

# **CANNOCK CHASE**

## **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**



### **Review of AONB Landscape Character Framework**

#### **Stage 2 Landscape Character Type descriptions**

**ASHMEAD·PRICE**  
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in association with Steven Warnock

Final report August 2017

## **1. Introduction**

The Stage 2 project start up meeting was held at the Barley Mow on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Howard Price and Steven Warnock met with members of the project steering group to agree the scope and timetable for the fieldwork and analysis stage. In attendance were Julia Banbury (SCC) Ruth Hytch and Anne Walker (AONB Unit). The meeting instructed Ashmead Price and Steven Warnock to proceed with the fieldwork in and adjacent to the Cannock Chase AONB, setting priorities for study areas due to the constraints on time and budget for the Stage 2 work. The timetable was to complete the field survey in the week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> June and to write up the Stage 2 Landscape Character Types in time for the Task and Finish Group meeting on July 11<sup>th</sup> 2017. The final report was completed following the meeting.

## **2. Methodology**

The Field survey built on the map analysis by providing essential information about the visual dimension of the landscape that could not easily be gained from the desk study. The primary function of the field survey was to identify the key characteristics that contribute to local distinctiveness and use these to group the LDUs into Landscape Character Types (LCTs). These are shown in Map 1 below, followed by a description of each of the 9 LCTs defined by the study

The field survey was also used to gather information about the condition of the landscape, in particular the impact of recent change. Condition was assessed at a sub landscape type level using smaller parcels of land (LCPs) to better reflect the state of the landscape. At this more detailed level other factors came into play including the relationship of the landscape to new development and other land use change. A key task of the field survey was to produce an informed assessment of the forces for change within each of the different landscape types.

Julia Banbury was able to join us for the survey days and in the event we completed the agreed priority areas in good time, allowing some additional resources to be spent on the analysis and landscape descriptions.

The next step involved a period of information sorting; using in addition to our own field sheets the recent 2016 landscape assessment study undertaken on behalf of Cannock Chase Council and the 2015 DRAFT County Council review of Cannock Chase and Cankwood. The process distilled an informed analysis of the strength of character and condition of each landscape (ie. how far removed it is from its optimum state), the forces that are driving change and the key issues that need to be addressed in order to conserve/enhance landscape character.

