

Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment



I Introduction

- 1.01 This study was commissioned by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to input into the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) for the District, in particular the Churnet Valley Masterplan. The Churnet Valley Masterplan will be an overarching Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) covering a wide rural area stretching across this central part of the District and encompassing a number of significant redevelopment sites. The SPD will support and inform the LDF by identifying opportunities and measures to help regenerate the rural area based around sustainable tourism, in a manner which is sensitive to and enhances its important heritage, landscape and ecology.
- 1.02 The landscape character assessment of the Churnet Valley area will develop on from the Staffordshire wide assessment undertaken by Staffordshire County Council in 2001 in the 'Planning for Landscape Change' Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance and the subsequent Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008) undertaken by Wardell Armstrong LLP on behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to inform the Core Strategy. The study will assess in more detail the landscape qualities of the Churnet Valley and identify appropriate measures for their protection and enhancement.
- 1.03 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's main requirements for the Landscape Character Assessment of the Churnet Valley are:
- *" description of the landscape character area and its main characteristics*
 - *An outline of the key planning and management issues and compatibilities and sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate change*
 - *Key landscape planning and land management guidelines*
 - *A plan identifying the constraints*
 - *A plan showing its landscape setting and key features"*
- 1.04 The document identifies landscape sub areas based on landscape character type. The analysis of the findings associated with each of these areas will inform the landscape planning and land management guidelines required. Key landscape features, characteristics and constraints will be mapped for each sub area.
- 1.05 The notional extent of the study area identified by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has been reviewed as part of this process.

2 Landscape Character Assessment of the Churnet Valley

METHODOLOGY AND PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the Churnet Valley relates only to the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council planning area. It provides more detail associated with landscape character types of the Churnet Valley as identified within the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008) and it should be read in conjunction with this assessment. The LCA of the Churnet Valley will provide supporting evidence for the production of the Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document.
- 2.02 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's main requirements for the Landscape Character Assessment of the Churnet Valley are:
- “ description of the landscape character area and its main characteristics
 - An outline of the key planning and management issues and compatibilities and sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate change
 - Key landscape planning and land management guidelines
 - A plan identifying the constraints
 - A plan showing its landscape setting and key features”

Desk Top Review including Planning Background

- 2.03 The desktop review built upon the initial findings of the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment prepared by Wardell Armstrong LLP in 2008 for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. This original study took account of the planning policy background including Planning Policy Statements, The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands, relevant saved policies in the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan September 1998. These are relevant to and should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Character Assessment of the Churnet Valley. Policies relevant to the Churnet Valley of the emerging Core Strategy, in particular Policy SS7, Policy E3, Policy DC2 & DC3 and Policy NE1 and policies relating to redevelopment of key sites have been taken into account as part of the process.
- 2.04 The saved Policy NC2 Landscape protection and restoration of Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 refers. It states:

‘Development should be informed by and be sympathetic to landscape character and quality and should contribute, as appropriate, to the regeneration, restoration, enhancement, maintenance or active conservation of the landscape likely to be affected. Proposals with landscape and visual implications will be assessed having regard to the extent to which they would:

- (a) *cause unacceptable visual harm;*
- (b) *introduce (or conversely remove) incongruous landscape elements;*
- (c) *cause the disturbance or loss of (or conversely help to maintain):*
 - (i) *landscape elements that contribute to local distinctiveness;*
 - (ii) *historic elements which contribute significantly to landscape character and quality, such as field, settlement or road patterns;*
 - (iii) *semi-natural vegetation which is characteristic of that landscape type;*
 - (iv) *the visual condition of landscape elements;*
 - (v) *tranquility.'*

2.05 'Planning for Landscape Change' is Supplementary Planning Guidance consequent on policy NC2. It comprises:

- A series of maps showing the distribution of a number of distinct types of landscape that are found within the Structure Plan area;
- A series of detailed descriptions of those landscapes;
- A map showing the areas to which landscape policy objectives apply;
- An explanation of the method used to generate those maps and landscape descriptions;
- An appendix indicating the areas that are preferred for targeting resources or woodland initiatives including new planting and management.

2.06 The introduction and user's guide to 'Planning for Landscape Change' outlines the approach to the analysis of landscape character in the Structure Plan area.

'The boundaries of the character areas which were broadly delineated on the Character of England map have been more broadly defined and the descriptions of landscape character have been taken to a finer grain, with the mapping and description of 22 landscape character types (LCTs). These descriptions make up the greater part of the Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Structure Plan.

No judgements about the relative worth of such landscape types have been made, but the approach does acknowledge that any given landscape type will be represented by some areas in which the underlying landscape character is strongly expressed and the constituent elements are in good condition, and other areas where this is not the case. Landscape quality can be defined in these terms: it is quite distinct from scenic beauty, but it is strongly linked to character. It is essentially an indicator of how clearly that character is expressed, and of how the state of repair of landscape elements contributes to an overall impression of an intact and unified landscape. Landscape quality can be assessed with respect to the following factors:

- (i) *The presence or absence of landscape elements which have a permanence over time, and which are characteristic features of that landscape type;*
- (ii) *The presence or absence of relatively novel features which are incongruous in that landscape type;*

- (iii) *The condition of landscape features, and the likelihood of their continuing survival as functional landscape elements;*
- (iv) *The extent to which the landscape exhibits a clear and consistent pattern of components resulting from a particular course of historical development;*
- (v) *The continuity or 'time depth' of the landscape, which is a function of the length of time since the last major change of land use that contributed significantly to current landscape character;*
- (vi) *The extent of survival of semi-natural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape type.'*

Staffordshire County Council's assessment of landscape quality also mapped proposed landscape policy objectives which ranged from landscape regeneration in areas of low quality landscape to active landscape conservation in areas of high quality landscape. The factors used to assess landscape quality also contribute towards landscape sensitivity. Those landscapes most sensitive to change, through development or land use change, may require specific development control policies.

2.07 The relevant policies within the emerging Core Strategy are as follows:

SS7 – Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor

The Churnet Valley shall be identified as a major sustainable tourism corridor. Within this corridor the following forms of development and measures will be supported:

- *short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;*
- *tourist facilities and services;*
- *extension of the Churnet Valley Railway;*
- *links to strategic footpaths/cycle routes;*
- *improvements to the Caldon Canal;*
- *the potential for restoration of the Uttoxeter Canal;*
- *the redevelopment of the Bolton Copperworks site at Froghall (see Policy SS6c);*
- *the sensitive expansion of Alton Towers;*
- *measures to enhance its landscape character and to protect the designated nature conservation sites and the river valley as wildlife corridors.*

Any development should be of a high standard of design, demonstrate strong sustainable development principles and be sensitive to the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. Complimentary highway improvements of access routes and measures to support other alternative means of access will be required to serve any developments which generate significant demand for travel.

A Masterplan will be produced to define the detailed extent of the corridor and guide the detailed planning and management of the corridor.

Further development at Alton Towers shall be considered against guidance set out in a Supplementary Planning Document. This shall include, as appropriate, measures to improve the principal access routes to Alton Towers via the villages of Farley and Alton and the provision of the Alton – Denstone road link.

E3 – Tourism and Cultural Development

New tourism and cultural development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports the local economy and promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5 and SS6.

In addition:

- *Support will be given to clusters of attractions, particularly within the Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor in accordance with Policy SS7, where they meet the objectives above and do not result in a cumulative detrimental impact.*

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- *Outside the development boundaries of settlements new tourist accommodation will:*
 - *be of a scale which can be easily accommodated into the local landscape in a sustainable manner;*
 - *be limited to the conversion of existing buildings (in accordance with Policy R1); or*
 - *in exceptional circumstances be of a non-permanent nature e.g. log cabins.*
 - *Within the Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor permanent new tourism accommodation of an appropriate scale to complement existing attractions will be supported where there is a demonstrable need which cannot be met in other ways.*
- *Outside the Green Belt permission will be granted for sites for camping and touring caravans provided they are well screened, sited and designed and have good access. Small camping sites may be appropriate in the Green Belt provided they do not prejudice the 'openness', there is appropriate screening and any necessary facilities can be accommodated within existing buildings.*

DC2 – The Historic Environment

The Council will safeguard and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, areas of historic landscape character and interests of acknowledged importance, including in particular scheduled ancient monuments, significant buildings (both statutory listed and on a local register), the settings of designated assets, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields and archaeological remains by:

1. *Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the District's towns and villages and those interests of acknowledged importance.*
2. *Promoting development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the*

2.07 continued

use of conservation area appraisals, design statements, archaeological assessments, characterisation studies and Masterplanning.

- 3. Preventing the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through appropriate reuse and sensitive development, including enabling development, unless their retention is not viable or there would be substantial planning benefits to outweigh the loss.*

DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting

The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

- 1. Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*
- 2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*
- 3. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;*
- 4. Identifying through the Site Allocations DPD and protecting from inappropriate development, areas of visual open space where the intention will be to retain the land's open and undeveloped appearance. Where appropriate the Council will seek public access agreements with the land owners and seek proposals for the enhancement or improvement of these areas. In exceptional cases, limited development of areas of visual open space may be acceptable where this will bring about overriding improvements to the open space itself;*
- 5. Recognising and conserving the special quality of the landscape in the Peak District National Park, and ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the National Park.*

NEI – Biodiversity and Geological Resources

The biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be protected and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development by:

- 1. Resisting any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site alone or in combination with other plans or projects unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met.*
- 2. Protecting, and enhancing national, regional and locally designated sites.*
 - The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests including ancient woodland unless it can be demonstrated that:*

- *there is no appropriate alternative site available; and*
 - *all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and*
 - *appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible*
 - *the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.*
3. *Supporting opportunities to improve site management and increase public access to wildlife sites including supporting the objectives of the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan.*
 4. *Ensuring development where appropriate produces a net gain in biodiversity, and ensuring that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for.*
 5. *Ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/or re-creation of biodiversity through its proposed nature, scale, location and design. The local biodiversity opportunity map, in conjunction with the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, will be used to guide biodiversity enhancement measures to be included in development proposals as appropriate to the nature and scale of development proposed and other environmental interest, in particular supporting opportunities to increase grassland and heathland habitats including supporting the 'Countdown 2010 – Enhancing Biodiversity in Northeast Staffordshire Project' objectives, the Weaver Hills Partnership and targets in the UK and Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.*
 6. *Protecting and enhancing habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity as identified in legislation, and recognising and implementing appropriate measures to take account of the fact that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change.*
 7. *Recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict.*
 8. *Ensuring the provision and protection of green infrastructure networks in line with Policy DC1.*

The Study Area

- 2.08 The landscape character designations and studies that impact on Staffordshire Moorlands are primarily the Joint Character Areas that form part of The Character of England Map and the local landscape character types determined by Staffordshire County Council in 'Planning for Landscape Change'.
- 2.09 The Churnet Valley study area falls primarily within Joint Character Area 64 Potteries and Churnet Valley. Although small sections of the eastern boundary of the study area fall into Joint Character Area 53 South West Peak and Joint Character Area 52 White Peak.
- 2.10 The original survey work carried out by Staffordshire County Council as part of the Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Planning for Landscape Change' to the Structure Plan used landscape description units. Landscape Description Units (LDUs) are distinct relatively homogenous units of land defined by a number of characteristic attributes. LDUs with similar characteristics are grouped to form larger areas of landscape character type. These informed the Staffordshire Moorlands Landscape Character

Assessment. The individual LDUs have, where appropriate, been used to inform the character sub areas within the Landscape Character Assessment of the Churnet Valley.

2.11 The findings of SMDC's Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment considered that the landscape types identified in the SPG for Staffordshire Moorlands were still applicable. A number of landscape character types are found within the Churnet Valley Study Area. These comprise:

- Dissected sandstone cloughs and valleys
- Dissected sandstone highland fringe
- Dissected sandstone uplands
- Ancient slope and valley farmlands
- Settled Plateau Farmlands
- Gritstone Highland Fringe

2.12 The desktop review identified constraints, key landscape features and characteristics (e.g. rocky outcrops, valleys, remnant historic parklands etc) of the character areas within the Churnet Valley and used mapping techniques similar to those used in the original assessment. The Draft Staffordshire Moorlands Historic Environment Assessment was referenced within the desk study, which alongside historic maps and aerial photographs assisted in the identification of historic landscape features and characteristics.

2.13 The desktop review built upon Staffordshire County Council's LDU and identified key characteristics within each division of the character types, resulting in character type sub areas. These are:

1 Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys

- Sub Area 1a **Alton and Oakamoor**
- Sub Area 1b **Consall and Froghall**
- Sub Area 1c **Cheddleton and Leek**

2 Dissected Sandstone Uplands

- Sub Area 2a **Alton**
- Sub Area 2b **Kingsley**
- Sub Area 2c **Rudyard**

3 Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe

- Sub Area 3a **Ipstones and Whiston**

4 Settled Plateau Farmlands

- Sub Area 4a **Consall**

5 Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands

Sub Area 5a **Wetley Rocks**

Sub Area 5b **East Leek**

Sub Area 5c **North Rudyard**

Sub area 5d **South Kingsley**

6 Gritstone Highland Fringe

Sub Area 6a **Tittesworth and Leek**

On-Site Review

- 2.14 This involved more detailed field analysis of the Churnet Valley using the findings of the desktop study. The field survey verified the desktop study and refined boundaries and extents of landscape features and character areas. The field survey focused on the key visual dimension of the Churnet Valley. This assisted in the visual analysis of landscape elements and features such as viewpoints, ridgelines, landscape features, skylines etc.
- 2.15 The survey built upon the original field assessments that were undertaken in the original character study. It looked more closely at the cultural environment in particular historic features and their setting, and ecological and hydrological features all of which were noted within the Churnet Valley. This provided more specific detail in relation to the sensitivity of this area. The field survey identified areas that were under increasing pressure from human influences.
- 2.16 Through the desk based study and the on site review the extent of the landscape character type sub areas were assessed in relation to the draft boundary to the landscape character assessment that was provided by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council as part of the brief for this study. The review identified that the extent of the boundary of the study area was too broad in landscape terms. It was agreed with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council that the extent of the boundary be reduced to the west and in part to the north to consolidate the key characteristics associated with this study area.

Report and Plans

- 2.17 For each Landscape Character Sub Area the key characteristics have been identified and the following main characteristics are described:
- Geology, Landform and Soils
 - Vegetation
 - Field Pattern and Enclosure
 - Land Use and Settlement
 - Water Features
 - Transport and Access
 - Historic Features

- Views
- Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation
- Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

- 2.18 Analysis of the character sub area has identified key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
- 2.19 Key Planning and Management Issues have been summarised and include reference to Destination Sites. These are locations that attract visitors for the purpose of tourism or recreation.
- 2.20 Both landscape planning and landscape management guidelines are proposed for each Landscape Character Sub Area.
- 2.21 This information was largely gathered by using Geographic Information System (GIS) data supplied by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and by Staffordshire County Council, the 'magic' website (multi agency geographic information for the countryside), the development plan for the district and other hard copy documents supplied by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and other key stakeholders.
- 2.22 Areas of particular sensitivity have been highlighted including within the constraints plans the areas of ecological and geological significance and Ancient Woodland. The landscape character of the study area identified further areas of sensitivity, which included Small Scale Landscape, Squatter Enclosures and Registered and Remnant Historic Parkland.

Small Scale Landscapes and Squatter Enclosures

- 2.23 Areas of Small Scale Landscape and Squatter Enclosures were determined following desk based and site assessment, and with reference to Staffordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation, the landscape character assessment, aerial photographs and OS 1st edition plans. The original field pattern, form of enclosure, vegetation cover and scale of the landscape is often largely intact in these areas and is at risk of fragmentation and erosion. This landscape is identified as being of high sensitivity to change.

Registered and Remnant Historic Parkland

- 2.24 Historic parklands, including the Registered Park and Garden at Alton Towers and remnants of other designed historic landscapes have been identified. These were often clearly recognisable from the aerial photograph and the Ordnance Survey 1st edition. Reference was made to the Register of Parks and Gardens for Staffordshire. Parklands were generally identified in the Staffordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation. From ground survey it could be seen that these contributed to the overall strength and character of the broader landscape, having particular influence on the vegetation structure of the area. Reference to the Ordnance Survey 1st edition clearly identifies the extent of the designed landscape and estate lands at that time. Many were well established by the late 1800's and it is possible with reference to aerial photographs to identify original parkland trees that still exist. Many will be veteran trees and are likely to be of ecological significance.
- 2.25 Parkland landscapes do not only provide a setting to the property with which they were associated but strengthen the vegetation structure of the local landscape. These designed landscapes create local distinctiveness and often add further interest through the introduction of decorative tree species.

These introduced species can include conifers and evergreens that are particularly visually significant in the wider landscape during the winter. The larger parklands consisted of pleasure grounds in close proximity to the main house (such as at Alton Towers), avenues, carriage drives and rides. Woodland blocks and belts, contained pasture characterised by individual and groups of parkland trees and parkland fences. Many parklands contain streams and water features often enlarged and remodelled as part of the design such as at Alton Towers and Consall Hall. The countryside directly around the parklands was often managed by the owners of the parklands and designed views out across that countryside were a feature of the parkland design. This is particularly evident from Farley Hall.

