) provide a carpet of blue striking colour;
- Coppiced woodland and strips or blocks of damp birch woodland are also a feature in places;
- In-field trees, including oak, alder and occasional ash, provide recognisable landscape features;
- Coniferous woodland on the rising mass of Beacon Fell dominates the skyline of views eastwards;
- Sound of fast-flowing water within the River Calder, which is lined with mature deciduous woodland;
• A series of narrow lanes (such as Snape Rake Lane) often pass through the woodland and are often lined with short, trimmed hedgerows or wide verges with trees, such as alder and birch, in addition to varied flora;
• These lanes have a strongly rural character, with few road markings and little signage, other than named lanes;
• Hedgerows generally contain a mixture of oak, alder and hawthorn
Gently sloping limestone topography is incised with a pattern of wooded cloughs which descend the slopes and flow into the valley of the River Ribble to the south;

The villages of Waddington, Grindleton, Holdon and Bolton –by- Bowland are situated at the foot of the wooded cloughs or brooks;

The brook corridors (including Drakenhouse Brook, West Lough Brook, Skirden Brook and Holden Brook) are lined with mature deciduous trees and woodland which provides a sense of enclosure and breaks up the surrounding predominantly pastoral farmland;

Between Waddington and Grindleton, the wooded brooks flow from northwest to southeast;

This woodland is key feature within views across the area;

Framed views southwards across the broad valley of the River Ribble;

The Copy Nook hotel (distinctive vernacular building) at the junction of two minor roads which converge at Holden is a recognisable landscape feature which contributes to sense of place and orientation;

Waddington and Grindleton are two relatively large, linear villages, which display terraces of traditional stone buildings lining the road corridors;
• Stone bridges which cross the River Ribble are landscape features;
• At Grindleton, bluebells introduce strong colour when in season;
• A network of narrow lanes cross the landscape, often lined with hedgerows, stone walls and white railings;
• The Sawley and Gisburn B roads run east-west across this area, connecting the villages and introducing a source of noise and movement into the landscape;
• Lanes in the Forest Becks and Bolton-by-Bowland area are often lined on one or both sides with trees, shrubs, varied flora and mixed hedgerows with hedgerow trees;
• Lanes in the Holden and Copy Nook area are often lined with drystone walls (which contain rounded, smooth boulders) and white railings;
• Patches of woodland provide a sense of enclosure and single deciduous trees at the edges of the road corridors and within fields are also a feature;
• The smell of wild garlic within the numerous woodlands is recognisable in the Spring
This small area extends outside the southern edge of the AONB and encompasses several patches of mature mixed woodland, which contribute to an intermittent sense of enclosure within views across the landscape;

Matured deciduous woodland lining the corridor of Duddel Brook is also a feature of this landscape, which contributes to recognisable sense of place within views;

The sound of fast-flowing water within the brooks contributes to recognisable sense of place
The large, nucleated village of Caton exhibits a combination of traditional stone buildings and more modern materials;

- Linear belts of deciduous woodland punctuate this landscape and contribute to an intermittent sense of enclosure within views;
- The aerial ropeways associated with Claughton Moor quarries are a key recognisable feature within the landscape, which contribute to recognisable local sense of place;
- Panoramic, open and framed views northwards across the wide floodplain of the River Lune;
- To the south, the dramatic rising profile of the central Unclosed and Enclosed Moorland Hills and Moorland Plateaux Landscape Character Types form the skyline backdrop to views;
- Field boundaries are delineated by a combination of stone walls and hedgerows, which provides a relatively stark contrast with the adjacent Moorland Fringe and Moorland Hills;
- Minor road corridors are often lined with mature hedgerows which limit open views across the landscape.
CURRENT AND FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Forces for Change

Past Landscape Changes

1.1.8 Observable changes in the past include:

- A decline in mature hedgerow trees as a result of age or loss due to agricultural intensification;
- Expansion of villages or modernisation of farmsteads utilising non-local building materials (e.g. red brick) which are intrusive to local vernacular character;
- Amalgamation and diversification of dairy farms;
- Intensification of agricultural management, involving chemical fertiliser and herbicide applications, which has affected herb-rich meadows;
- Loss of, and decline in field boundaries, through agricultural intensification and lack of management, resulting in replacement with stock fencing, and boundary removal to create larger fields;
- A loss of grassland, which has since been reversed.

Current Landscape Condition

1.1.9 The overall condition of the Undulating Lowland Farmland with Wooded Brooks Landscape Character Type is considered to be moderate to good. Most landscape features are generally well managed. Patches of unmanaged woodland are, however, visible and there is also evidence of neglected stone walls (for example at Sabden Fold) and loss of hedgerows which have been replaced by fences.

Future Landscape Changes and Opportunities

1.1.10 An overall consistency in the use of vernacular building materials indicates a local desire to retain the traditional character of the area; however, there has recently been a trend towards the addition of conspicuous modern farm buildings, slurry tanks and silage bays.

1.1.11 Negative changes may include the amalgamation of farms, leading to a change in the character of the landscape, with new access tracks and the creation of larger fields leading to a loss of traditional stone wall and hedgerow field boundaries. Amalgamation of farms may also result in farmhouses and associated buildings
being converted to new uses and key landscape features being lost through neglect or removal to enable the amalgamation of adjacent fields. Conversion of historic buildings may also be an issue. The increased farm size may lead to the demand for new agricultural buildings, affecting character and views. Increased financial pressures and reduced availability of higher level agri-environment payments, may lead to field boundaries, walls and hedges suffering from a lack of management.