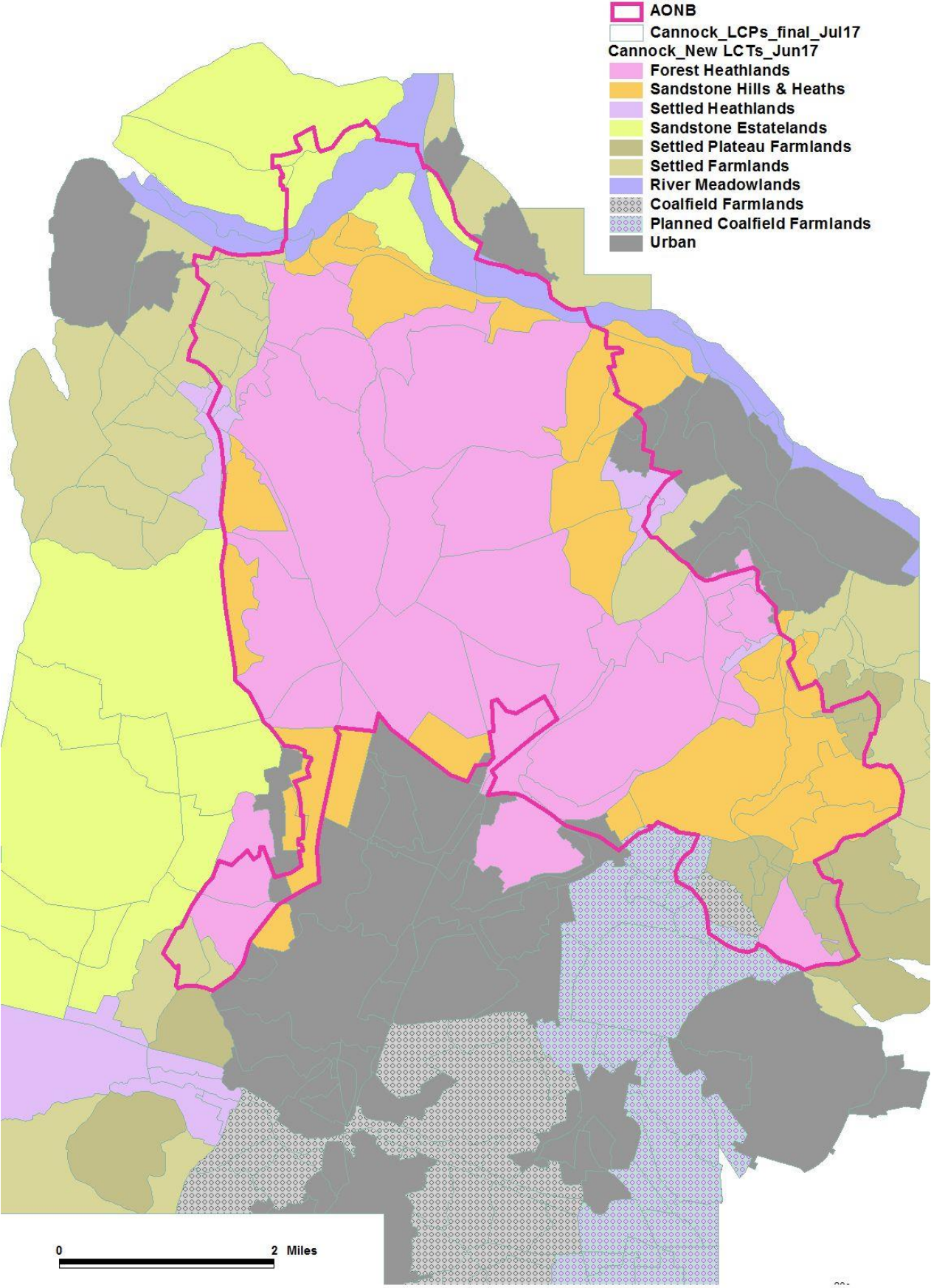
The landscape descriptions for each Landscape Character Type were adapted from the County Council DRAFT report and tailored to the particular characteristics found during the field survey and through prior understanding of Cannock Chase AONB.

In the light of the analysis, the next stage was to propose management strategies for each of the different landscapes within the AONB. The most recent Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan (2014-2019) was reviewed in order to extract key issues and landscape policies relevant to the landscape assessment. These acted as a framework within which a series of much more specific implementation guidelines could be formulated.

A short vision statement summarised the overall aims of management within each Landscape Character type and then guidelines were set out in the form of bullet point statements.

The aim of the guidelines is to provide practical management advice to help both planners and land managers tackle specific environmental and recreation issues which have been identified within the AONB. Since the guidelines were drawn up respecting the landscape patterns / features of Cannock Chase, their implementation would allow these issues to be resolved in a way that strengthens, rather than diminishes, the distinctiveness and special character of the AONB.

Map 1 revised landscape typology for Cannock Chase



## FOREST HEATHLANDS

### Overall character

The Forest Heathlands are strongly associated with the high plateau of Cannock Chase, where the underlying Pebble beds have weathered to produce a dissected topography characterised by domed summits with small incised valleys. This is an unenclosed, heavily wooded landscape dominated by woodland / heath and characterised by conifer plantations, semi-natural oak / birch woodlands and areas of open heathland. The association with heathland is a recurring visual and ecological theme, even in the more heavily wooded parts of the Chase.

The sandy, free draining soils historically posed a major constraint to land use and even today the landscape is dominated by commercial forestry plantations, typically comprising large blocks of Scots and Corsican pines, forming an ordered pattern within a more natural heathland setting. Semi-natural oak and birch woodlands occur in places, but it is the association with heathland that defines the visual and ecological character throughout this landscape. Patches of heathland survive at Brocton Field, Shoal Hill, Chetwynd Coppice and in the Hednesford Hills. These areas are heavily used and locally valued by the large urban population living within an hour's drive of the Chase.



### Key Characteristics

- Convex slopes with small incised valleys
- Commons and unenclosed land with heathland and secondary birch woodland / scrub
- Semi-natural woodlands with ancient oak pollards
- Conifer plantations and shelter belts
- Straight / unenclosed roads through the core of the Chase
- Sand and gravel workings / former coal mining tips
- Abrupt edge in places to surrounding urban development

Although this is largely an unsettled landscape, historic industrial activity is evident with furnaces, slitting mills and forges associated with post-medieval iron working. Evidence of coal mining activity is also evident throughout the area, with rows of terraced housing backing onto remnant heathland in a number of places. There are many informal and designated accessible footpaths, bridleways and former mineral line routes leading from housing areas into the open hills and heaths.