- 2.26 There is one parkland included within the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens within the Churnet Valley which is Alton Towers (Grade I). It lies to the north of its estate village of Alton close to the southern edge of the study area. Other notable parklands include Farley Hall, Ashcombe Park which abuts the southern edge of Cheddleton and Consall Hall and Gardens.
- 2.27 There are numerous smaller remnant historic parklands throughout the Churnet Valley that contribute to the landscape character of the Study Area.

Plans

- 2.28 Plans have been prepared at 1:12,500 scale that identify the constraints and the landscape character of each character sub area. This information has also been prepared in a suitable digital format to enable the Council to upload onto its website.

Constraints Plans

- 2.29 For each Landscape Character Type Sub Area a constraints plan has been prepared which comprised mainly of information supplied in digital form and which was transferred onto an Ordnance Survey base under Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's licence agreement. The constraints plans show: Ancient Woodland, Sites of Biological Interest (SBI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), Biodiversity Alert Site, Floodzones, the main road network, public rights of way, Conservation Areas, contours at 20m intervals, Churnet Valley LCA study area boundary, Landscape Character Type boundaries, the Peak Park boundary (where visible) and Staffordshire Moorland District Council boundary (where visible).

Landscape Character Plans

- 2.30 The landscape character plans built upon the desk based data and were prepared following 'on site' appraisals. The setting plans show public rights of way, significant public footpaths (including the Staffordshire Way), open access land, national bridleways, locally important cycleways, the Churnet Valley Railway with the Moorland and City Railway line, registered and remnant historic parklands, rocky outcrops, significant ridgelines, Squatter Enclosures, Small Scale Landscape, heathland, significant views and Key Opportunity Sites.
- 2.31 The Key Opportunity Sites mapped data is purely indicative and used for the purpose of preparing the Landscape Character Assessment.

3 Document Layout

3.01 The data collected in the course of this assessment is presented as follows

3.02 A brief description of the Joint Character Areas (JCAs) that occur within Staffordshire Moorlands Churnet Valley study area precedes the description of landscape character type sub areas. The JCA descriptions cover the regional landscape character of:

JCA	64	Potteries and Churnet Valley
JCA	52	White Peak
JCA	53	South West Peak

3.03 Reference is made to the Staffordshire Moorlands DC Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008), which covers the whole of the Staffordshire Moorlands. The landscape character types that are found within the Churnet Valley Study Area are as follows:

- Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys
- Dissected Sandstone Uplands
- Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe
- Settled Plateau Farmlands
- Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands
- Gritstone Highland Fringe

3.04 A further breakdown of the landscape character types into sub-areas generally follows the landscape description units used in the survey for Staffordshire County Council's 'Planning for Landscape Change' Supplementary Planning Guidance. These sub areas have been named after the settlements within the Churnet Valley which they either contain or abut. The breakdown and naming of sub areas is as follows:

Within character type **1 Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys**

Sub Area **1a Alton and Oakamoor**

Sub Area **1b Consall and Froghall**

Sub Area **1c Cheddleton and Leek**

Within character type **2 Dissected Sandstone Uplands**

Sub Area **2a Alton**

Sub Area **2b Kingsley**

Sub Area **2c Rudyard**

Within character type **3 Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe**

Sub Area **3a Ipstones and Whiston**

Within character type **4 Settled Plateau Farmlands**

Sub Area **4a Consall**

Within character type **5 Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands**

Sub Area **5a Wetley Rocks**

Sub Area **5b East Leek**

Sub Area **5c North Rudyard**

Sub area **5d South Kingsley**

Within character type **6 Gritstone Highland Fringe**

Sub Area **6a Tittesworth and Leek**

- 3.05 A plan showing the distribution and juxtaposition of each landscape character type sub area within the Churnet Valley is located at the front of the Landscape Sub Areas section.
- 3.06 The information provided for each landscape character type sub area comprises the text, a landscape constraints plan and a landscape character assessment plan.
- 3.07 The key characteristics for each landscape character type sub area have been identified and the following main characteristics are described:
- Geology, landform and soils
 - Vegetation
 - Field pattern and enclosure
 - Land use and settlement
 - Water features
 - Transport and access
 - Historic features
 - Views
 - Features with potential for tourism/recreation

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- Landscape change/incongruous landscape features
- Analysis of the character of the sub area
- Key planning and management issues/future pressures
- Landscape planning guidelines
- Land management guidelines

4 Application of the Assessment and Review Findings

- 4.01 Churnet Valley is characterised by deeply incised, generally wooded valleys associated with the River Churnet and its tributaries. Outside of the valleys the land becomes a more gentle rolling landscape, with smaller valley features, and a more open, pastoral nature. Fields are mostly bounded by hedges, with dry stone walls associated with dwellings. The proximity to upland and gritstone landscapes changes the nature of the land to less intimate, with more ridgelines, and field boundaries are interspersed with dry stone walls. Views are generally experienced from higher ground. More enclosed views are experienced from within the Cloughs and valleys. Remnant Historic Parkland is located throughout the study area creating a strong character to the area. The Caldon Canal, Churnet Valley Railway with disused railway lines, Rudyard and Tittesworth Reservoirs are distinct man made interventions of high value within the landscape.
- 4.02 When considering development proposals within the Churnet Valley study area, including the Key Opportunity Sites, the Landscape Character Type Sub Areas should be used to assess the landscape impact of the proposals.
- 4.03 When considering the landscape character data it should be remembered that the edges of the landscape character type sub areas are not always readily distinguishable on the ground and along boundaries of character types there can be a transition zone where features from both adjoining character types are present. The distribution of typical landscape features will vary throughout individual character types, and these have been broken down further into the sub areas. All the key characteristics of the character type sub areas are unlikely to be always present in each part of the area. In areas where the landscape structure is weak and eroded, areas of the original landscape can still be found intact. It is important that the Landscape Character Type Sub Area descriptions are used as a guide to help articulate the features and character of the landscape.
- 4.04 Important areas of setting around towns and villages were undertaken as part of the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment in 2008. The Landscape Character of the Churnet Valley should be read in conjunction with this document. Towns and villages may be situated on the edge of more than one Landscape Character Type Sub Area which can mean that the landscape characteristics will vary around the settlement.
- 4.05 Squatter Enclosures and Small Scale Landscapes have been identified as important landscape and historic features within the landscape of this part of Staffordshire Moorlands. These landscapes are generally areas sensitive to change. They should be protected from inappropriate development and the erosion of the vegetation structure which is likely to have an adverse impact on the character of the area through the loss of or decline in these important landscape characteristics.
- 4.06 There is a Registered Park and Garden at Alton Towers and a number of remnant historic parklands which remain within the Churnet Valley study area. These are generally clearly recognisable from their intrinsic parkland features and which contribute to the overall strength and character of the broader landscape.

- 4.07 The Key Opportunity Sites have been discussed in relation to their significance within the particular Landscape Character Type Sub Area in which they are located. Development of the Key Opportunities Sites must have regard to its impact on the intrinsic character of the individual Landscape Character Type Sub Area. Particular care should be taken of sensitive landscape features and of small scale landscapes. These should be protected and reinforced where possible as part of the design proposals. Any planting proposals should reflect the form, character and species found in the locality. Planting should aim to maximise biodiversity and to enhance the structure of the Landscape Character Type Sub Area. Urban elements including those associated with necessary improvements to infrastructure should be avoided so as not to detract from the intrinsic rural character of the Churnet Valley.
- 4.08 Staffordshire County Council's 'Planning for Landscape Change' assessment of landscape quality identified proposed landscape policy objectives which ranged from landscape regeneration in areas of low quality landscape to active landscape conservation in areas of high quality landscape. These are broad brushed and are discussed within the overall Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, 2008. On further analysis individual sub areas have specific sensitivities such as small scale landscapes, squatter enclosures, ancient woodlands, the openness of the landscape or the existing or potential pressures associated with Key Opportunity Sites. These have been identified within each Landscape Character Type Sub Area.
- 4.09 The Landscape Character Assessment found that the main issues which are impacting on landscape character within the Churnet Valley study area are:
- Replacement of hedgerows and dry stone walls by stock proof fencing
 - Overgrazing and horsiculture
 - Erosion and loss of parkland landscapes
 - Loss of tree cover and lack of woodland management
 - Pressures associated with tourist hotspots
 - Erosion of canal infrastructure
 - 'Urbanisation' of rural villages and isolated dwellings
 - Urban fringe impacts associated with Leek
 - Development which does not reflect local vernacular
 - Urban style highway improvements
- 4.10 In general within the Churnet Valley planning guidelines are needed to:
- Encourage retention and maintenance of typical field boundaries
 - Protect small scale landscapes and squatter enclosures from inappropriate development
 - Require historic landscape appraisals to protect heritage landscapes & inform development
 - Identify and protect key views and viewpoint opportunities

- Prepare design guides and advice for tourism and recreation accommodation
- Encourage long distance horse riding accommodation along Sabrina Way Bridleway
- Provide advice on the provision of good quality signage and interpretation

4.11 Where new development is considered appropriate consideration should be given to the features of the landscape character type sub area and to the more immediate landscape setting. The scale of the development should reflect the scale of the surrounding landscape. Careful consideration should be given to boundary treatments ensuring that the vegetation structure of the existing site and its environs are either strengthened or protected and that any new planting carried out as part of the proposals is sympathetic with the local landscape. Where the existing landscape structure is eroded and in a poor condition, new development can provide the opportunity for creating a strong new landscape structure. Plant material should where possible contribute towards local habitats and to the land management guidelines identified for the relevant landscape character type. Open space can be used to create views out to the surrounding countryside; with appropriate tree and shrub planting to act as a buffer between development and the adjacent countryside; and create strong new defensible boundaries to settlements.

4.12 Planning control and guidance alone cannot achieve the reinforcement and enhancement needed to maintain and improve the landscape character of the Churnet Valley. Active land management is also required. Land management guidelines need to include:

- Encourage the management and reinforcement of ancient/semi natural woodland
- Encourage field boundary restoration and management through good practice
- Provide good practice guides to counteract the adverse impacts of horsiculture
- Support and encourage good pastoral and arable land management practice
- Encourage the improvement and management of water bodies including water quality
- Take action to control the spread of Himalayan Balsam along river and canal
- Protect and enhance the rights of way network and access to key facilities and open access land supported by the provision of signage and interpretation

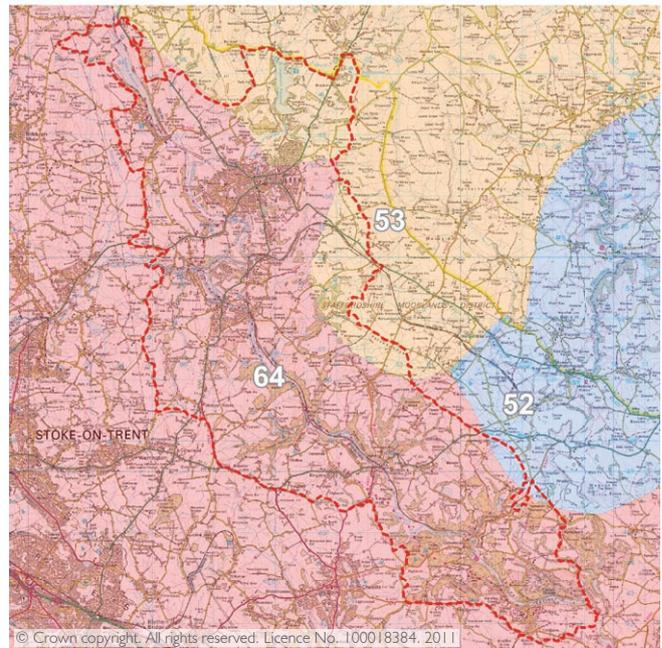
4.13 This Landscape Character Assessment supplements the District-wide landscape and settlement assessment and Staffordshire County Council's 'Planning for Landscape Change' Supplementary Planning Guidance. It assesses the landscape qualities of the Churnet Valley in more detail and proposes specific and appropriate measures for its protection and enhancement.

5 Regional Character Areas: Churnet Valley Study Area

5.01 In 1996 the former Countryside Commission and English Nature, with support from English Heritage, produced The Character of England Map. This map combines English Nature's Natural Areas and the former Countryside Commission's Countryside Character Areas into a map of 159 Joint Character Areas (JCAs) for the whole of England.

5.02 The Churnet Valley study area falls within 3 Joint character areas:

- 64 Potteries and Churnet Valley
- 52 White Peak
- 53 South West Peak



5.03 The majority of the Churnet Valley lies within the Potteries and Churnet Valley. The Peak Park abuts the north eastern boundary of the study area and the White Peak and the South West Peak Joint Character Areas extend into this study area. The key characteristics of each of the joint character areas are identified as follows:

5.04 64 The Potteries and Churnet Valley

- Strongly dissected hills and small plateaux, rising up to the Pennines and cut by major river valleys.
- Strong contrast between remote uplands, urban areas, sheltered wooded valleys and hillside pastures.
- Prominent Millstone Grit and Coal Measures ridges.
- Sprawling industrial towns of the Potteries forming a major conurbation.
- Extensive former industrial and extractive sites, many now reclaimed, intermixed with settlements and open land.
- Open moorland and rough grazing on higher ground.
- Rural settlement pattern of sheltered villages on low ground with hamlets, scattered farmsteads and cottages elsewhere. Brick and sandstone older buildings with tile and slate roofs.

5.05 52 The White Peak

- Elevated limestone plateau dissected by steeply cut dales and gorges with rock outcrops, screes, and cave systems.
- Long, narrow, shelter belts of broadleaved trees on high ground and along lead rakes with semi-natural broadleaved woodland along dale sides.
- Clear, fast-flowing rivers and streams in some dales; others are dry or seasonal.
- Nucleated villages and small towns connected by crest and valley roads.
- Improved farmland for intensive dairy farming characterised by small narrow fields, often of medieval origin, around many villages and large rectangular fields away from the villages, formed by white, limestone, dry stone walls and walled up lead rakes (forming a combination of white walls and green grass).
- Poorly vegetated dew ponds, common over the whole plateau, lined with concrete, limestone or clay.
- Mosaic of herb-rich grassland, woodland and scrub along dales.
- Lack of a unifying style of architecture for buildings and settlements due to the availability of two dissimilar rock types, limestone and 'gritstone' used either singly or in combination in various parts of the area.
- Large-scale limestone quarries creating major scars in limited places in an otherwise attractive landscape.
- Long-disused workings for limestone and ores, particularly lead rakes, provide features rich in ecological, historical and cultural interest.
- Features of special archaeological interest together with strong cultural heritage dating from the earliest prehistoric past.

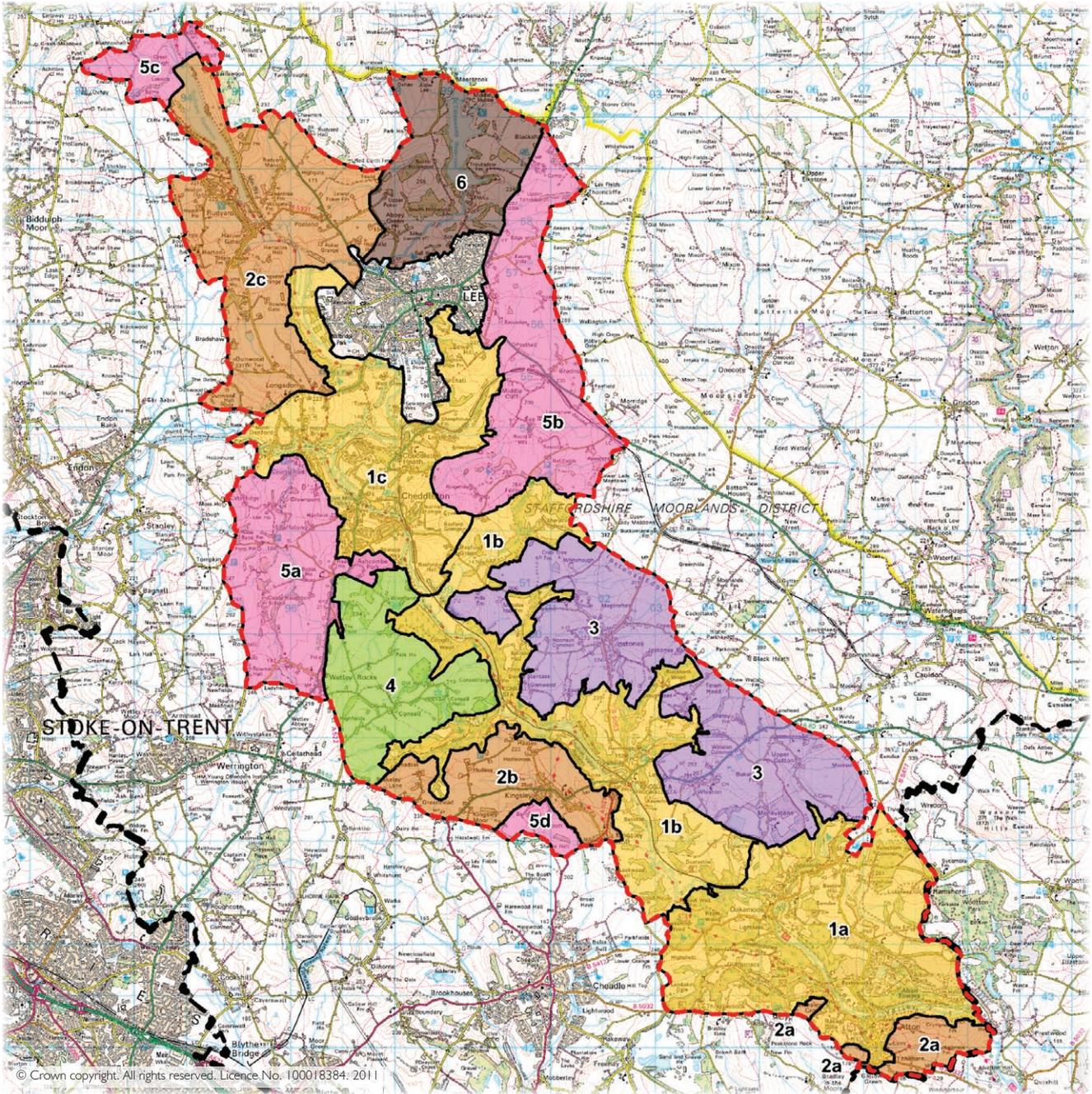
5.06 53 The South West Peak

- Integrated mosaic of landform and vegetation patterns comprising tracts of wild expansive moorland with heather on hill tops and ridges and small scale enclosed farmland with herb-rich hay meadows and rushy pastures in valleys.
- Area of upland flanked by lower hills to the south and west and indented by valleys which broaden to the west into gently undulating lowland as the rivers drain to the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain.
- Isolated 'gritstone' edges at Ramshaw Rocks and the Roaches providing a dramatic contrast to rolling uplands.

Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment

- Long, uninterrupted views from margins to upland areas and vice versa, and contained and intimate around the foothills.
- Fringes to the upland dissected by river valleys with fast flowing streams which create an intricate ridge and valley landscape of distinctive pattern and character.
- Main rivers of the Goyt, Dove, Dane, Manifold, Churnet and Hamps all with their sources in the upland area.
- Economy of the area based on stock rearing (sheep and beef) with some dairy farming and grouse shooting on the moorland.
- Intricate and distinctive field patterns often with historic associations including gritstone walls at higher elevations and hedgerows at lower elevations, with holly prevalent in the lower valleys.
- Farm buildings and villages built predominantly of local stone reflecting local geology and history.
- Small nucleated settlements with extensive dispersed farm landscape, commonly with distinctive and recognisable area of intake.
- Remains of former coal mining activity particularly in the area around Flash.

Landscape Character Types



-  Dissected sandstone cloughs and valleys
-  Dissected sandstone uplands
-  Dissected sandstone highland fringe

-  Settled plateau farmlands
-  Ancient slope and valley farmlands
-  Gritstone highland fringe

Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys

Ia - Alton & Oakamoor

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area follows the main valley of the River Churnet and its tributaries to the north of Alton and south of Oakamoor.



2. Key Characteristics

- Deeply incised wooded valleys with narrow winding watercourses
- Extensive Historic Parkland
- Rocky Outcrops
- Stone buildings and walls
- Italianate influence on buildings in and around Alton
- Sheep and cattle farming with smallholdings
- Large broadleaf woodlands
- Narrow sunken lanes with hedgebanks and tall hedges that limit views
- Dominant views to higher ground
- Alton Towers Resort (Key Opportunity Site)
- Moneystone Quarry (Key Opportunity Site)

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Deeply incised wooded valleys of the River Churnet and its tributaries associated with Carboniferous and Permo-Triassic sandstones. Strongly undulated with pronounced rounded landform above valley sides and rock outcrops to valley tops. The acid soils, brown earths and stagnogley soils originally supported vegetation communities between lowland and upland heath. These now support extensive woodland areas.

4. Vegetation

Extensive woodland blocks and belts of deciduous and conifer, much of which is Ancient Woodland. Tall hedgerows and hedgebanks line roads limiting views. Historic parklands are characterised by woodland belts containing open grassland with parkland trees and avenues. Formal pleasure grounds with introduced species are located close to the main house.

5. Field Pattern and Enclosure

Sunken lanes with extensive hedge banks and tall hedges confine views and create a sense of enclosure. In places the small intimate wooded valleys contrast with the glimpses of wider distant views. Ramshorn Common is a moorland landscape. Very small scale squatter enclosures are still evident around Toothill.

6. Land Use and Settlement

Farming varies from large intensive sheep and cattle farms to smallholdings. The main tourist attraction in this area is Alton Towers Resort. Caravan parks are located in Cotton and Alton. Holiday Lodges within woodland on Ramshorn Common.

Building styles in Oakamoor are mainly of traditional sandstone, characteristic of the surrounding geology although red brick properties are also found. In Cotton a mix of stone and brick buildings are found including Cotton College, a visually impressive former seminary. In Toot Hill brick properties associated with newer developments dominate. Alton is influenced by its proximity to the historic parkland at Alton Towers, with Italianate style estate properties mixed with traditional stone dwellings. Farley Hall is mock tudor in style with a mix of stone and rendered properties within Farley.

7. Water Features

The River Churnet is the main water body within the landscape defining the valleys, with numerous tributaries and streams. There are lakes at Alton Towers associated with the designed early 19th Century landscape and park.

8. Transport and Access

The B5417 passes west-east through this area, and the B5032 forms the boundary to the south of the character type sub area. A network of small lanes is notable within this area as are a substantial

network of Public Rights of Way. The lanes are deeply cut and narrow often tree lined or within woodland belts. Disused railway line at the bottom of the valley is used as the Oakamoor/Denstone Greenway Cycleway. Sabrina Way a National Bridleroute Network follows a series of small lanes and Old Carriage Ways. A section of the Staffordshire Way runs through this area. Extensive areas of Open Access Land include Threap Wood, Toothill Wood and Hawksmoor Nature Reserve.

9. Historic Features

Grade I Registered Park and Garden of Alton Towers is laid out around a major early 19th Century Country House. Extensive remnant historic parkland extends around Alton Towers and Farley Hall. Old Carriage Ways associated with Alton Towers run through the woodlands and remain visible today, some extending towards Cheadle in the west. Other historic features include Moor Court Hall and Lightoaks both remnant historic parklands, and Cotton College. Numerous listed buildings associated with the parkland landscapes. Alton and Farley Conservation Area provides further historic reference.

10. Views

Broad views of the parkland landscape briefly experienced from Farley, where parkland fencing replaces vegetation enabling views. Key views of Alton Castle and Alton Mill are experienced along New Road on the approach to Alton. Further views are generally experienced from higher ground where there are gaps in vegetation.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

Old Carriage Ways through woodland could be reformed to provide recreation links to Cheadle and re-opening of the railway line between Froghall and Alton could provide alternative transport links. Encourage use of public footpaths and Open Access Land. Moneystone redevelopment proposals and Alton Towers Resort's long term plan proposals could provide further opportunities for recreation and tourism. Create marked viewpoints.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

- Alton Towers Resort and associated busy roads and realigned junctions.
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows.
- More recent development with no reference to building character within the area.
- Disused and abandoned Cotton College.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Substantial woodland belts.

- Stone vernacular to small settlements.
- Very small scale landscape associated with squatter enclosures.
- Strong valley features with rocky outcrops.
- Registered Historic Park and Garden at Alton Towers and extensive remnant historic parkland including Farley.
- Focal points of Alton Towers and Alton Castle and key vantage points from high ground.
- Open Access Land and network of Public Rights of Way.
- The Staffordshire Way.
- Sabrina Way Bridleway.
- Denstone/Oakamoor Cycleway.

b) Weaknesses

- More recent development with no reference to local vernacular or pattern.
- Alton Towers Resort has resulted in changes to the local road network increasing junction sizes, with busy roads which create access problems for local residents and businesses.
- Stock proof and chain link fencing providing uncharacteristic boundaries.
- Abandoned development at Cotton College.

c) Opportunities

- Making better use of Open Access Land and network of paths and rights of way for walking and cycling.
- Encourage good farming practices to maintain/replant hedgerows.
- Forestry management schemes to maintain biodiversity and good quality woodland.
- Old Carriage Ways through woodland associated with Alton Towers could provide links from Cheadle into the Churnet Valley.
- Re-opening of disused railway line between Froghall and Alton.
- Create viewing opportunities with signage and interpretation.
- Separate pedestrian access arrangements to parkland gardens at Alton Towers.
- Moneystone Quarry redevelopment as a potential recreation destination.
- Long term plan of Alton Towers Resort.

d) Threats

- Erosion of hedgerows is creating a larger scale landform.
- Expansion of Alton Towers Resort may have an adverse impact on parkland landscape and be visually intrusive.

- Erosion of parkland fencing and parkland landscape through lack of appropriate management.
- Tourist hotspots could result in further significant demand for improved infrastructure, road improvements and car park facilities, which need to be well managed so as not to result in loss of key landscape features and erosion of the landscape structure.
- Moneystone Quarry redevelopment proposals may cause loss of small scale landscape features further eroding the character of the local landscape.
- Lack of woodland management will result in the loss of these notable features within the landscape.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues/Future Pressures

- Alton Towers Resort/historic parkland Key Opportunity Site
- Part of the Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site
- Route of disused railway line
- Busy roads
- Modern agricultural practice resulting in change of landscape scale through enlarging field sizes
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows
- Loss of parkland landscape
- Loss of woodland – poor management practices
- Tourism and recreation associated with Destinations Sites:
 - Alton Towers Resort
 - Moneystone Quarry (in part)

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. Hedgebanks which are significant local feature should be protected and maintained.
- b. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and drystone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- c. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this area. The influence of the building style associated with the historic parkland at Alton Towers extends into adjacent settlements.
- d. New planting should take account of landform, landscape scale and small field pattern. Consideration should be given to the spatial relationship between woodland blocks and open areas so that the rhythm of the landscape is not disrupted.

- e. Both broadleaves and conifer species occur in this landscape and new plantings should generally reflect this mix. However woodland plantings should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission. Care should be taken not to interrupt important views across the landscape in particular from higher ground towards Alton Towers and Alton Castle, from Farley and Oakamoor.
- f. The Key Opportunity Site at Moneystone Quarry is generally well screened from view. However redevelopment proposals should take into account the sensitive nature of the small scale landscape in terms of its protection. Particular regard should be taken of woodland planting that may result in the infill of this small scale landscape and which can create an adverse impact on the landscape character.
- g. New broadleaved woodland planting could be used effectively to counteract the effects of fragmentation and isolation of ancient woodland although this must consider the context and form of the existing woodland, and due regard to small scale landscape and squatter enclosures.
- h. Development and new tree planting including that within the Key Opportunities Site of Alton Towers should take account of the setting of the Registered Parkland of Alton Towers and the extensive remnant historic parkland of Alton Park and Farley, of the setting of important buildings and of important local views. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of an historic parkland must take account of the unique character of that designed landscape.
- i. Any proposals for development or land use change within an historic landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.
- j. Historic landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland, pleasure grounds and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- k. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs) including Oakamoor, Alton and Farley, particularly as a result of the influence of Alton Towers Resort.
- l. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- m. Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
- n. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protect these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.

- o. Encourage the use of Open Access Land, Public Rights of Way, cycleways, and bridleways through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley. Existing old Carriage Ways through woodland, associated with Alton Towers, should be considered for restoration to provide recreational links from Cheadle to Alton Towers and the Churnet Valley.
- p. Consideration should be given to re-opening of the disused railway between Alton Towers Resort and Froghall. This should be considered alongside established cycleways that currently use this route.
- q. Rocky outcrops are a notable feature in this landscape character type sub area and should be retained and protected from development or change.
- r. Key viewing opportunities should be created supported by signage and interpretation.
- s. Consideration should be given with the development of any lodges for recreational development, taking careful account of position, loss of valuable woodland or creation of screen woodlands with regard to the sensitive landscape and existing woodland form, materials, and access, to prevent any visual impact of the development or new planting.
- t. Consideration should be given to providing recreational opportunities along the Sabrina Way Bridleway for long distance horse riding accommodation. This small scale form of development should be considered alongside all other landscape planning guidelines specific to this area.
- u. Cotton College provides an opportunity for development. However, the abandoned development site has a substantial negative impact on the landscape character, with the potential loss of an historic landscape feature.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Ancient/Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

It is highly important to the character and quality of the landscape that ancient/semi-natural broad leaved woodlands are maintained and enhanced. Degraded sites should be restored and new woodlands should be recreated or regenerated.

Ancient and semi-natural broadleaved woodland is generally particularly important to the form and character of historic parkland landscapes. Similarly the maintenance, safeguarding and restoration of wood pasture and parkland is also important. It is also likely that a number of veteran trees will be found within an historic parkland.

There should be more emphasis on conservation and restocking of existing woodlands, and the restoration of semi-natural character to plantations on ancient sites, to maintain the present well wooded character of the landscape.

b) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational

grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice through provision of guidance and monitoring of appropriate land and field boundary management.

c) Hedgerows

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows be encouraged.

d) Heathland

It is of high importance that heath at Ramshorn Common is protected from development and damaging activities and that former heathland areas are re-created and new heathlands are created.

e) Lakes and Ponds

There are lakes and ponds within the designed parkland landscape of Alton Towers. It is most important that these water bodies and catchments are maintained and enhanced.

f) Reedbeds

Opportunities should be taken to maintain and create reedbeds.

g) Rivers and Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features is maintained and that the quality and quantity of water should be improved.

h) Invasive Species

Along the River Churnet, Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) a non native invasive species has colonised overwhelming native species. Advice and guidance needs to be provided to control Himalayan Balsam and for the reestablishment of native riverbank species.

i) Wet Woodland

Wet woodland should be maintained, enhanced, restored and that further losses are prevented. Opportunities should be sought to increase the number and extent of these woodlands.

j) Arable Field Margins

Arable field margins should be maintained, improved and restored where possible

17. Development within Alton Towers Key Opportunity Site

Development within the Alton Towers Resort Key Opportunity Site (KOS) should take account of the sensitive nature of the Registered Historic Parkland and its setting. Development that substantially alters the remaining historic landscape within the KOS boundary should seek to maintain the character of the

parkland landscape, retaining and reinforcing parkland trees. New development proposals that extend into the wider parkland should take account of the parkland setting, and where possible reinforce the vegetation structure to enable new development to be absorbed within this important landscape.

Consideration should be given to providing pedestrian access only to the the Registered Park and Gardens within Alton Towers.

To minimise the impact of vehicle movements associated with the Resort sustainable transport measures and practice should be considered such as the creating of off road cycle routes to this attraction and partnership working with Moorland and City Railway Ltd to extend local rail access. Necessary road improvements associated with the expansion of the facility should be in-keeping with the character of the area and avoid creating intrusive urban features.

Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site is discussed in more detail in Landscape Character Type Sub Area 1b.

Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys Ib - Froghall and Consall Forge

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area follows the main valley of the River Churnet and its tributaries through Froghall and Consall Forge. It lies between the sub areas of Alton and Oakamoor (Ia), and Cheddleton and Longsdon (Ic).



2. Key Characteristics

- Deeply incised wooded valleys with winding watercourses
- Broader valley bottoms of the River Churnet with more open floodplain
- Remnant Historic Parkland of Sharpcliffe Hall and part Consall Hall
- Stone buildings and boundary walls
- Churnet Valley Railway and Caldon Canal
- Consall Nature Park and Combes Valley Nature Reserve
- Sheep and cattle farming with smallholdings
- Large broadleaf woodlands with newer conifer plantations
- Narrow sunken lanes with hedgebanks and tall hedges that limit views
- Dominant views to higher ground
- The Staffordshire Way
- Bolton Copperworks (Key Opportunity Site)
- Moneystone Quarry (Key Opportunity Site)

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Deeply incised wooded valleys of the River Churnet and its tributaries associated with Carboniferous and Permo-Triassic sandstones, particularly north of Froghall. Smaller incised valleys and streams further south of Froghall. More open floodplain along valley floor. Strongly undulated with pronounced rounded landform above valley sides. The acid soils, brown earths and stagnogley soils originally supported vegetation communities between lowland and upland heath. These now support extensive woodland areas.

4. Vegetation

Extensive woodland blocks and belts of deciduous and coniferous trees. Tall hedgerows and hedgebanks line roads limiting views. Limited remnants of historic parklands are characterised by woodland plantations and parkland trees.

5. Field Pattern & Enclosure

Sunken lanes with extensive hedge banks and tall hedges confine views and create a sense of enclosure. In places the small intimate wooded valleys contrast with the glimpses of wider distant views. A small scale well structured pastoral landscape lies to the south east of this area within the Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site. Enclosures are generally hedgerows with some drystone walls often associated with dwellings.