1.1.12 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 erosion of landscape quality. Changes in land ownership or agricultural management may also lead to a decline in the management of brook side woodlands, which are a key feature of the landscape pattern of this Type.

- **Climate Change** – The likely effects of climate change on this landscape are not easily identifiable with current information, however, agricultural practices could be affected, with a move to plough up pasture and plant new crops. Woodland could also be lost with a change in temperatures and average rainfall levels.

- **Development** – Diversification of farm businesses leading to introduction of new buildings and the conversion of farm buildings for residential and other uses could gradually change the nature of the working landscape and its associated attributes. The erosion and loss of vernacular building styles through introduction of cheaper alternatives will reduce the distinctive characteristics of this area. Encroachment of large scale development such as wind farms, masts and pylons into the area would also have a significant effect on landscape character. It is likely that there will also be increased pressure from residential
and tourist related developments, affecting the character and quality of the landscape.

Sensitivities and Capacity for Change

1.1.13 The ecological sensitivity of this Landscape Character Type is represented by the combination of hedges, hedgerow trees, diverse brook corridors and the mature woodland which lines these water courses. There is also a rich industrial archaeological record associated with millstone production and an intact network of stone walls, stone bridges and historic villages. In addition, the landscape displays a mature structure of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. This Type is considered to have moderate landscape character sensitivity. Overall, visual sensitivity is considered to be moderate. In places, woodland and hedgerows limit views, whilst there is strong intervisibility with the Unenclosed and Enclosed Moorland Hills and Moorland Plateaux Landscape Character Types.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING LANDSCAPE CHANGE

1.1.14 The overall strategy for the Undulating Lowland Farmland with Wooded Brooks Landscape Character Type is to conserve and enhance the mature deciduous woodland and single trees that line brook corridors and contribute to the distinctive landscape pattern. Herb rich river and brook banks and scattered herb rich meadows and pastures should also be conserved and enhanced. The retention and restoration of historic and vernacular building materials and details, and the careful design of new buildings should also be encouraged. Where landscape features have been neglected, opportunities should be sought for restoration. There is also a need for conservation of the network of stone walls, roadside verges, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Open views towards the unenclosed and enclosed moorland hills and moorland plateaux Landscape Character Types, and views framed across the Lune and Ribble, should also be conserved.

1.1.15 Specific guidelines include:

Physical Character

- Conserve and enhance woodland, hedges and stone walls.
Ecological Character

- **Link** existing woodlands and hedgerows to create a continuous woodland network to reverse habitat fragmentation\(^1\);
- **Conserve** and **enhance** herb-rich river banks;
- **Create** new hedgerows and regenerate existing hedges to maintain and enhance key landscape linkages\(^2\);
- **Encourage** farmers to adopt less intensive farming practices so that the vitality of existing woodlands is not compromised and to facilitate natural regeneration in and around woodland habitats\(^3\);
- **Encourage** conservation of existing key landscape features and habitats;
- **Encourage** habitat linkage to increase robustness to climate change.
- **Increase** the proportion of river corridor woodland through natural regeneration and new woodland planting\(^4\);
- **Increase** the percentage of lowland oak and mixed woodlands;
- **Conserve** the water quality of streams and becks and **limit** run off or pollution from adjacent pastoral farmland;
- **Conserve** ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- **Conserve** species-rich grass verges and increase species diversity by management where appropriate;
- **Ensure** that UK BAP habitats are appropriately managed.

Cultural and Historic Character

- **Encourage** conservation of significant historic features and buildings;
- **Encourage** sympathetic new uses for disused farm buildings to ensure that they remain a viable and contributory feature within this landscape; and;
- **Encourage** the use of local building materials, in particular gritstone and limestone;
- **Ensure** that highway improvement schemes respect and reflect local character and **encourage** the use of traditional signage where possible;
- **Maintain** stone walls, which are often located on the outskirts of villages, respecting local differences in style and construction;
- **Conserve** local features such as small farm lime kilns which signify the past use of limestone as a soil conditioner;
- **Conserve** the distinctive settings to rural settlements;

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\(^1\) Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission and TEP.
\(^2\) Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission and TEP.
\(^3\) Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission and TEP.
\(^4\) Lancashire Woodland Vision, Lancashire County Council, Forestry Commission and TEP.
• **Ensure** that any potential new development on the edges of villages reflects the characteristic clustered form; development should be sited to retain views to landscape features and landmarks, such as church towers on the approaches to villages.

• **Conserve** traditional boundary features such stone/metal boundary markers and wells.

**Aesthetic and Perceptual Character**

• **Conserve** open views towards the surrounding higher Moorland Plateaux and Unenclosed and Enclosed Moorland Hills Landscape Character Types;

• **Conserve** open and framed views across and into the corridors of the River Ribble and Lune;

• **Maintain** the distinctive pattern of hedgerows and stone walls at field boundaries;

• **Restore** white railings.

**For more information about the Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment please visit**

[http://www.forestofbowland.com/landscape_character](http://www.forestofbowland.com/landscape_character)