### **Strength of Character**

**Natural:** strong      **Cultural:** moderate

***Overall: strong***

The undulating topography and remnant heathy character both contribute to a relatively strong natural dimension of the Forest Heathlands landscape. The cultural pattern is more variable and includes remnants of an ancient, unsettled wildland within a more recent heavily forested, but strongly unified landscape.

### **Summary of Condition**

***Overall: moderate***

This is a landscape that has undergone widespread change over the last century, changing from an open heathland to a wooded heathland character. It has also been subject to urban expansion, mostly around the edges of the Chase and localised mineral extraction. Evidence of historic coal mining activity can be seen in many places, in particular where this has modified the shape of the land at Huntington and adjacent to the Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre. As a result, the Forest Heathlands comprises a collection of cultural landscapes and is in need of a strategic/integrated approach to rebuild the overall unity of the landscape.

### **Vision Statement**

***Conserve and restore*** the former heathland character of this landscape by encouraging positive management of all remaining tracts of heathland and ancient broadleaved woodland / veteran trees to help integrate the conifer plantations more effectively into the wider landscape.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and manage the remnant ancient woodlands and veteran trees in the AONB, particularly at Brocton Coppice and Chetwynd Coppice.
- Forest Design plans should include measures to reduce the visual impact of forestry edges following major felling and re-planting operations throughout the AONB.
- Develop a strategy, in association with a wide range of partners and landowners, to restore locally valued areas of heathland.
- Encourage initiatives to introduce cattle grazing as a long term management option for the restoration of heathland areas.
- Consider mechanisms for developing a market for locally produced conservation grade beef and venison in association with local business partners.
- Identify and conserve key views into and from the AONB when considering significant new development proposals.
- Ensure a high standard of design / management of Visitor Centre hubs and in the maintenance of recreational facilities throughout the Country Park.

## SANDSTONE HILLS & HEATHS

### Overall character

A well wooded landscape with an upstanding, in places steep sided, undulating topography, closely associated with the underlying outcrops of Permo-Triassic rock. A distinguishing feature of this landscape are the impoverished, free draining, sandy soils, which historically posed a major constraint to land use and until relatively recently this landscape continued to be dominated by woodland and heath. Remnants of heathy vegetation still survive in places, but mostly they have been planted with coniferous woodland, or converted to intensive arable cultivation / stock rearing. Most of the farmland is enclosed by a regular pattern of medium to large sized, hedged fields, often framed by conifer plantations.

The Sandstone Hills & Heaths has undergone several stages of development and today it is a landscape of large estate farms, set within a planned enclosure pattern of medium sized and larger hedged fields. The associated woodland framework creates a strong sense of enclosure and helps to screen views of the encroaching urban edge in many places. Some of the estates were associated with earlier deer parks, such as that at Beaudesert, the former palace of the Bishop of Lichfield. These are complemented by later ornamental parks, such as that around Wolseley and Hagley Park.



### Key characteristics

- Upstanding/undulating topography, with occasional steep sided valleys
- Impoverished sandy soils with patches of bracken and gorse
- Well wooded, cultivated landscape with a strong sense of visual enclosure
- Estate farms with a regular pattern of large hedged fields
- Remnants of historic wood pasture
- Sparsely settled, in places remote landscape with limited public access

The settlement pattern is generally dispersed, with a scatter of large farmsteads, many of which have a regular courtyard design, generally built of red brick with plain clay roof tiles. Together with the scatter of roadside dwellings, these are linked by occasional minor roads that give access via private trackways.

### **Strength of Character**

Natural: moderate

Cultural: Moderate

**Overall: moderate**

In the Sandstone Hills & Heaths both the natural and cultural dimensions of the landscape contribute to an overall moderate strength of character. The former reflects a relatively prominent landform with patches of semi-natural vegetation, whilst the cultural dimension, although fairly coherent, is of relatively recent in origin and contributes moderately to the overall character of the landscape.