6. Land Use and Settlement

Farming is pastoral and appears to be small scale in this area. Moneystone Quarry is an incongruous feature within a small scale landscape. Consall Nature Park and Combes Valley Nature Reserve provide recreational destinations. Churnet Valley Railway and Caldon Canal run through this area from Froghall via Consall along the River Churnet. This is a well used section of the Churnet Valley for all forms of recreation.

Froghall lies within the centre of this Landscape Character Type Sub Area and is an industrial settlement associated with the long established Bolton Copperworks, which dominates the landscape. The remaining industrial structures are mainly concrete and corrugated steel. The most prominent remaining feature is the brick chimney which can be viewed from the surrounding landscape. The Caldon Canal Conservation Area has recently been extended into the Bolton Copperworks site to include the chimney. Froghall lies at the end of the current active railway and canal network. Smallholdings and buildings associated with the railway and canal are found throughout the valley. There are still derelict former industrial buildings and features in the vicinity of the railway, canal and industrial settlements which are undergoing or worthy of renovation. Building styles are mainly of red brick or traditional sandstone. Consall Forge hamlet lies in the base of the valley further north of Froghall comprising several sandstone dwellings. Dry stone walls are often associated with dwellings. Limestone Kilns are noted at Froghall and Consall Forge.

7. Water Features

The River Churnet is a key feature of this character area, along with Combes Brook and other tributaries of the Churnet. The Caldon Canal follows the line of the River Churnet ending at Froghall. There are a series of ponds associated with Consall Nature Park and Combes Valley. Caldon Canal and River Churnet share the same line along the valley and separate with a series of weirs at Consall Forge.

8. Transport and Access

The A52 and B5053 run through a small part of this area at Froghall. Access through this area is limited. Churnet Valley Railway, a steam railway and tourist attraction, runs along the bottom of the Churnet valley with stations at Consall and Kingsley/Froghall. The Caldon Canal passes through this character area following the line of the River Churnet. The active railway and canal end at Froghall. The landscape is crisscrossed by a well walked and cycled network of towpaths, extensive Public Rights of Way and informal paths created through the nature parks.

9. Historic Features

Caldon Canal, Churnet Valley Railway, the Bolton Copperworks, Froghall Wharf, and the Limekilns at Froghall and Consall, reference the varied industrial heritage of the area. There is remnant historic parkland at Sharpcliffe Hall with other parkland extending into this area. Very small scale squatter enclosures are found at Coldlea Farm and Froghall.

10. Views

Views are generally experienced from higher ground particularly from roads along the boundary of the character area and also along the B5053 within the character area.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

Consall Nature Park, Combes Valley Nature Reserve, redevelopment of the Key Opportunity Site at Bolton Copperworks, Caldon Canal, Churnet Valley Railway, the disused railway lines and the extensive network of footpaths. Disused buildings have potential for holiday/short break accommodation. The redevelopment of Moneystone Quarry could provide future tourism and recreation within this landscape area.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

Moneystone Quarry lies partly within this landscape area. The busy A52 crosses the area at Froghall. Bolton Copperworks is an industrial site of heritage value. However, steel palisade fencing and concrete block fencing are incongruous features within the area impacting particularly on the canal. Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows are evident elsewhere in the character area.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Substantial woodland belts.
- Small scale landscape around Moneystone Quarry and Foxt.
- Strong recreational and tourism opportunities associated with the Churnet Valley Railway, Caldon Canal, Consall Nature Park, Combes Valley Nature Reserve and the Staffordshire Way.

b) Weaknesses

- The current state of the Bolton Copperworks site. Intrusive fencing and certain structures associated with the industrial site.
- Insufficient or poorly designed car parking facilities associated with the Churnet Valley Railway e.g. at Froghall.
- Landscape sensitive to change from tourism pressures and lack of management.

c) Opportunities

- Bolton Copperworks site provides an opportunity for a development/recreation hub within this location and offers car parking facilities for destination sites.
- Re-opening of the disused railway line south of Froghall reinforces the proposed recreation hub at Bolton Copperworks site.
- Making better use of the network of paths and rights of way for walking and cycling could divert the concentration of activities away from one key area.
- Increased forestry management.
- Provision of design guidance for improved tourist facilities e.g. car parking etc
- Moneystone Quarry redevelopment as a potential recreation destination.

d) Threats

- The tourist attractions and destination sites result in pressures across the landscape through lack of appropriate facilities, investment and repairs.
- Overuse of the canal towpath has resulted in significant erosion and the concentration of activities surrounding the railway has resulted in an inappropriate informal car park.
- Tourist hotspots could result in significant demand for improved infrastructure, such as road improvements and car park facilities, which could result in loss of key landscape features and erosion of the landscape structure.
- Erosion of hedgerows is creating a larger scale landscape.
- Lack of woodland management will result in the loss of these notable features within the landscape.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Bolton Copperworks Key Opportunity Site
- Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site
- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows
- Loss of woodland – poor management practices
- Tourist and recreation pressures associated with Destination Sites:
 - Churnet Valley Railway, Froghall and Consall Forge stations
 - Froghall Wharf
 - Consall Nature Park
 - Combes Valley Nature Reserve
 - Caldon Canal
 - Moneystone Quarry redevelopment proposals

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. Hedgerows which are significant local feature should be protected and maintained.
- b. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and dry stone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- c. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this local area.
- d. New planting should take account of landform, landscape scale and small field pattern. Consideration should be given to the spatial relationship between woodland blocks and open areas so that the rhythm of the landscape is not disrupted.
- e. Both broadleaves and conifer species occur in this landscape and new plantings should generally reflect this mix. However woodland plantings should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission. Care should be taken not to interrupt important views across the landscape. These are generally contained views from within the valley or from higher ground. In particular from Froghall, Caldon Canal towpath, Churnet Valley Railway, and Public Rights of Way.
- f. Parts of the Key Opportunity Site at Moneystone Quarry are generally well screened from views. However redevelopment proposals should take into account the sensitive nature of the small scale landscape in terms of its protection. Particular regard should be taken of woodland planting that

may result in the infill of this small scale landscape and which can create an adverse impact on the landscape character.

- g. Areas adjacent to the Key Opportunity Site at Bolton Copperworks are sensitive to development in particular Caldon Canal and the Churnet Valley Railway. Development proposals should improve the environment in terms of landscape character, biodiversity and visual appearance along the canal, railway line, River Churnet and roadside by having due regard for the landscape character within this area.
- h. New broadleaved woodland planting may be needed to reinforce landscape structure and counteract the effects of fragmentation and isolation of ancient woodland.
- i. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of the remnant historic parkland of Sharpcliffe Hall and part of Consall Hall and Gardens must take account of the unique character of these designed landscapes.
- j. Any proposals for development or land use change within these remnant historic landscapes should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.
- k. Historic landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland, pleasure grounds and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- l. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs), in particular where providing recreation facilities and new development at the Key Opportunity Sites.
- m. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- n. Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
- o. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
- p. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley.
- q. Key viewing opportunities should be created supported by signage and interpretation.

16. Land Management Guidelines

The loss of some semi-natural vegetation, particularly ancient woodland, semi-natural grasslands and hedgerows is one of the key planning and management issues for this landscape character type.

a) Ancient/Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

It is highly important to the character and quality of the landscape that ancient/semi-natural broad leaved woodlands are maintained and enhanced. Degraded sites should be restored and new woodlands should be recreated or regenerated.

Ancient and semi-natural broadleaved woodland is generally particularly important to the form and character of historic parkland landscapes. Similarly the maintenance, safeguarding and restoration of the remains of wood pasture and parkland are also important. It is likely that a number of veteran trees will be found within remnant historic parkland.

There should be more emphasis on conservation and restocking of existing woodlands, and the restoration of semi-natural character to plantations on ancient sites, to maintain the present well wooded character of the landscape.

New planting associated with the development of Bolton Copperworks Site (Key Opportunity Site) needs to take account of the interrelationship between landform and landscape scale. Consideration should be taken of the rhythm and nuances of local landscape and the scale and form of existing planting blocks.

b) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

c) Hedgerows

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows be encouraged.

d) Caldon Canal, Lakes and Ponds

It is most important that water bodies and catchments are maintained and enhanced and where possible the number of water bodies is increased. The erosion along the Caldon Canal towpath needs urgent attention and repair followed up by future routine management to safeguard the recreation use of this landscape feature.

e) Invasive Species

Along the River Churnet, Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) a non native invasive species has colonised overwhelming native species. Advice and guidance needs to be provided to control Himalayan Balsam and for the reestablishment of native riverbank species.

f) Reedbeds

Opportunities should be taken to maintain and create reedbeds.

g) Rivers and Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features is maintained and that the quality and quantity of water should be improved. This is particularly relevant in relation to the River Churnet and the industrial heritage at Froghall.

h) Arable Field Margins

Arable field margins should be maintained, improved and restored where possible.

17. Development within Bolton Copperworks Key Opportunity Site

Development within the Bolton Copperworks Key Opportunity Site (KOS) should be in-keeping with the traditional building style of the local area and should reflect the historic patterns of local, traditional settlement. Removal of incongruous fencing associated with the industry should be undertaken as part of the development proposals to improve the visual appearance and the quality of the canalside environment. Retention of any significant features should be considered as part of the development. Improvements to the quality of the waterside landscape at both the River Churnet and Caldon Canal should form an intrinsic part of the development proposals. Planting should be of a nature that complements the informal wooded setting and formal planting should be discouraged. Narrow floodplains are evident within this Landscape Character Type Sub Area and should be encouraged as a feature within this development and seen as a means of improving the quality of the water environment. Any proposed development alongside Caldon Canal within the Bolton Copperworks site could reflect the vernacular characteristics of the local area. Screening of the remaining industrial development would be required although planting should reflect the natural species and mixes within the character sub area.

Road improvements within and to the surrounding area as a result of further development should be in-keeping with the character of the area and should not create intrusive urban features.

The Churnet Valley Railway and other local attractions require the provision of car parking as part of the recreation facilities within this sub area. A design guide for the provision of car parking within the Churnet Valley Study Area should be prepared which should incorporate and cover layout, appropriate surfacing and suitable screen planting to enable such facilities to be readily absorbed within the Character Sub Area.

18. Development within Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site

Redevelopment proposals for Moneystone Quarry are located over three character sub areas, 1a, 1b and 3.

Redevelopment proposals of Moneystone Quarry should be in-keeping with the scale and nature of the landscape character of the three sub areas within which it is located. Active workings of Moneystone Quarry are generally well screened from views.

Redevelopment proposals should take into consideration the openness and high visibility of areas outside of the active quarry particularly around Whiston. Development within these locations should be low key and should be of a nature, character and style that are intrinsic to the character of Whiston. Any housing development should create a contiguous link to Whiston to ensure a natural flow with the village core and be of a layout that reflects the traditional expansion of the village.

Additional planting should be of a nature that complements the informal wooded setting of the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys and relates to the existing woodland planting associated with the quarry. Woodland planting should aim take on the form and character of the ancient and semi natural woodland which is typical of the landscape character type. This should avoid the introduction of incongruous woodland blocks within the landscape. Formal planting should be discouraged throughout the redevelopment proposals as it is out of character with the area. Redevelopment proposals should take into account the sensitive nature of the small scale landscape in terms of its protection. Particular regard should be taken of woodland planting that may result in the infill of this small scale landscape and which can create an adverse impact on this landscape character. Proposals should seek to reinforce and appropriately manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

Development proposals that encourage the use of static caravans and lodges in visible locations should be discouraged. Static caravans and lodges should be located where they do not impinge on the small scale landscape or the open, visible landscape and where they can be well screened by existing vegetation or can be screened by appropriately located new planting.

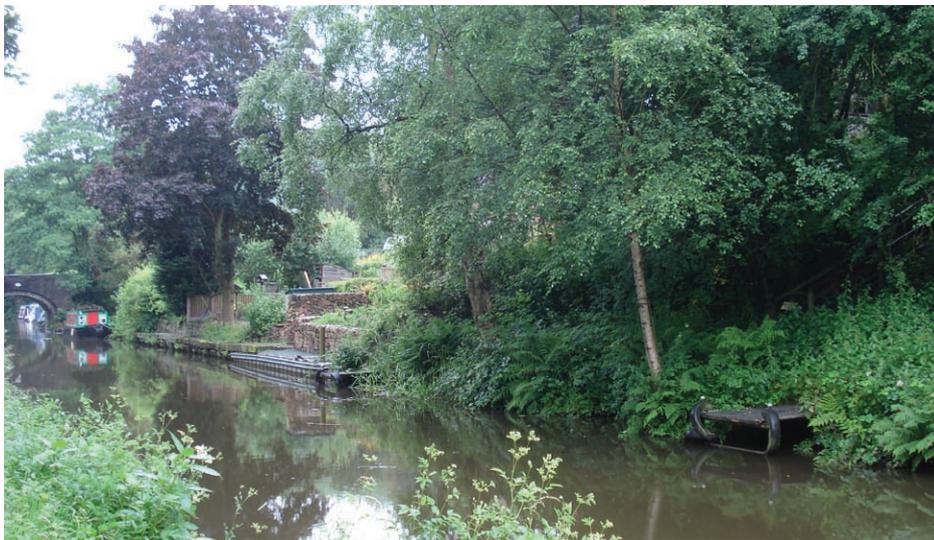
To minimise the impact of vehicle movements associated with this redevelopment and pressure to carry out visually intrusive road improvement, sustainable transport measures and practice should be considered such as the creating of off road cycle routes to this attraction and partnership working with Moorland and City Railway Ltd to extend local rail access. Necessary road improvements associated with the expansion of the facility should be in-keeping with the character of the area and avoid creating intrusive urban features. Roads within the site should be of a scale and nature that are not intrusive to the landscape character and should minimise hedgerow and tree removal.

Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys

Ic - Cheddleton & Longsdon

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area contains the upper reaches of the River Churnet and its tributaries including Endon Brook. It abuts the northern edge of the Froghall and Consall Forge sub area (Ib) and skirts the southern and western boundaries of Leek.



2. Key Characteristics

- Fewer deeply incised wooded valleys
- More smaller valley features
- More open and undulating cloughs
- Small scale rectilinear field pattern around Longsdon
- Settlements of Leek, Cheddleton and Longsdon
- Sheep and cattle farming with smallholdings
- Remnant historic parkland of Churnet Grange, Basford Hall and part of Ashcombe Park
- Extensive recreation facilities and historic features
- Industrial development
- Busy main roads
- Views from higher ground
- Cornhill (Key Opportunity Site)

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Fewer deeply incised valleys associated with Carboniferous and Permo-Triassic sandstones with numerous smaller valley features with more undulation in the cloughs with a pronounced rounded landform above valley sides. The acid soils, brown earths and stagnogley soils originally supported vegetation communities between lowland and upland heath, which generally support woodland areas. However these are smaller in extent than the sub areas to the south (1a and 1b), with remnant heath at Cheddleton.

4. Vegetation

Wooded valley sides and wooded streams with blocks of woodland scattered throughout the landscape. The cloughs are more open than the character areas further south (1a and 1b), although views are often distinctly wooded. Roads through the valleys are lined with tall hedgerows and hedgebanks limiting views. Remnant historic parkland of Churnet Grange, Basford Hall and part of Ashcombe Park are characterised by woodland belts and parkland trees.

5. Field Pattern & Enclosure

Distinctive, very small scale rectilinear field pattern around Longsdon, mainly hedgerows with some drystone walls. However, the fields are generally poorly managed with some horsiculture and are often overgrazed with rapidly eroding field boundaries being replaced with post and wire fencing. Large irregular fields are noted elsewhere within the landscape often with eroded field boundaries. In parts of this sub area sunken lanes with extensive hedge banks and tall hedges confine views and create a sense of enclosure. In places the small intimate wooded valleys offer wider distant views.

6. Land Use and Settlement

There is more settlement within this sub area than elsewhere in the study area and the proximity to Leek has had a strong influence on the landscape. The character sub area wraps around the southern edges of Leek with fringe development along the main roads. The expanded village of Cheddleton is located to the south of the sub area, and Longsdon village lies to the west. Further new housing development is located along the A520 near Cheddleton Heath, and at St Edwards Park. Industrial development is located along the A520 and A53 within this area and around the fringes of Leek.

Traditional building styles are of sandstone, characteristic of the surrounding geology although red brick properties are also found. The proximity of Leek has had a significant influence on the land use of this sub area, with new housing of varying styles and the suburbanisation of villages and isolated properties occurring. Farming ranges from sheep and cattle farms to smallholdings, however, horsiculture is becoming more prevalent.

The area is used extensively for recreation with the two branches of the Caldon Canal, Ladderedge Country Park, the Churnet Valley Railway, the Staffordshire Way, and two golf courses. The proximity to Leek and Cheddleton increases the level of local access.

7. Water Features

The River Churnet runs north-south through the character area with broader open floodplains and numerous tributaries. A significant feature is the Caldon Canal dividing at Longsdon into two branches, one heading towards Leek and the other south through Cheddleton.

8. Transport and Access

Busy major routes of the A53, A520, and A523 cut through the area and have a visual impact on the landscape. Narrow lanes around Longsdon and east of Cheddleton are lined with tall hedgerows and hedge banks and are characteristic of this sub area. Outside of Cheddleton village core new housing takes on a suburban character.

The main station of the Churnet Valley Railway, a steam railway and tourist attraction is located at Cheddleton. The new branch of the railway runs north east through Leekbrook, whilst the existing branch runs south to Froghall. Two branches of the Caldon Canal pass through this character area generally following the line of the River Churnet.

9. Historic Features

A number of remnant historic parkland landscapes associated with Churnet Grange, Basford Hall and part of Ashcombe Park are located within this character sub area. Longsdon retains its historic character with surrounding distinctive ancient field patterns. The canals and the steam railway are significant historic features. A disused railway line connects Endon through Longsdon to Leekbrook junction and from there through Leek towards Rudyard Lake.

10. Views

Views are generally experienced from higher ground within the cloughs, along the broad open floodplain and from minor routes through the area.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

The disused railway line which runs through Longsdon and Leek could be further utilised for recreation.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

Influence of urban fringe. Industrial areas. Busy roads. Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows. New housing development that does not relate to traditional settlement characteristics.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Distinct wooded valley sides.
- Rectilinear small scale landscape around Longsdon.
- Recreational and tourism opportunities associated with the Churnet Valley Railway, the two branches of Caldon Canal and Ladderedge Country Park.
- Broad flood plains.
- Remnant historic parkland landscapes of Basford Hall, Churnet Grange and part of Ashcombe Park.
- Intimate valleys and narrow roads around Longsdon and east of Cheddleton.

b) Weaknesses

- Busy roads.
- Industrial estates with poorly screened, untidy roadside views.
- New housing developments that do not reference local vernacular.
- Eroded field boundaries.
- Poor entrance to Ladderedge Country Park.

c) Opportunities

- Disused railway line.
- Reinforce small rectilinear landscape around Longsdon.
- Improve signage and manage access to recreational facilities.

d) Threats

- Suburbanisation of villages and isolated dwellings.
- Further new development with no reference to local historic vernacular.
- Erosion of field boundaries particularly in Longsdon.
- Horsiculture and overgrazing changing the nature of the pastoral landscape.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Cornhill Key Opportunity Site
- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows

- Loss of remnant historic parkland landscape
- Loss of woodland – poor management practices
- Tourism and recreation associated with Destination Sites:
 - Ladderedge Country Park
 - Churnet Valley Railway – Cheddleton Railway Station
 - Two branches of Caldon Canal
 - The Staffordshire Way
 - Golf Courses
- Influence of Leek

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. A much broader, more open landscape than sub areas 1a and 1b, with more visible field patterns. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. There are fewer stone walls within this Landscape Character Type Sub Area. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and drystone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- b. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this area. Recent development at Leekbrook does not sit well within the landscape. It lacks vegetation structure necessary to reinforce and link into the local landscape framework. Further development of such design and lack of landscape framework should be discouraged within this sub area.
- c. New planting should take account of landform, landscape scale and field pattern. The character within this sub area has diminished and the landscape structure is weaker. Consideration should be given to small belts of woodland planting along valley sides linking with existing woodland belts. Consideration should be given to the spatial relationship between woodland blocks and open areas so that the rhythm of the landscape is not disrupted.
- d. Both broadleaves and some conifer species occur in this landscape and where appropriate new plantings should generally reflect this and contain mixed woodland species. However woodland plantings should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission. Care should be taken not to interrupt important views across the landscape.
- e. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of the remnant historic parkland of Pickwood Hall, Churnet Grange, Westwood Hall, Basford Hall and parts of Ashcombe Park must take account of the unique character of these designed landscapes.
- f. Any proposals for development or land use change within these remnant historic landscapes should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.

- g. Historic landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- h. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs), particularly with the proximity and the influence of Leek on this sub area. Rural villages such as Longsdon and rural roads are particularly sensitive to these features.
- i. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- j. Development opportunities at the Key Opportunity Site at Cornhill within Leek should refer to the Settlement Assessment for Leek for further clarification and guidance.
- k. Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
- l. Small scale landscapes are generally areas sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale. This is of high importance around Longsdon, where the landscape is particularly sensitive to change and should be protected from development and landscape change.
- m. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way, The Staffordshire Way, Ladderedge Country Park and canal towpaths, through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation, which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley. Further improvements to the entrance signage to Ladderedge Country Park.
- n. Key viewing opportunities should be created, supported by signage and interpretation.
- o. Water channels from Rudyard Reservoir supplying the Caldon Canal should be informed by signage and interpretation.
- p. Consideration should be given to the quality of the landscape in Leekbrook, with improvements to landscape infrastructure and screen planting to reduce the negative impact of the housing development and industrial estate.
- q. Consideration should be given to the use of the dismantled railway from Endon to Leekbrook, for the purposes of recreation or tourism, providing links with the Churnet Valley Railway.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Woodlands

The weaker structure of this sub area should be supported by new woodland planting that follows the form and structure similar to Longsden Wood, linking existing woodland. Conservation and restocking of existing woodlands is equally important.

b) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management. This is of high importance within the small scale landscape around Longsden.

c) Hedgerows

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows be encouraged.

d) Heathland

It is of high importance that the existing heath at Cheddleton Heath is protected from development and damaging activities. Management of trees and grazing practices will improve the quality of this heathland.

e) Canals and Ponds

It is most important that water bodies and catchments are maintained and enhanced and where possible the number of water bodies is increased. The erosion along the Caldon Canal towpaths needs urgent attention and repair followed up by future routine management to safeguard the recreation use of this landscape feature.

f) Invasive Species

Along the River Churnet and Caldon Canal, Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) a non native invasive species has colonised overwhelming native species. Advice and guidance needs to be provided to control Himalayan Balsam and for the reestablishment of native riverbank species.

g) Reedbeds

Opportunities should be taken to maintain and create reedbeds.

h) Rivers and Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features is maintained and that the quality and quantity of water should be improved. It is of particular importance that the terraced drainage channels and sluice gates that direct the water supply from Rudyard Reservoir to the Caldon Canal alongside the River Churnet are maintained and the quality of water and substrate improved. The importance of these channels should be informed through signage and interpretation.

i) Wet Woodland

Wet woodland should be maintained, enhanced, restored and that further losses are prevented. Opportunities should be sought to increase the number and extent of these woodlands.

j) Arable Field Margins

Arable field margins they should be maintained, improved and restored where possible

17. Development within Cornhill Key Opportunity Site

For clarification and guidance in relation to development opportunities at the Key Opportunity Site at Cornhill within Leek refer to the Settlement Assessment for Leek as undertaken in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, 2008.

Dissected Sandstone Uplands

2a - Alton

1. Location

This minor Landscape Character Type Sub Area lies close to the south and east of Alton above the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys of the Churnet river valley, in particular 1a.



2. Key Characteristics

- Strong, well defined field structure
- Small scale hedged field pattern, with hedgerow trees
- Low intensity pastoral farming
- Views restricted by vegetation and limited in extent
- Narrow lanes with boundary hedgerows
- The Staffordshire Way

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Valley side falls towards the Churnet River valley. Acid sands, brown earths and stagnogley soils supported transitional communities between lowland and upland heath replaced with grazing.

4. Vegetation

Hedges are occasionally banked with hedgerow trees. They are a very strong feature and are dominant in the landscape limiting views. Hedgerows are becoming less well maintained

5. Field Pattern and Enclosure

Small sized fields are enclosed with hedges. These are substituted with dry stone walls near to dwellings. Squatter enclosures are noted west of Toothill, with a regular field pattern along the B5032 east of Alton. Erosion of some hedgerows has commenced in parts with some gaps appearing in field boundaries. Post and wire fencing is often used to replace or reinforce hedgerows as stock control.

6. Land Use and Settlement

Land use is low intensity pastoral farming. There are a small number of isolated farms and buildings in good condition. A caravan site is noted at Rainroach Rock. Traditional dwellings are mainly constructed of stone. There are some newer brick dwellings. The Staffordshire Way runs through this area along Saltersford Lane.

7. Water Features

There are small drains that run through the landscape with localised ponds.

8. Transport and Access

The B5032 runs to the southern boundary of this Landscape Character Type Sub Area with Saltersford Lane and Wheel Lane traversing the area providing access to farmsteads. Part of the Staffordshire Way follows Saltersford Lane through the area.

9. Historic Features

The landscape largely retains the historic field patterns, with generally well structured boundaries. Smaller scale squatter enclosures are noted to the west of the sub area. A more regular field pattern is located to the east of this sub area.

10. Views

Views are very limited to gaps in vegetation providing views towards Alton Castle and Alton Towers.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

The Staffordshire Way follows Saltersford Lane.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

There are few incongruous features. Field boundary erosion is commencing with replacement post and wire fencing being used for stock control. There is a noted reduction in the quality of hedgerow management.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Intact small scale landscape with good structure and historic field patterns.
- Squatter enclosures to the west have distinctive very small scale field patterns.
- The Staffordshire Way.

b) Weaknesses

- Erosion of field boundaries commencing although at present this is not a significant issue.

c) Opportunities

- Encourage traditional management of the landscape in particular hedgerow management to maintain its quality and improve biodiversity.

d) Threats

- Pressures for more intensive farming, with erosion of field boundaries, replacing with post and wire fencing for stock control. Resultant loss of strong, intact character of the area.
- Expansion of Alton Towers Resort.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. The open character of the upland landscape should be maintained.
- b. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and drystone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- c. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. excessive signage, urban road kerbs, suburban residential boundaries).

- d. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional brick and sandstone old farm buildings characteristic of this area.
- e. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development. The scale of these buildings should be minimised where possible to reflect the scale of the landscape. Planting may also be used to reduce visual scale.
- f. Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
- g. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
- h. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way and The Staffordshire Way, through improved access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley.
- i. Key viewing opportunities should be created supported by signage and interpretation.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

b) Hedgerows

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of removal of hedgerows for field enlargement or for the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows be encouraged.

c) Ponds

The maintenance and enhancement of small water bodies and increasing the number of water bodies, is a lower priority.

Dissected Sandstone Uplands

2b - Kingsley

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area occurs to the west of the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys (1b). It is located around Kingsley and Kingsley Holt.



2. Key Characteristics

- Gentle rounded undulations dissected by some minor small scale valleys
- Small to medium scale hedged field pattern, with hedgerow trees
- Low intensity pastoral farming
- Two small settlements of Kingsley and Kingsley Holt developed around two major roads
- Views restricted by vegetation and limited in extent
- Narrow hedge lined lanes
- Large farmsteads
- Isolated run down dwellings
- Dissected by two busy major roads, the A52 and A521

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Gentle rounded undulations with minor small scale valleys. Acid sands, brown earths and stagnogley soils supported transitional communities between lowland and upland heath replaced with grazing.

4. Vegetation

Hedges and hedgerow trees are dominant in the landscape and limit views. Vegetation is tight to streamlines.

5. Field Pattern and Enclosure

Small to medium sized fields are enclosed with hedges. Erosion of field boundaries has occurred in parts, with larger sized fields. Some hedgerows are poorly maintained displaying large gaps. Post and wire fencing has replaced the hedgerows as stock control.

6. Land Use and Settlement

The majority of land use is low intensity pasture farming. Farm intensification has locally increased the scale of the landscape. A small scale quarry (Kingsley Quarry) lies to the centre of this sub area. The southern entrance and car park to Consall Nature Park lies to the north of this sub area.

There are several isolated farms and buildings some of which are rundown in nature. Large farmsteads have developed particularly around dairy farming. Traditional dwellings are mainly constructed of stone with some brick. Kingsley and Kingsley Holt are traditional mining villages and consequently have a different character to other settlements within the area, with terraced red brick houses fronting the main road, some stone cottages and more modern dwellings on side roads. The traditional core of these villages has eroded with suburban changes to roads and street patterns.

7. Water Features

A number of small streams and tributaries run through this Landscape Character Type Sub Area, with ponds associated with the small quarry.

8. Transport and Access

The main roads A52 and A521 run through this sub area and are busy routes. There are a small number of narrow minor lanes within this area. Public Rights of Way and the Staffordshire Way run through this sub area.

9. Historic Features

The small scale landscape retains many of its historic field patterns. The village centres of Kingsley and Kingsley Holt are still evident although eroded by newer development and settlement expansion.

10. Views

Views are generally restricted through gaps in hedges, and are limited to surrounding hillsides. Views towards the Churnet Valley and Bolton Copperworks from Bank Lane are limited to gaps in vegetation particularly at Kingsley Bird and Falconry Centre.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

The southern entrance to Consall Nature Park. Network of Public Rights of Way.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

Post and wire fencing has replaced some hedgerows as stock control. Intensive agricultural pressures have resulted in the erosion of much of the historic field boundaries resulting in a medium scale landscape. Kingsley Quarry is an incongruous feature within the landscape. Large modern farmsteads are clearly visible within the landscape. Some run down dwellings. Improved dwellings with suburban influences. Expansion of settlements with urban development style and streetscape.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- The Staffordshire Way.
- Well vegetated landscape.
- Entrance to Consall Nature Park.
- Narrow lanes.
- Public Rights of Way.

b) Weaknesses

- Erosion of field boundaries has begun to create a larger scale landform.
- Use of post and wire fencing to reinforce boundaries.
- Kingsley Quarry as a landscape detractor.
- Urban road scene at Kingsley and Kingsley Holt with urban style road infrastructure degrading character of villages.
- Busy main roads.

c) Opportunities

- Network of Public Rights of Way.
- Southern entrance to Consall Nature Park.
- Improve visual experience through Kingsley and Kingsley Holt.
- Signage and interpretation particularly related to key views.

d) Threats

- Erosion of field boundaries replaced with post and wire fencing.
- Potential expansion of Kingsley Quarry.
- Large scale commercial farmsteads.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues/Future Pressures

- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows
- Large commercial farmsteads

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. The open character of the upland landscape should be maintained.
- b. Consideration should be given to strengthening the vegetation and hedgerow cover in areas where agricultural intensification has led to an increase in scale of the landscape through loss of hedgerows, trees and other small scale landscape features.
- c. Small scale tree planting is appropriate around settlements linking into and strengthening the existing vegetation. It may also be used to extend existing woodlands particularly on the lower slopes.
- d. Planting of steeper slopes should relate to the landform where the hedgerow pattern is weakened.
- e. Future plantations should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission and reflect landscape scale.
- f. Where possible native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure in order to reflect and maintain local character. Replacement of hedges by fencing should be discouraged and the maintenance and replanting of hedges should be supported.
- g. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional brick and sandstone old farm buildings characteristic of this area.
- h. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs, suburban residential boundary walls). Consideration should be given to improving the existing urban road scene at Kingsley and Kingsley Holt to enhance the village experience and reconnect the village to its rural setting.
- i. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional brick and sandstone old farm buildings characteristic of this area.

- j. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development. The scale of these buildings should be minimised where possible to reflect the scale of the landscape. Planting may also be used to reduce visual scale.
- k. Small scale landscapes are areas sensitive to change and consideration should be given to protecting these areas from development and minimising landscape change.
- l. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way, through increased access, circular walks, signage and interpretation.
- m. Key viewing opportunities should be created with signage and interpretation.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

There is limited woodland within this sub area. However it is highly important to the character and quality of the landscape that where semi-natural broadleaved woodlands exist, they are maintained and enhanced. Degraded sites should be restored and these generally small scale woodlands should be recreated or regenerate.

b) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to managing the quality of the grassland habitats. This would include rotational grazing with some hay meadow cropping, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Small scale horsiculture is commencing within this sub area. Consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

c) Hedgerows and Dry Stone Walls

Where hedgerows are planted or restored it is of high importance that they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of removal of hedgerows for field enlargement or for the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of traditional field boundaries can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows be encouraged. Ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly the hedgerow trees along them, should be maintained and managed.

d) Ponds

Consideration should be given to retaining ponds associated with Kingsley Quarry and restoring them as water bodies within the landscape.

e) Reedbeds

Opportunities should be taken to create reedbeds particularly around restoration ponds.

f) Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features are maintained. The quality and quantity of water should be improved where possible.

Dissected Sandstone Uplands

2c - Rudyard

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area occurs to the west of Leek adjoining the Gritstone Highland Fringe outside of the study area, and north of the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys (1c) of the Churnet Valley.



2. Key Characteristics

- A transitional landscape of rolling hills dissected by wooded small scale valleys
- Rudyard Reservoir
- Small to medium scale hedged field pattern, with hedgerow trees, some drystone walls
- Low intensity pastoral farming
- Dispersed isolated settlements with red brick and stone buildings
- Blocks of woodland particularly around reservoir edge
- Extensive views from higher ground and roads free from vegetation
- Winding sunken lanes in the valley
- Banked hedgerows
- Remnant historic parkland at Dunwood Hall, Cliffe Park Hall and Harracles Hall

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Rolling, gentle landscape with steep slopes around Rudyard and the reservoir, with gentler undulations leading into the Churnet River valley and tributary streams. Acid sands, brown earths and stagnogley soils supported transitional communities between lowland and upland heath replaced with grazing and forestry.