### **Summary of Condition**

**Overall: moderate**

Arable intensification has caused an increasing impact on this landscape, resulting in the enlargement and in some places a loss of the field pattern. Where hedgerows remain they tend to be gappy, or redundant and in places they have been replaced by wire fences. There are also increasing urban pressures from residential development and in a number of places there is a hard edge to new development in surrounding urban areas, with little or no buffer between the housing and the countryside.

### **Vision Statement**

**Conserve and enhance** the visual integrity of this well wooded estate landscape and look for opportunities to improving linkages and access to the AONB from surrounding urban areas without creating undue pressures on the character and function of this landscape.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Protect and conserve the strong woodland belts within and around the boundaries of this estate landscape.
- Conserve and strengthen roadside hedgerows and verges as valuable buffers alongside busy roads. Manage hedgerows and verges to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit.
- Conserve and restore areas of historic wood pasture within the old Beaudesert deer park in association with other project partners.
- Conserve and manage public access via the established footpath network. Take opportunities for improving linkages and access to the AONB from urban areas without creating undue pressures on landowners.
- Mitigate the impact of any new development on open farmland around the edge of the AONB by encouraging new native broadleaved woodland planting that links with the existing estate woodlands.
- Mitigate the suburbanising impact of sub-divided horse paddocks, menages and stabling by promoting guidelines for appropriate management.

## SETTLED HEATHLANDS

### Overall character

This landscape is mainly associated with areas of former heathland around the fringe of higher ground in the Chase. Here the underlying Permo-Triassic rocks are masked by deposits of glacial drift forming a more gently rolling topography. This drift mainly comprises reddish sandy till, producing impoverished fine and coarse loamy soils that reflect its former heathland origins. The latter is characterised by the recurring presence of bracken and birch in the woodlands and hedgerows, although here is little remaining heathland and much of the land is now used for stock rearing

This landscape has been shaped by the planned enclosure of heathland in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the many place names referring to 'heaths' reflect areas of former heathland, for example, 'Calf Heath', and 'Slade Heath'. Field enclosure resulted in the creation of a regular pattern of small / larger hedged fields and a network of generally straight lanes with uniform verges. The settlement pattern is dispersed, with a high density of roadside dwellings that may well have originated as common-edge settlements. The pattern typically comprises clusters of farmsteads and roadside cottages, often with associated horse paddocks. Where hedgerows remain intact, the landscape remains small scale and relatively well treed.



### Key characteristics

- Gently rolling topography.
- Glacial till with sands and gravels creating poor soils with a relic heathy character.
- Pastoral farmland and pony paddocks.
- Regular pattern of small to medium sized, hedged fields.
- Dispersed settlement pattern with many roadside dwellings.
- Planned highway network with uniform verges and relic heathy vegetation.
- Numerous heath names reflecting the presence of former heathland.



The proximity of the urban edge influences the general character of this landscape and whereas some areas retain a peaceful rural character of clustered farmsteads and older roadside cottages, in other parts this is an active landscape with much recent development and many busy roads. Together these factors reduce the overall tranquillity of the landscape.

### **Strength of Character**

Natural: moderate    Cultural: moderate

**Overall: strong**

Since the landform is not particularly prominent and there is only relic habitat survival, the natural character of the Settled Heathlands is not very strong. The historic character is fairly distinct / unified, however and contributes to a reasonably strong strength of character for this landscape.

### **Summary of Condition**

**Overall: moderate**

The proximity and general pattern of the settlement edge influences the overall character of this landscape and although some areas retain a peaceful rural character of clustered farmsteads and roadside cottages, other parts are disturbed by busy roads and urban influences. Where this is associated with a decline in the maintenance of the landscape, in particular where farmland has been replaced by pony paddocks and/or hedgerows have deteriorated, becoming gappy or replaced by wire fencing, this often results in a disjointed/neglected appearance.

### **Vision Statement**

**Conserve and restore** the enclosed small scale pastoral character of this farmed landscape through the maintenance / replacement of hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Encourage the conservation and management of species rich permanent pastures by issuing guidance to landowners and land managers.
- Encourage traditional field boundary management and conservation of hedgerow trees, particularly along roadsides.
- Mitigate the suburbanising impact of sub-divided horse paddocks, menages and stabling by promoting guidelines for appropriate management.

## SANDSTONE ESTATELANDS

### Overall character

An open, gently rolling, mixed farming landscape associated with an area of Permo-Triassic rocks comprising a mix of fine-grained reddish-brown sandstones that give rise to a rounded, rolling topography, mildly dissected by minor rivers and streams. This landscape is characterised by sandy, free draining soils derived from the underlying sandstone. Although locally podzolic, most of these soils are deeper loams, supporting a well ordered, intensively farmed estate landscape. Prominent large woodlands are a feature in places, along with coverts and belts of trees. This is a landscape that appears far more wooded than it is, due to the prominent positioning of woodlands and the coalescence of mature hedgerow oaks in places. Despite the lack of heathland, this landscape is almost everywhere distinguished by heathy woodland/scrub and patches of bracken/gorse, providing a locally distinctive identity.

The planned field pattern throughout this landscape is mostly derived from the early 18th century enclosure of former open ground and heath. Small fragments of heath survive in places and some ridge and furrow also exists, associated with the settlements. This planned character has been influenced by a number of traditional rural estates and their associated landscape parks, such as those at Shugborough and Teddesley. A significant area of ancient woodland survives to the south of the latter park, while a number of smaller parks and gardens, developed at a later date, are also a feature of this landscape.



### Key characteristics

- Smooth rolling landform.
- Heathy remnants and roadside bracken
- Intensive arable farmland with a remnant field pattern of large, open, regular fields.
- Broadleaved and mixed woodlands with silver birch
- Well treed stream valleys

- Parkland plantations and game coverts
- Straight roads
- Red brick farmsteads and estate cottages

Settlement is sparse and characterised by large estate farms with a scatter of decorative estate cottages, often with painted woodwork. There are also a few early settlements, such as at Tixall, containing traditional red brick and tile roofed buildings. There are some sandstone buildings, including churches and other buildings with sandstone plinths, while most estates have regular brick built courtyard farms with extensive modern buildings. These farms, often accessed along narrow trackways, are connected to a network of wide, straight roads with grass verges.

### **Strength of Character**

Natural: moderate    Cultural: moderate

**Overall: moderate**

Since the landform is not particularly prominent and there is only relic habitat survival, the natural character of the Sandstone Estatelands is not very strong. The historic character, is fairly unified, however and contributes to a moderate strength of character for this landscape.

### **Summary of Condition**

**Overall: moderate**

Agricultural intensification has resulted in an overall decline in the management of hedgerows, or their replacement with alternative boundary types, leading to the alteration and localised removal of the historic enclosure pattern. Recreational pressures have also resulted in an increase in horse pasturing in this landscape, leading to the introduction of field sub-divisions and incongruous features (e.g. field shelters). It can also be a cause of over grazing and poaching which can be a particular problem on wetter land.

Other changes linked to the developing agricultural economy and associated recreational pressures include the introduction of new land uses such as golf courses. Although these have the potential to cause an impact on the rural character of the landscape, where they are well sited and designed, they can contribute strongly to the existing wooded estate character.

### **Vision Statement**

**Conserve and enhance** the wooded agricultural estate character of this landscape.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Respect the historic character of the landscape and conserve distinctive estate features.
- Conserve and maintain the structure, age and diversity of woodlands and parklands.
- Maintain and protect well defined natural boundaries to urban development.
- Maintain and enhance the views from the Staffordshire Way long distance path throughout this landscape.
- Maintain the open character of this landscape, with framed views to wooded edges.

## SETTLED (PLATEAU) FARMLANDS

### Overall character

The Settled Farmlands is a well-defined cultural landscape with a varied pattern of small to medium sized hedged fields set within an irregular pattern of rural lanes. The Settled Plateau Farmlands has a similar cultural pattern, but in addition is characterised by patches of relic common, with a more planned pattern of regular fields, straight roads and wayside dwellings. The latter also has a gently rolling 'upland' character, associated with low glacial summits. Both landscapes lie around the edge of the Cannock plateau where the underlying Permo-Triassic rocks, comprising Mercia mudstones, create a well-rounded, rolling topography. The mudstones produce fertile, easily cultivated reddish Brown soils, giving rise to a productive agricultural landscape of dairying and mixed farming within a relatively unwooded setting.