4. Vegetation

Hedges are dominant in the landscape and limit views. Hedges are often banked with scattered hedgerow trees. Drystone walls are located near to the Gritstone Highland Fringe. Vegetation is generally along streamlines, lanes and steep embankments. Small woodland blocks are significant within the landscape. Woodland belts line the embankments towards the southern section of Rudyard reservoir and within Rudyard village.

5. Field Pattern and Enclosure

Small to medium sized fields are enclosed with hedges although these are bounded by dry stone walls near to other character areas. Some hedgerows are poorly maintained displaying large gaps. Post and wire fencing has replaced the hedgerows as stock control. Descending into the valley some lanes are sunken and enclosed. With the rise in horsiculture around settlements field boundaries are becoming enclosed by post and rail fencing.

6. Land Use and Settlements

The majority of land use is low intensity pasture farming. However, horsiculture is becoming more commonplace around settlements. Rudyard Reservoir attracts tourism to the area. The area is used quite widely for recreational pursuits particularly concentrated around Rudyard Reservoir.

There are many isolated farms and buildings. Smaller settlements and traditional dwellings are mainly constructed of stone with some brick. Rudyard is a linear settlement that contains both traditional and modern properties. There are visually significant Victorian properties many with boat houses onto Rudyard Reservoir which contribute to the distinctive character of this area. Horton hamlet west of the character area is a traditional hamlet with large stone dwellings.

7. Water Features

Rudyard Reservoir is a distinctive large scale feature within the landscape and is used for boating. The River Churnet with its numerous tributaries and streams, runs through the southern half of this character sub area. The formal drainage terraces and channels associated with the base of the dam at Rudyard Reservoir provide interesting features within the landscape.

8. Transport and Access

The A523 runs through this character sub area and is a busy route. The A53 forms the boundary with the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys (1c). There are numerous winding minor lanes within this area some sunken in nature.

A miniature steam railway provides access along a disused section of railway line at Rudyard Reservoir.

The Staffordshire Way runs through this character sub area, and a limited network of Public Rights of Way cross the area.

9. Historic Features

Rudyard Reservoir and the associated Victorian dwellings and structures are a distinctive historic features of this tourist destination. The landscape around the reservoir is small and well structured in parts reflecting historic field patterns.

Squatter enclosures are located around Old House Farm, Horton and Poolend creating a very small scale landscape character. Dunwood Hall, Cliffe Park Hall and Harracles Hall with associated historic parkland landscapes. The Conservation Area at Horton identifies the historic and heritage significance of the settlement.

10. Views

Views are experienced of Rudyard Reservoir from the A523 east of the reservoir. A parking lay-by provides a key viewing opportunity. Views are also experienced from Horton, from other lanes within the landscape and from high ground on Public Rights of Way.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

Rudyard Reservoir is a long established destination site. Disused railway line connects with Leek and further north outside of the character area.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

Post and wire fencing has replaced the hedgerows as stock control in some locations. Horsiculture has altered the management of the landscape with introduction of field sub-compartments. The introduction of 'suburban gated entrances' to properties is impacting on the rural character of the area.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Rudyard Reservoir and associated attractions.
- Small scale landscape that remains relatively well intact.
- Recreational facility of Rudyard Reservoir with historic and literary context.

b) Weaknesses

- The suburbanisation of isolated dwellings and settlements.
- Inadequate signage and interpretation of key features and views.

c) Opportunities

- Rudyard Reservoir, the disused railway line, and creating more distinctive signage and interpretation at viewpoints and attractions.
- Provision of design guidance to support appropriate boundary security improvements to dwellings and the control of inappropriate development.
- Encourage good field management in relation to horsiculture and general land management.

d) Threats

- Suburbanisation of dwellings.
- Increase in horsiculture changing the management and character of the landscape.
- Erosion of field boundaries through poor boundary management and replacement with post and wire for stock control.
- Further development along the shoreline and banks of Rudyard Reservoir.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues/Future Pressures

- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows
- Loss of parkland landscape
- Loss of woodland – poor management practices
- Tourism and Recreation associated with Destinations Sites:
 - Rudyard Reservoir

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. The open character of the upland landscape should be maintained.
- b. Consideration should be given to strengthening the vegetation and hedgerow cover in areas where agricultural intensification has led to an increase in scale of the landscape through loss of hedgerows, trees and other small scale landscape features.
- c. New native woodland planting should where possible be used to improve the distribution of and links to existing woodlands, counteracting isolation of these woodlands.
- d. Planting of steeper slopes should relate to the landform where the hedgerow pattern is weakened or where there are larger plantations.
- e. Both broadleaves and conifer species occur in this landscape however future plantations should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission and broadleaved edges to new plantations will link into existing vegetation. Planting design must respond to landform.

- f. Where possible native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure in order to reflect and maintain local character. Replacement of hedges by fencing should be discouraged and the maintenance and replanting of hedges should be supported.
- g. Development and new tree planting should take account of the setting of the remnant historic parklands of Dunwood Hall, Cliffe Park Hall, and Harracles Hall, the setting of important buildings and of important local views. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of historic parkland must take account of the unique character of that designed landscape.
- h. Any proposals for development or land use change within an historic landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.
- i. Historic parkland landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- j. Any proposals for further development or land use change along the shorelines and banks of Rudyard Reservoir which impact on the landscape character, visual, recreational, or ecological importance of this feature must take account of and not detract from the unique character of this landscape.
- k. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs, suburban residential boundary walls).
- l. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional brick and sandstone old farm buildings and Victorian villas characteristic of this area.
- m. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development. The scale of these buildings should be minimised where possible to reflect the scale of the landscape. Planting may also be used to reduce visual scale.
- n. Small scale landscapes are areas sensitive to change and consideration should be given to protecting these areas from development and minimising landscape change.
- o. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way, cycleways, and miniature railway through increased access, circular walks, signage and interpretation.
- p. Key viewing opportunities should be created with signage and interpretation.
- q. Rudyard Reservoir, water channels and sluice gates supplying the Caldon Canal should be highlighted through signage and interpretation.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

It is highly important to the character and quality of the landscape that semi-natural broad leaved woodlands in this character type are maintained and enhanced. Degraded sites should be restored and small scale woodlands should be recreated or regenerated. It may be appropriate to plant tree species, including specimen conifers, which were introduced by Victorians in the vicinity of Rudyard reflecting the character of the existing landscape.

b) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to managing the quality of the grassland habitats. This would include rotational grazing with some hay meadow cropping, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with the provision of guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

c) Hedgerows and Dry Stone Walls

Where hedgerows are planted or restored it is of high importance that they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of removal of hedgerows or dry stone walls for field enlargement or for the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of field traditional field boundaries can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows and walls be encouraged. Ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly the hedgerow trees along them, should be maintained and managed.

d) Rudyard Reservoir and Ponds

The maintenance and enhancement of Rudyard Reservoir and its environs as a recreational and tourist destination is of importance. Where further development and improvements to the infrastructure are being proposed these should be in-keeping with the scale and character of this location and should not detract from the enjoyment of this facility.

e) Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features and tributaries of the River Churnet are maintained. The quality and quantity of water should be improved where possible. It is of particular importance that the infrastructure associated with drainage and water supply interrelationship between Rudyard Reservoir and the Caldon Canal are maintained and the quality of water and substrate are improved. The significance of these structures should be highlighted through signage and interpretation.

Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe

3a - Ipstones and Whiston

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area is generally at higher elevations than the Dissected Sandstone Uplands. It lies between the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys of the Churnet Valley (1a and 1b) and the Gritstone Highland Fringe (outside of the study area) that extends through into the Peak Park.



2. Key Characteristics

- Steep sided valleys and rounded dissected landform
- Narrow wooded stream valleys
- Intact small to medium scale pastoral landscape
- Fields hedge lined or bounded by dry stone walls
- Scattered hedgerow trees
- Stone built farmhouses
- Narrow, steep and winding lanes
- Wide and distant views
- Moneystone Quarry (Key Opportunity Site)

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Steep sided valleys with small streams create a rounded dissected landform with wooded valleys leading from an open highland edge.

4. Vegetation

The area is not as vegetated as the Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys although the valleys remain wooded. The broadleaved woodlands of the valleys have been extended by the introduction of large blocks of conifer. The condition of hedgerows is variable. Hedgerows contain small plots with isolated trees to the boundaries that reduce the scale of the landscape. In places poor maintenance has resulted in overgrown remnant hedgerows often consisting of single lines of trees. Broadleaved woodland tree species comprise oak, rowan, birch, beech and sycamore. Holly can be locally significant as a hedge species.

5. Field Pattern and Enclosure

Fields are small scale and generally enclosed by hedges. However in parts the hedges are poorly maintained displaying large gaps, giving a larger sense of scale. Post and wire fencing has replaced some hedgerows for stock control. Along the boundaries of the gritstone character area, drystone walls are used more widely to enclose fields. A number of squatter enclosures within the area provide a very small scale landscape.

6. Land Use and Settlement

This is mainly a pastoral landscape with sheep and cattle farming. Commercial forestry plantations to the east of Moneystone Quarry. A golf course is located at Whiston. Extensive quarrying at Moneystone Quarry lies south east of Whiston crossing into the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys (1b). The Key Opportunity Site of Moneystone Quarry lies partly within this sub area.

Small villages and individual properties have developed along the lanes. Properties are mainly constructed of stone or red brick. Farms are generally in poor condition showing signs of dilapidation. The main settlements are Ipstones, Upper Cotton, Whiston and Foxt.

7. Water Features

Tributaries to the River Churnet provide small wooded valleys within the landscape. Small streams and ditches are prevalent within this landscape running along field boundaries.

8. Transport and Access

The busy A52 and the B5053 cut across the character area. Minor roads around the area are narrow, steep and winding. There is a substantial network of Public Rights of Way within this area. Sabrina Way, a National Bridleroute Network, follows a series of small lanes through this character area

connecting the southern Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys around Alton (1a) to the Gritstone Highland Fringe to the east.

9. Historic Features

The small scale landscape is largely intact reflecting the historic field patterns. A number of squatter enclosures provide a very small scale landscape.

10. Views

Extensive views from high ground with an open aspect across the landscape.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

The extensive network of Public Rights of Way and the Sabrina Way provides opportunities for encouraging riding and walks through the area. Moneystone Quarry redevelopment proposals could provide additional recreational opportunities within the area.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

Run down isolated farms and buildings. Post and wire fencing has replaced the hedgerows for stock control. Busy roads. Moneystone Quarry.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- The small scale landscape and squatter enclosure that reflect historic field patterns are particularly evident within this landscape.
- Villages of Whiston and Foxt generally retain context and recent development respects local vernacular.
- Views from high ground.

b) Weaknesses

- Erosion of Ipstones village character through introduction of development with a more suburban nature.
- Busy main roads.

c) Opportunities

- Redevelopment proposals of Moneystone Quarry should provide recreational opportunities.
- Extensive Public Rights of Way.

- Disused Tramways could provide footpath/cycleway connections between Froghall and Cauldon Lowe.
- Management plans for field management.
- Sabrina Way bridleway recreation accommodation with stabling/livery

d) Threats

- Suburban influences on village character.
- Erosion of field boundaries is creating a larger scale landform.
- Tourist hotspots could result in further significant demand for improved infrastructure, road improvements and car park facilities, which need to be well managed so as not to result in loss of key landscape features and erosion of the landscape structure.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Part of the Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site
- Run down, isolated farmsteads
- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows and dry stone walls
- Tourism and Recreation associated with Destinations Sites:
 - Whiston Golf Course
 - The Sabrina Way bridleway

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. The open character of the upland edge should be maintained.
- b. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and dry stone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- c. Improvements to run down and isolated farms and buildings should be encouraged but changes that detract from local character and over urbanise properties and their settings should be avoided
- d. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional farm buildings characteristic of this area.
- e. There are limited opportunities for additional woodland planting. Planting should be generally restricted to the valleys where additional small scale plantings can reinforce the existing vegetation

and landscape structure. Woodland plantings should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission.

- f. The Key Opportunity Site at Moneystone Quarry is generally well screened from views. However redevelopment proposals should take into account the sensitive nature of the small scale landscape in terms of its protection. This impacts on the setting of Whiston. Any housing development associated with Moneystone Quarry near to Whiston should be low key and should be of a nature, character and style that are intrinsic to the character of Whiston. Particular regard should be taken of woodland planting that may result in the infill of this small scale landscape and which can create an adverse impact on the landscape character.
- g. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. excessive or inappropriate signage, urban road kerbs).
- h. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development. The scale of these buildings should be minimised where possible to reflect the scale of the landscape. Planting may also be used to reduce visual scale.
- i. Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
- j. This character sub area has a large proportion of small scale landscape. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
- k. Encourage the use of Open Access Land, Public Rights of Way, and bridleways through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley.
- l. Consideration should be given to the use of the dismantled tramway from Froghall to Cauldon Lowe, for the purposes of recreation, providing pedestrian or cycle links between Cauldon Lowe and the Churnet Valley.
- m. Consideration should be given to providing recreational opportunities along the Sabrina Way Bridleway for long distance horse riding accommodation with livery. This small scale form of development should be considered alongside all other landscape planning guidelines specific to this area.
- n. Key viewing opportunities should be created supported by signage and interpretation.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows.

Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

b) **Hedgerows/Dry Stone Walls**

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows/dry stone walls can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows/dry stone walls be encouraged.

c) **Lakes and Ponds**

The maintenance, enhancement and increasing the number of water bodies is a lower priority. However, the redevelopment of the Key Opportunity Site at Moneystone Quarry could provide lakes for recreation and wildlife.

d) **Streams**

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features is maintained and that the quality and quantity of water should be improved.

e) **Wet Woodland**

It is highly important that wet woodland is maintained, enhanced, restored and that further losses are prevented. Opportunities should be sought to increase the number and extent of these woodlands.

Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site is discussed in more detail in Landscape Character Type Sub Area 1b.

Settled Plateau Farmlands

4a - Consall

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area is located around the settlement of Consall on the upper extents of the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys (1b).



2. Key Characteristics

- Rolling plateau with limited contained views from higher ground
- Large scale, open, regular and rectilinear field patterns with hedges and dry stone walls
- Field structure relatively intact with major signs of hedgerow deterioration and fragmentation
- Low grade pasture farmland with overgrazed poorly drained fields with rushes and rough grass
- Some blocks of mature broadleaf woodland
- Busy road network through part of the site
- Parklands of Consall Hall and Ashcombe Park
- Animal waste incinerator
- Consall Hall and Gardens (Key Opportunity Site)

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Gentle slopes to the Churnet Valley edge with a rolling plateau that lies on boulder clay overlying Triassic mudstones. Non calcareous stagnogley soils are poorly drained and overgrazed. Hedgerows and some dry stone walls are aligned in a regular field pattern. Stone outcrops in higher areas, such as Wetley Rocks.

4. Vegetation

Fields are generally bounded by hedgerows, which have deteriorated in parts with isolated beech, birch, oak and holly trees demarcating field boundaries. Overgrazed, poorly drained fields have resulted in rushes and rough grass predominant in fields. Heathland is present in isolated areas on higher ground with stunted oak and birch trees. Blocks of woodland and specimen trees are associated with Consall Hall parkland. Some introduction of exotic species.

5. Field Pattern and Enclosure

Generally a rectilinear field pattern with hedges as boundaries. Smaller scale landscape close to Consall and Wetley Rocks. Although the original field structure is relatively intact it is showing signs of decline with hedges in a poor state of repair and replacement by post and barbed wire fences. Where hedgerows exist rectilinear field patterns are clearly defined. Some lanes have banked hedgerows restricting views and creating a sense of enclosure. Close to Wetley Rocks dry stone walls are used in preference to hedgerows.

6. Land Use and Settlement

The main land use is dairy farming although this is gradually being replaced by horsiculture. Consall Hall and Gardens provides a tourist attraction within the area. A number of fish ponds are associated with Consall Hall. Remnant historic parklands are found to the north and south within this area.

Wetley Rocks is the main settlement which is becoming more suburban in character with old stone dwellings intermixed with new style properties. Individual properties in Consall hamlet have also been improved creating a more suburban feel to the area.

An animal waste incinerator and a scrap yard are located to the north of this area, east of Wetley Rocks.

7. Water Features

A generally wet, poorly drained landscape. Small streams and drains run through the sub area. Designed and extended ponds and water features are associated with Consall Hall and Gardens.

8. Transport and Access

The busy A520 and A522 run to the west and through the boundaries of the Character Type Sub Area. Converging minor lanes into a single narrow lane provides the only connection to Consall and Consall Forge. This becomes very busy during summer months. There are very few Public Rights of Way through this area.

9. Historic Features

Consall Hall and Gardens, Woodland Hall parkland and the historic parkland of Ashcombe Park.