### Key characteristics

- A Gently rolling and folded landform– more open on rolling low plateau summits
- Many small streams in shallow valleys.
- Mixed pastoral and arable farming
- A varied, well defined pattern of small-medium sized fields
- Small patches of enclosed former heathland
- Network of narrow lanes, often with hedge banks.
- Clusters of farmsteads and roadside cottages.
- Traditional red brick farmsteads and dwellings with clay tile roofs
- Horse pasture and small grazed paddocks with wire fences

Stream side willow/alder are locally prominent, while areas of semi-natural grassland can be found in a number of places, especially in stream valleys and on more steeply sloping ground. These provide habitat and ecological diversity within the landscape.

Both landscapes are well settled with a clustered pattern of medieval villages and hamlets, roadside dwellings and a scattering of small farmsteads. These are connected by a network of narrow, sunken lanes, often enclosed by hedge banks and hedgerow trees.

### **Strength of Character**

Natural: weak

Cultural: strong

**Overall: moderate**

The natural dimension of the Settled (Plateau) Farmlands is not very strong, as the landform is not particularly prominent and there is only relic habitat survival. The historic character, however, is coherent and in places unified, contributing strongly to the strength of character of both landscapes.

### **Summary of Condition**

**Overall: declining**

The pattern and scale of the historic enclosure pattern greatly influences the overall character of this landscape and although some areas retain a peaceful rural character, other parts have been disrupted by agricultural intensification, or the proximity to urban centres/busy roads. Where this is associated with a decline in the maintenance of the landscape, in particular where hedgerows have deteriorated, becoming gappy, or replaced by wire fencing, this often results in a fragmented/neglected appearance.

### **Vision Statement**

**Conserve and restore** the structure and overall historic integrity of the farmed landscape through the maintenance / replanting of hedgerow boundaries and look for opportunities to enhance tree cover in order to soften hard urban edges.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where necessary restore the small to medium scale field pattern as defined by hedgerow boundaries.
- Encourage the conservation of species rich grasslands.
- Seek opportunities to conserve and enhance hedgerow tree cover to soften the impact of adjoining hard urban edges.
- Mitigate the suburbanising impact of sub-divided horse paddocks, menages and stabling by promoting guidelines for appropriate management.
- Monitor the impact of new and extended dwellings in this landscape, encouraging the adoption of vernacular building styles / materials when considering new development proposals.

## (PLANNED) COALFIELD FARMLANDS

### Overall character

A varied industrial / urbanised landscape of former mining villages and areas of disturbed / restored land, with in places pockets of ancient settled farmland, set within a matrix of planned farmland originally reclaimed from woodland and heath. This landscape occurs along the south eastern edge of the AONB, where although underlain by a mix of interbedded mudstones, siltstones and sandstones, with deposits of coal and ironstone, the landform is strongly influenced by a covering of glacial drift. The mixed rocks of the coal measures and the overlying sandy drift give rise to a rolling topography with heavy, in places impoverished soils, which are very much reflected in the heathy origins of this landscape. To the north of the A5 the landform becomes more undulating as it rises up to Heath Hayes and Hednesford on the edge of the Forest Heathlands. In this area, which has been widely disturbed by open cast coal mining, there are often wide views over the adjoining lower lying land.



### Key characteristics

- Low rolling plateau
- Restored opencast sites with immature landscape features
- Pockets of planned farmland enclosed by thorn hedges/fences
- Pockets of ancient settled farmland with thick mixed species hedgerows
- Patches of secondary woodland on older restored sites
- Heathy origins strongly evident throughout, with relic wet heathland commons in less disturbed areas
- A vacant landscape lacking in settlement, often adjoining a well defined urban edge
- Large scale urban elements including pylons major roads and distribution warehouses.

The advent of recent and extensive land use change in the coalfield area has resulted in the creation of a new locally distinctive character. The area north of the A5 and M6 Toll Road, as far as Prospect village and Wimblebury, has undergone complete transformation due to recent opencast coal mining activities. The original planned enclosure landscape, formerly open heath, has largely been destroyed and a new restored/planned landscape has now taken its place. Some of the spoil heaps have been re-vegetated with secondary woodland, disguising their landforms and creating a localised well treed character. In some places new patches of heath have been re-created as a reminder of the extensive areas of unenclosed land that once dominated this landscape prior to enclosure and the development of the Cannock coalfield. Areas of open water, subsidence flashes, and wet grassland are also a characteristic feature of this area.

Elsewhere, the presence of pylons, large distribution warehouses, landfill sites and the open exposed landform emphasises the large scale industrial character of the landscape, in contrast to the pocket of more ancient farmland around Nuns Well. This area, which is used mainly for stock rearing, comprises small to medium sized fields defined by an older pattern of mixed hedges. Many pockets of agricultural land in this landscape are surrounded by urban settlement and/or land disturbed by extensive coal mining and clay winning.

### **Strength of Character**

Natural: moderate

Cultural: weak

**Overall: moderate**

The undulating landform in the area around Heath Hayes is more prominent than in most of the Planned Coalfield Farmlands to the south of the A5 and although there are patches of surviving heathland and other relic semi-natural vegetation, these only contribute to a moderate strength of character for the natural dimension of the landscape. Apart from the pocket of more ancient farmland around Nuns Well, the cultural dimension of this recent, planned landscape is weak, giving an overall moderate strength of character.

### **Summary of Condition**

**Overall: poor**

Overall, this is a landscape in decline, although it still contains many patches of semi-natural habitat that are worthy of conserving and restoring. Where opencast coal mining and arable intensification have occurred, the scale of the landscape has enlarged, creating a more open, less enclosed character, often with wide views to the surrounding urban edges. Other pressures for change include the development of the M6 toll road.

### **Vision Statement**

**Restore and enhance** the character and overall structure of the landscape and seek opportunities for the creation of new areas of heathland linked to the Biological Enhancement Area within the Planned Coalfields area.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and strengthen pockets of older historic landscape character and encourage the positive management of primary field boundaries, hedgerow trees and woodlands.
- Encourage the creation of new grazed heathland habitats in areas of post mineral extraction landscapes.
- Encourage the creation of new belts of trees and small woodlands to buffer the impact of new housing development in this landscape.
- Create opportunities for new recreational routes to provide safe off road access between existing settlements.

## RIVER MEADOWLANDS

### Overall character

The low-lying alluvial floodplain of the River Trent forms a distinctive River Meadowlands landscape that cuts through the Permo-Triassic rocks in the northern part of the region. The two key features are the meandering river channel, especially where this has a varied bank profile and the flat alluvial floodplain which flanks the river channel. The latter, which is normally defined by strong hedgelines along the edge of the floodplain, provides a sharp contrast to the steep wooded slopes of the adjoining Sandstone Hills.

The flat alluvial floodplain is subject to periodic flooding and for the most part is unploughed and characterised by grazing animals in undisturbed pastoral scenes. There is also much marginal vegetation and fringing alders/willow scrub along the river channel itself, especially where this has a varied bank profile. Such habitats provide valuable nesting and feeding areas for wildlife and where associated with unimproved meadowland, they create a strong sense of place and feeling of naturalness. The sound and movement of water add to this feeling of tranquillity.



### Key characteristics

- Flat, low-lying corridor adjacent to the river Trent
- Seasonally flooded alluvial floodplain
- Meandering river channel
- Pastoral farming with grazing livestock
- Lines of poplar, willow and alder along watercourses
- Unsettled with few roads



This is an unsettled landscape due to its wet nature, although settlements often lie on higher ground adjacent to the River Meadowlands. Where roads cross this landscape they are generally either small rural lanes, or major through routes along the edge of the river floodplain. Many of the river crossings are via 18th and 19th century bridges, many on the site of earlier crossing points.

### **Strength of Character**

Natural: strong

Cultural: moderate

***Overall: strong***

The flat landform, meandering river channel and patches of wet grassland contribute strongly to the overall character of the River Meadowlands landscape, while the historic time depth of the cultural pattern contributes to a moderate strength of character. Overall this is a distinctive landscape with a strong natural character.

### **Summary of Condition**

***Overall: moderate***

A generally intact river meadowlands landscape where the habitat network and cultural pattern are functioning and in good condition.

### **Vision Statement**

**Conserve** the natural wetland character of the River Meadowlands landscape by protecting the floodplain from further development and encouraging traditional grazing management of the land.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Promote the restoration of traditional water meadows for grazing.
- Conserve existing wetlands and restore the continuity of wetland habitats along the river course.
- Conserve views into the river meadowlands from the AONB.
- Protect the river floodplain from inappropriate urban development and new transport links.