10. Views

Views into the landscape are generally contained from the few narrow lanes within the sub area.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

Consall Hall and Gardens could be further developed as a tourist attraction and a destination site.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

The animal waste incinerator remains relatively well hidden. Horsiculture and over grazing associated with urban fringe farming. Increasing use of post and wire fencing for stock control. Busy roads mainly through the western edge of the sub area.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Rectilinear field boundaries often reflect historic field patterns.
- Consall Hall and Gardens.

b) Weaknesses

- Poorly managed, wet fields, with poor drainage and overgrazing.
- Beginnings of field boundary fragmentation and use of post and barbed wire fences.
- Busy roads.

c) Opportunities

- Consall Hall and Gardens has the potential to provide an increased tourism/recreational destination site within this area.
- Encouragement of appropriate field management, rotational grazing and land drainage methods to redress erosion and fragmentation of field boundaries and create a more intact landscape.

d) Threats

- Poor land management could result in further erosion of field boundaries.
- Erosion of hedgerows is creating a larger scale landform.
- Suburban influences on villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings.
- Need to improve the financial viability of Consall Hall and Gardens to secure retention of parkland.
- Needs careful design to avoid visual impact of new development.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Consall Hall Key Opportunity Site
- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows
- Loss of parkland landscape
- Loss of woodland – poor management practices
- Tourism and Recreation associated with Destination Sites:
 - Consall Hall and Gardens

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and drystone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- b. The planting of hedgerows with associated trees and tree groups can help to restore the vegetation cover, re-articulate the scale of the landscape and reinforce the landscape structure.
- c. The growth of horsiculture is beginning to impact on the landscape, causing subdivision of fields by fencing and further loss of hedgerows. Consideration should be given to actions to counteract the impact of this land use on land cover and landscape scale.
- d. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this area.
- e. Development and new tree planting should take account of the setting of the historic parklands, of the setting of important buildings and of important local views. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of historic parkland must take account of the unique character of that designed landscape.

- f. Any proposals for development or land use change within an historic landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.
- g. Historic landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland, pleasure grounds and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- h. Where new development is proposed within Consall Hall Key Opportunity Site associated vegetation should be reinforced or new planting blocks established to reduce the visual impact of the development and to enable it to be more readily assimilated into the landscape. Any new planting should take account of the form and character of the historic parkland and the form of its setting. Consideration should be given to the spatial relationship between woodland blocks and open areas so that the rhythm of the natural and designed landscapes is not disrupted.
- i. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs), in particular where providing recreation facilities and new development at the Key Opportunity Site.
- j. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Ancient/Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland is generally particularly important to the form and character of historic parkland landscapes. Similarly the maintenance, safeguarding and restoration of wood pasture and parkland is also important. It is also likely that a number of veteran trees will be found within the historic parkland.

b) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

c) Hedgerows

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows can be checked and the

retention and maintenance of hedgerows be encouraged. The impact of poor drainage on hedgerow management should be considered.

d) **Wet Woodlands**

It is highly important that further losses of wet woodlands are prevented and that existing woods are maintained, enhanced and restored. Opportunities should be sought to increase the number and extent of these woodlands.

e) **Reedbeds**

Opportunities should be taken to maintain and create reedbeds.

f) **Streams**

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features is maintained and that the quality and quantity of water should be improved.

g) **Arable Field Margins**

Arable field margins should be maintained, improved and restored where possible.

17. Development of Consall Hall Key Opportunity Site

Consideration should be given for the need to improve the financial viability of Consall Hall and Gardens to secure the retention of the parkland landscape. Where new development of lodges or similar built form is proposed associated vegetation should be reinforced or new planting blocks established to reduce the visual impact of the development and to enable it to be more readily assimilated into the landscape. Any new planting should take account of the form and character of the historic parkland and the form of its setting. Consideration should be given to the spatial relationship between woodland blocks and open areas so that the rhythm of the landscape is not disrupted. Development should be in-keeping with the woodland/natural landscape in which it would be located.

Development within existing established woodland would need careful consideration in relation to the future management of woodland and the potential wind blow as a result of tree removal.

Road improvements within and to the surrounding area, particularly as a result of new development should be in-keeping with the character of the area and should not create intrusive urban features.

Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands

5a - Wetley Rocks

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area lies west of Wetley Rocks and Cheddleton. It abuts the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys (1c) and the Settled Plateau Farmlands (4) along the western edge of the Churnet Valley.



2. Key Characteristics

- Undulating or sloping landscape cut by small scale steep sided stream valley
- Small scale mainly ancient irregular fields bounded by trees and hedgerows
- Roadsides often bounded by dry stone walls.
- Extensive views from higher ground
- Intimate wooded valleys
- Settlement of Wetley Rocks and fringes of Cheddleton
- Deep Hayes Country Park
- Remnant historic parklands of Ashcombe Park, Rownall Hall and Westwood Manor (Cicely Houghton School).

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Undulating or sloping landscape with a small scale, steep sided meandering stream valley that interrupts slopes. Exposed high ground contrasts with an intimate valley.

4. Vegetation

Woodland belts of ash, oak and alder follow the streams creating a ribbon effect on the landscape which reinforces the vegetation cover of the farmland. Hedgerows mainly form field boundaries although these can be poorly maintained, left tall with frequent gaps. Infrequent small blocks of woodland include broadleaf and conifer plantations. Tree cover within the valleys softens the landscape and limits views. Remnant historic parklands of Ashcombe Park, Rownall Hall and Westwood Manor contribute towards the character of the local landscape and reinforce the vegetation structure.

5. Field Pattern & Enclosure

Internal field boundaries are generally enclosed with hedgerows although boundaries along roads are often dry stone walls. There are areas of small scale landscape with strong field boundaries. However, hedgerows are generally poorly maintained and tend to be replaced by or reinforced with post and wire fencing.

6. Land Use and Settlement

The main land use for the area is low intensity pastoral farming. There are fish ponds to the south and pools within Deep Hayes Country Park.

The ancient character of the area is reflected in the form of settlement. There are isolated properties linked by narrow winding lanes. Individual large halls of Ashcombe Park, Westwood Manor (Cicely Haughton School) and Rownall Hall Farm are sited within designed parkland landscapes.

The settlement of Wetley Rocks and the western fringes of Cheddleton abut this landscape.

7. Water Features

Streams and ponds provide intimate valley features within the landscape. Deep Hayes Country Park contains a series of pools.

8. Transport and Access

The busy A520 abuts the eastern boundary of this sub area connecting to a small network of minor roads. Minor roads can be narrow, incised and steep linking small farms. Public Rights of Way link through this landscape.

9. Historic Features

The landscape pattern tends to retain historic field boundaries. The trees and woodlands associated with the remnant historic parklands at Ashcombe Park, Rownall Hall Farm and Westwood Manor contribute to the vegetational structure and the landscape character of the locality.

10. Views

Views are extensive from high ground particularly along the A520 and Knowsley Road.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

Historic parklands including Ashcombe Park. Increase access from the south to Deep Hayes Country Park. More walks with better signage. Create viewing opportunities with interpretation.

12. Incongruous Landscape Features

Replacement of hedgerows and dry stone walls by post and wire fencing. Busy roads.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Small scale landscape.
- Remnant historic parklands.
- Deep Hayes Country Park.
- Extensive views from high ground.

b) Weaknesses

- Erosion of field boundaries has begun to create a larger scale landform.
- Suburban influences on dwellings.
- Only the northern section within this landscape sub area at Deep Hayes Country Park has direct links with the Churnet Valley.

c) Opportunities

- Deep Hayes Country Park.
- Historic parkland landscapes.
- Improve links to the canal network from Deep Hayes Country Park.
- Improved signage and interpretation of areas of importance.
- Create viewing opportunities with interpretation.

d) Threats

- Erosion of field boundaries replaced with post and wire fencing.
- Suburbanised residential property boundaries.
- Urbanised improvements to highways.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows and dry stone walls
- Remnant historic parkland of Rownall Hall, Westwood Manor and Ashcombe Park
- Tourist and recreation pressures associated with Destination Sites:
 - Deep Hayes Country Park

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Although this is generally a well structured landscape it is beginning to show signs of erosion. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and dry stone walls by fencing should be discouraged
- The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this local area.
- Planting, both trees and woodlands can be used effectively to reinforce the existing vegetation structure. This can be particularly successful where it is associated with the restoration of historic parkland landscapes. A reinforced vegetational structure can generally more readily absorb new development as well as screening the edges of existing settlements.
- The planting of small woodlands, hedgerows with associated trees and tree groups can help to restore the vegetation cover and re-articulate the scale of the landscape following its gradual erosion due to lack of maintenance of the hedgerow pattern.
- New woodland planting should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission.
- Care needs to be taken to avoid obscuring important viewpoints and maintaining the interrelationship of open areas to woodland blocks relating to local landscape scale and field pattern.
- Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of the Remnant Historic Parkland of Rownall Hall, Westwood Manor and Ashcombe Park must take account of the unique character of these designed landscapes.

- h. Any proposals for development or land use change within an historic landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.
- i. Historic landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland, pleasure grounds and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- j. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs, suburban residential boundary walls).
- k. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Ancient/Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

It is of very high importance to the character and quality of the landscape that degraded ancient/semi-natural broad leaved woodlands are restored and managed, particularly the reinforcement of existing vegetation along streamlines and valley sides taking account of the landscape scale and views.

Ancient and semi-natural broadleaved woodland can be particularly important to the form and character of historic parklands. Similarly the maintenance, safeguarding and restoration of wood pasture and parkland is also important. It is also likely that a number of veteran trees will be found within historic parkland.

b) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

c) Hedgerows

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows be encouraged.

d) Ponds

There are a number of fish ponds within Deep Hayes Country Park and along the streamline. It is important that water bodies and catchments be maintained and enhanced and the number of existing features be increased.

e) Reedbeds

Opportunities should be taken to maintain and create reedbeds.

f) Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features is maintained. The quality and quantity of water should be improved.

g) Wet Woodland

It is important that wet woodland is maintained, enhanced, restored and that further losses are prevented. Opportunities may exist along streamlines and within Deep Hayes Country Park and appropriate locations should be sought to increase the extent and number of these woodlands.

Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands

5b - East Leek

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area lies east of Leek separating two areas of the Gritstone Highland Fringe, (6 to the west). It is traversed by the A523 and the re-opened railway line.



2. Key Characteristics

- Strongly undulating or sloping landscape cut by small scale steep sided stream valleys
- Small scale mainly ancient irregular fields bounded by trees, hedgerows and dry stone walls
- Extensive views from higher ground between gaps in vegetation.
- Intimate wooded valleys
- Stone buildings and drystone walls towards uplands
- Isolated properties
- Narrow lanes
- Re-opened railway line of Moorland and City Railway
- Remnant historic parkland Ashenhurst Hall farm

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Strongly undulating landscape with small knolls throughout. Small scale, steep-sided stream valleys that interrupt slopes. Open high ground contrasts with intimate valleys.

4. Vegetation

Strong field boundary vegetation, south west within the area. Narrow woodland belts of ash, oak and alder follow the streams creating a ribbon effect on the landscape which reinforces the vegetation cover of the farmland. Hedgerows mainly form field boundaries although these can be poorly maintained, left tall with frequent gaps. Infrequent small blocks of woodland are often associated with farmsteads and isolated dwellings. Tree cover within the valleys softens the landscape and limits views. Remnant historic parkland at Ashenhurst Hall Farm reinforces the vegetation structure of the local landscape.

5. Field Pattern/Enclosure

Generally a small scale landscape that reflects the original field patterns. Fields are often enclosed with hedgerows, however with the proximity of the Gritstone Highland Fringe fields are also bounded by dry stone walls. In parts, hedgerows and drystone walls are poorly maintained and tend to be replaced by or reinforced with post and wire fencing. Some parkland style fencing occurs around road junctions to aid visibility.

6. Land Use and Settlement

The main land use for the area is low intensity pastoral farming. The re-opened railway line of Moorland and City Railway runs through this character area through Bradnop south east towards Cauldon Lowe. A disused Army Base lies to the north near Blackshaw Moor. A network of lanes runs through this area.

The ancient character of the area is reflected in the form of settlement. There are numerous isolated properties with occasional rundown farmsteads linked by narrow winding lanes. There are scattered settlements within this area. Thorncliffe lies to the north and Bradnop to the centre, both appear to have developed along lanes and junctions. Despite the proximity to Leek, these settlements retain their rural character. Ashenhurst Hall is sited within a remnant parkland landscape.

7. Water Features

There are numerous densely vegetated streams, drains and ponds located throughout the sub area. The vegetation along streamlines tightly follows the line of stream.

8. Transport and Access

The busy A523 runs west-southeast through the sub area and the A52 forms its north western boundary. There are numerous narrow lanes that interconnect across this area. Minor roads are often

narrow, incised and steep linking small farms. The re-opened railway line of the Moorland and City Railway follows the line of the A523 through the sub area. It is densely vegetated and set within a cutting near to Bradnop rising to follow the landform further south east. A limited network of Public Rights of Way covers the area.

9. Historic Features

Many of the field boundaries reflect the historic field patterns. Ashenhurst Hall and its historic parkland lie within this character area. The re-opened railway line is a prominent feature within part of this landscape.

10. Views

Views are extensive from higher ground particularly where there are gaps in vegetation along roadsides. This contrasts with the intimate valley bottoms.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

The re-opened railway line of the Moorland and City Railway creates new interest within this landscape. The Public Rights of Way connect Leek with the surrounding landscape.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

The disused army base in the north of the sub area at Blackshaw Moor is an incongruous feature within the landscape and can be seen from the A52 and surrounding roads. Hedgerows and dry stone walls have been replaced by fences that are often poorly constructed. Busy roads.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Small scale pastoral landscape, with traditional rural settlements.
- Contrast of intimate valleys with extensive views.
- Stone settlements.
- Narrow network of lanes.
- Recreational and tourism opportunities associated with the Moorland and City Railway.

b) Weaknesses

- Erosion of field boundaries creating a larger scale landform uncharacteristic of the area.
- Use of post and wire fencing to reinforce boundaries.

c) Opportunities

- Tourism associated with the Moorland and City Railway.
- Network of paths connecting Leek to the wider landscape.
- Development opportunity associated with the disused army base.

d) Threats

- Expansion of Leek into sensitive landscapes.
- Suburbanisation of isolated dwellings and influences within small settlements.
- Erosion of field boundaries is creating a larger scale landscape.
- Abandonment of the disused army base at Blackshaw Moor.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows
- Remnant historic parkland at Ashenhurst Hall
- Potential expansion of Leek and associated impact
- Tourist and recreation pressures associated with Destination Sites:
 - Viewing opportunities of the Moorland and City Railway

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. Urban fringe pressures can have an adverse impact on landscape quality with the proliferation of incongruous features and the deteriorating condition of existing landscape features. Although this is generally a well structured landscape the impact of urban expansion needs to be monitored.
- b. Some limited woodland planting of a small scale is appropriate in this landscape, from field corner to small field size, tying into the existing woodlands and hedgerows with attention to edge detail and predominantly of a broadleaved character.
- c. Planting, both trees and woodlands can be used effectively to reinforce the existing vegetation structure to enable it to more readily absorb new development and to screen the edges of existing settlement at Leek.
- d. Care needs to be taken to avoid obscuring important viewpoints and maintaining open areas, relating to local landscape scale and field pattern.
- e. Any proposals for development or land use change within the remnant historic landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.

- f. Historic landscapes contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- g. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs, suburban dwelling boundary walls).
- h. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this area.
- i. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- j. Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
- k. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
- l. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley.
- m. Key viewing opportunities within the landscape and of the new Moorland and City Railway should be created, supported by signage and interpretation.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Ancient/Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

Ancient/semi-natural broadleaved woodland is generally particularly important to the form and character of remnant historic parkland. Similarly the maintenance, safeguarding and restoration of wood pasture and parkland is also important. It is also likely that a number of veteran trees will be found within historic parkland.

b) Hedgerows/Dry Stone Walls

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows/dry stone walls can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows/dry stone walls be encouraged.

c) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

d) Ponds and Ditches

It is most important that water bodies and catchments be maintained and enhanced and where possible the number of water bodies is increased.

e) Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing stream and channel features are maintained. The quality and quantity of water should be improved where possible.

f) Arable Field Margins

Arable field margins should be maintained, improved and restored where possible.

g) Wet Woodland

It is important that wet woodland is maintained, enhanced, restored and that further losses are prevented. Opportunities should be sought to increase the number of these woodlands within the valley features.

Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands

5c - North Rudyard

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area lies north of Rudyard Reservoir and the Dissected Sandstone Uplands (2c), and adjoins the Gritstone Highland Fringe to the east (outside of the study area). It is traversed by the A523.



2. Key Characteristics

- Strongly undulating or sloping landscape cut by small scale steep sided stream valleys
- Small scale mainly ancient irregular fields bounded by trees and hedgerows
- Dry stone walls evident towards Highland Fringe
- Extensive views from higher ground
- Intimate wooded valleys
- Stone buildings with dry stone wall curtilage
- Isolated farmsteads
- Narrow lanes, often sunken in nature
- Banked hedgerows
- Busy A523 main road
- Proximity to Rudyard Reservoir

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Strongly undulating landscape with small knolls throughout. Small scale, steep-sided stream valleys that interrupt slopes.

4. Vegetation

Strong field boundary vegetation. Distinctly wooded streamlines creating a narrow ribbon effect on the landscape which reinforces the vegetation cover of the farmland. Hedgerows mainly form field boundaries although these are beginning to show signs of fragmentation with some gaps. Tree cover within the valleys softens the landscape and limits views. Small woodland copses are often associated with farmsteads.

5. Field Pattern/Enclosure

Mainly a small scale landscape that reflects the original field patterns. Fields are often enclosed with hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees. Some dry stone walls bound fields towards the Gritstone Highland Fringe. Field fragmentation has created a larger scale landscape in some locations. In parts, hedgerows are poorly maintained and tend to be replaced by or reinforced with post and wire fencing. The entrance to the north of Rudyard Reservoir has a more relaxed and natural feel than the southern end.

6. Land use and Settlement

The main land use for the area is low intensity pastoral farming, although there is some evidence of localised horsiculture. Recreation associated with Rudyard Reservoir, the Staffordshire Way and a cycle route occurs within this area.

There are numerous isolated stone properties linked by narrow winding lanes and tracks.

7. Water Features

There are several densely vegetated streams and small ponds located throughout the sub area. The vegetation along streamlines tightly follows the line of the stream. A man made channel diverting water from the River Dane runs through this area feeding into Rudyard Reservoir.

8. Transport and Access

The busy A523 runs north through the eastern section of this sub area. There are several narrow lanes and tracks that interconnect this area, which are often incised and steep, linking small farms. A disused railway line that serves as a cycle route and the Staffordshire Way runs through this area from Rushton Gate to Rudyard Reservoir. Few Public Rights of Way traverse the area.

9. Historic Features

Many of the field boundaries reflect the historic field patterns. The remnant historic parkland associated with Cliffe Park Hall lies partly within this sub area. The disused railway line and water channel associated with Rudyard Reservoir are notable features to the east of this area.

10. Views

Views are extensive from higher ground particularly along the A523. This contrasts with the intimate valley bottoms.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

The network of Public Rights of Way. The less structured northern end of Rudyard Reservoir could provide opportunities for more wildlife related recreation/education.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

Electricity pylons traverse the landscape to the west, although these are only visible locally. The A523 is a busy main road and the associated traffic is incongruous to the landscape character. Hedgerows and dry stone walls replaced by fences.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Small scale pastoral landscape.
- Strong vegetation along streamlines.
- Contrast of the intimate valleys with the extensive views.
- Stone dwellings.
- Narrow lanes.
- Proximity to Rudyard Reservoir.

b) Weaknesses

- Erosion of field boundaries has begun to create a larger scale landscape.
- Use of post and wire fencing to reinforce boundaries.

c) Opportunities

- Extend public rights of way network through permissive rights of way.
- Improve the natural quality of the reservoir environment.

- Create wildlife related facilities to northern end of Rudyard Reservoir.
- Improve signage and interpretation relating to Rudyard Reservoir.

d) Threats

- Erosion of field boundaries replaced with post and wire fencing.
- Change in landscape scale.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Busy roads
- Powerlines
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows and dry stone walls
- Remnant historic parkland of Cliffe Park Hall
- Tourist and recreation pressures associated with Destination Sites:
 - Rudyard Reservoir

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. Although a generally well structured landscape, it is beginning to show signs of erosion. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and dry stone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- b. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this local area.
- c. The planting of small woodlands, hedgerows with associated trees and tree groups can help to restore the vegetation cover and re-articulate the scale of the landscape following its gradual erosion due to lack of maintenance of the hedgerow pattern.
- d. New woodland planting should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission.
- e. Care needs to be taken to avoid obscuring important viewpoints and maintaining the interrelationship of open areas to woodland blocks relating to local landscape scale and field pattern.
- f. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of the historic parkland of Cliffe Park Hall must take account of the unique character of this designed landscape.
- g. Any proposals for development or land use change within an historic landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.

- h. Historic landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- i. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs, suburban residential boundary walls).
- j. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- k. Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
- l. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
- m. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way through increased access, permissive rights of way, circular routes and appropriate signage and interpretation.
- n. Consider the opportunity to use the northern end of Rudyard Reservoir for wildlife recreation/education.
- o. Key viewing opportunities within the landscape should be created, supported by signage and interpretation.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

It is of very high importance to the character and quality of the landscape that degraded semi-natural broad leaved woodlands are restored and that where it is appropriate that new woodlands should be recreated or regenerated.

b) Hedgerows/Dry Stone Walls

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows/dry stone walls can be controlled. The retention and maintenance of hedgerows/dry stone walls should be encouraged.

c) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational

grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Further consideration should be given to horsiculture practice with the provision of guidance and monitoring in relation to appropriate land and field boundary management.

d) Ponds

It is most important that water bodies and catchments be maintained and enhanced and where possible the extent and number of water bodies increased. This is of particular importance to the northern edge of Rudyard Reservoir.

e) Rivers and Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural and man made existing channel features is maintained. The quality and quantity of water should be improved where possible.

f) Reedbeds

Opportunities should be taken to maintain and create reedbeds. This may be considered in the northern reaches of Rudyard Reservoir where the margins are silted.

g) Wet Woodland

It is important that wet woodland is maintained, enhanced, restored and that further losses are prevented. Opportunities should be sought to increase the number and extent of these woodlands. This may be considered within the environs of the northern reaches of Rudyard Reservoir.

Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands 5d - South Kingsley

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area lies south of Kingsley and the Dissected Sandstone Uplands (2b), and is traversed by the A521.



2. Key Characteristics

- Strong sloping landscape cut by small scale steep sided stream valleys
- Small to medium scale irregular fields bounded by trees and hedgerows
- Extensive views from higher ground
- Intimate wooded valleys
- Small woodland copses
- Isolated farmsteads
- Part of the remnant historic parkland at Shawe Hall

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Strongly sloping landscape with small knolls. Small scale, steep-sided stream valleys that interrupt slopes.

4. Vegetation

Strong field boundary vegetation. Wooded streamlines creating a narrow ribbon effect on the landscape which reinforces and articulates the vegetation cover of the farmland. Hedgerows mainly form field boundaries although these are beginning to show signs of fragmentation with some gaps. Tree cover within the valleys softens the landscape and limits views.

5. Field Pattern/Enclosure

A small to medium scale landscape with some fields reflecting the historic field patterns. Fields are often enclosed with hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees. Field fragmentation has created a larger scale landscape throughout the majority of this area. In parts, hedgerows are poorly maintained and tend to be replaced by or reinforced with post and wire fencing.

6. Land use and Settlement

The main land use for the area is low intensity pastoral farming. A broad network of Public Rights of Way traverses this area creating strong links between Kingsley and the rural environment.

7. Water features

There are few densely vegetated streams located throughout the sub area. The vegetation along streamlines tightly follows the line of the stream. Some ponds relate to the historic parkland at Shawe Hall.

8. Transport and Access

The busy A521 forms the southern boundary of this character sub area within the study area. Access to farmsteads is via small farm tracks. Residential cul-de-sacs along the ridgeline at Kingsley form the northern boundary to this sub area. Numerous Public Rights of Way cross the area.

9. Historic Features

Some small scale field boundaries reflect the historic field patterns. The remains of the historic parkland associated with Shawe Hall lie partly within this sub area.

10. Views

Views are extensive from higher ground. This contrasts with the intimate valley bottoms.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

The network of Public Rights of Way.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

The A521 is a busy main road, and the traffic associated is incongruous to the landscape character. Hedgerows and dry stone walls have been replaced by fences.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Small scale pastoral landscape.
- Strong vegetation along streamlines.
- Contrast of the intimate valleys with the extensive views.
- Remnant historic parkland at Shawe Hall.

b) Weaknesses

- Erosion of field boundaries has begun to create a larger scale landform.
- Use of post and wire fencing to reinforce boundaries.

c) Opportunities

- Network of Public Rights of Way.

d) Threats

- Erosion of field boundaries replaced with post and wire fencing.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Busy roads
- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows and dry stone walls
- Remnant historic parkland at Shawe Hall

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. Although a generally well structured landscape, it is beginning to show signs of erosion. Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure. Replacement of hedges by fencing should be discouraged.

- b. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this local area.
- c. The planting of small woodlands, hedgerows with associated trees and tree groups can help to restore the vegetation cover and re-articulate the scale of the landscape following its gradual erosion due to lack of maintenance of the hedgerow pattern.
- d. New woodland planting should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission.
- e. Care needs to be taken to avoid obscuring important viewpoints particularly from within sub area 2b and maintaining the interrelationship of open areas to woodland blocks relating to local landscape scale and field pattern.
- f. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of the historic parkland at Shawe Hall must take account of the unique character of these designed landscapes.
- g. Any proposals for development or land use change within an historic landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.
- h. Historic landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- i. Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs, suburban residential boundary walls).
- j. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- k. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
- l. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way through increased access, circular routes and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley.
- m. Key viewing opportunities within the landscape should be created supported by signage and interpretation.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

It is of very high importance to the character and quality of the landscape that degraded semi-natural broad leaved woodlands are restored and that where it is appropriate within the landscape new woodlands should be recreated or regenerated.

b) Hedgerows

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows be encouraged.

c) Pasture Land

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows.

d) Ponds

It is most important that water bodies and catchments be maintained and enhanced and where possible the number of water bodies is increased.

e) Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural features is maintained. The quality and quantity of water should be improved where possible.

f) Reedbeds

Opportunities should be taken to maintain and create reedbeds.

g) Wet Woodland

It is important that wet woodland is maintained, enhanced, restored and that further losses are prevented. Opportunities should be sought to increase the number and extent of these woodlands.

Gritstone Highland Fringe

6a - Tittesworth and Leek

1. Location

This Landscape Character Type Sub Area is found in the South West Peak Joint Character Area (JCA). It abuts the northern fringes of Leek and includes Tittesworth Reservoir, and lies east of the Dissected Sandstone Uplands (2c) and west of the Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands (5b).



2. Key Characteristics

- Broad scale, steeply sloping, smooth rolling upland landscape with plateaux, steep slopes and valleys
- Small ridgeline with long distance panoramic views
- Small scale rectilinear field pattern enclosed in the main with hedgerows with some dry stone walls
- Woodland blocks to Tittesworth Reservoir
- Vegetation follows the River Churnet and streamlines
- Conifer plantations and broadleaf woodland following narrow valleys
- Remnant historic parkland of Home Farm and Abbey Farm
- Tittesworth Reservoir

3. Geology, Landform and Soils

Palaeozoic sandstones or millstone grit create a dissected plateau with small ridgelines and long distance panoramic views across the Peak District National Park to the Roaches and the South West Peak. The area has a steeply sloping, smooth rolling landform with flatter plateaus and steeply sided valleys. Stagnogley and peat soils support upland grassland and moorland species in large fields. Tittesworth Reservoir lies within the valley.

4. Vegetation

Within this area hedgerows are the main form of field enclosure, but are generally in poor condition. There are some woodland blocks of broadleaf and conifer trees towards the banks of Tittesworth Reservoir and on steep sided slopes. The woodland blocks act as individual features but do not create enclosure. Sycamore and beech are predominant in the broadleaf copses. There is some ash but alder and thorn are dominant in the bottoms of valleys. Poor quality upland grassland with other moorland species supports grazing. Vegetation is also located along the River Churnet and other streamlines.

5. Field Pattern and Enclosure

Field enclosure is mainly hedgerows, but includes dry stone walls, particularly adjacent to roads and dwellings. The field enclosures are eroding and poorly maintained with gaps replaced by post and wire or post and rail fencing for stock control. It is generally a small scale landscape, with rectilinear field pattern towards Blackshaw Moor. Higher ground and areas around Leek are more open. Woodland blocks do not create enclosure within the area.

6. Land use and Settlements

The main land use for the area is stock rearing in particular sheep grazing. Tittesworth Reservoir and its visitor centre attract tourism and recreation. Caravan sites around Blackshaw Moor.

The sub area encloses the northern edge of Leek with industrial sites and housing located along this edge. Traditional buildings are constructed of stone. Newer developments in hamlets such as Meerbrook are generally constructed of stone in-keeping with the rest of the village. However, Meerbrook has suburban influences in the road improvements through the village. Individual dwellings are scattered along roads. Dwellings that are in proximity to settlements have generally been improved and have introduced suburban features. Other settlements include Blackshaw Moor, although this is on the edge of the sub area.

7. Water Features

Tittesworth Reservoir, a tourist attraction and destination dominates this sub area. It is not a recreational reservoir. The River Churnet links the reservoir with Leek. Further tributaries feed into the River Churnet and Tittesworth Reservoir.

8. Transport and Access

The busy A53 forms the boundary to the east of the character sub area. A network of narrow lanes are lined with drystone walls. Roadsides generally do not have edging kerbs and pavements or are lined with stone setts. However, in proximity to Tittesworth Reservoir, the introduction of pavements with concrete edging kerbs detracts from the rural character of the area creating a more suburban feel. A small network of Public Rights of Way traverses this sub area.

9. Historic Features

Remnant historic parklands of Home Farm and Abbey Farm. Tittesworth Reservoir. Small scale historic field patterns.

10. Views

Views are experienced from high ground and small lanes. There are views towards the Peak District National Park.

11. Features with Potential for Tourism/Recreation

Tittesworth Reservoir is an established tourist destination.

12. Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features

Suburbanised improved dwellings. Busy roads. Introduction of fencing for stock control. Introduction of roadside pavements with concrete edging kerbs detracts from the rural character of the area creating a more suburban feel.

13. Analysis of Character Sub Area

a) Strengths

- Tittesworth Reservoir.
- Small scale rectilinear field pattern.
- Panoramic views.

b) Weaknesses

- Replacement of field boundaries with post and wire fencing for stock control.
- Inappropriate road design and suburbanised dwellings.

c) Opportunities

- Circular walks from Leek to Tittesworth Reservoir.
- Viewing opportunities supported by signage and interpretation.

d) Threats

- Erosion of field boundaries is creating a larger scale landform.
- Suburbanisation of dwellings and inappropriate highway management and design layout.

14. Key Planning and Management Issues

- Large scale agricultural pressures
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating field boundaries
- Tourism and recreation pressures associated with Destination Sties:
 - Tittesworth Reservoir

15. Landscape Planning Guidelines

- a. Both broadleaves and conifer species occur in this landscape however future plantations should generally reflect this and follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission. Planting design must respond to landform and increase in scale on upper slopes. The landscape cannot easily accommodate large scale plantations and the interrelationship between larger plantations and the open spaces that they frame must be identified and repeated in the siting and layout of any significant woodland planting.
- b. New woodland within this sub area could be used to reduce the scale of the landscape and improve the distribution of and links to existing woodland.
- c. Where it is desirable new woodland could increase vegetation cover around the banks of Tittesworth Reservoir or where there are acceptable recreational demands such as lodges, camping, caravans etc, than cannot be absorbed within a more open landscape.
- d. All woodland planting should consider the spatial relationship between woodland blocks and open areas so that the rhythm of the landscape is not disrupted.
- e. In general the open skyline should be maintained –planting blocks should be positioned so as not to impact upon the skyline and wide open views.
- f. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of the remnant historic parkland of Abbey Farm, must take account of the unique character of this designed landscape.
- g. Any proposals for development or land use change within this remnant historic landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal.
- h. Historic landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland, pleasure grounds and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.

- i. The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional stone buildings characteristic of this area.
- j. The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- k. Where possible gritstone walls should be used as a means of enclosure in order to reflect and maintain local character.
- l. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protect these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
- m. Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley.
- n. Key viewing opportunities should be created supported by signage and interpretation. This is particularly important within this area where views are afforded of Tittesworth Reservoir and The Roaches beyond.

16. Land Management Guidelines

a) Semi-natural Broad Leaved Woodland

Semi-natural broad leaved woodlands in this sub area are generally valley woodlands. It is highly important to the character and quality of the landscape that these woodlands are maintained and enhanced. Degraded sites should be restored and these generally small scale woodlands should be recreated or regenerated.

b) Pasture Land and Horsiculture

Consideration should be given to how good pastoral land management practices can be encouraged and monitored in relation to maintaining the quality of the grassland habitats. This can include rotational grazing with some cropping of hay meadows, maintenance of ditches and restocking of hedgerows. Although horsiculture is not significant within this landscape, appropriate advice and guidance on appropriate land and field boundary management should be made available and changes in the extent of horsiculture should be monitored.

c) Hedgerows/Dry Stone Walls

It is highly important that ancient and diverse hedgerows, particularly those with hedgerow trees along them, are maintained and managed. Where hedgerows are planted or restored they should be species rich reflecting local indigenous hedge mixes and that the plants where possible should be grown locally. Consideration should be given to how the current practice of the erection of stock proof fencing rather than maintenance and management of hedgerows/dry stone walls can be checked and the retention and maintenance of hedgerows/dry stone walls be encouraged.

d) Tittesworth Reservoir

The maintenance and enhancement of Tittesworth Reservoir and catchments is highly important. Tittesworth Reservoir is a drinking water reservoir, with recreation along the edges of the lake. Maintenance and enhancement of these recreation facilities is highly important.

e) Rivers and Streams

It is highly important that the quality of all natural existing channel features including the River Churnet, its tributaries and those of Tittesworth Reservoir are maintained. The quality and quantity of water should be improved where possible.

