Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project
Landscape Capacity Study - Scottish Borders Pilot Areas 1 & 2

Final Report, October 2019

Carol Anderson Landscape Associates

CONTENTS

1 BACKGROUND 3

1.1 Aims and objectives of the study 3
1.2 Guidance on landscape sensitivity and capacity 3
1.3 Definition of terms 4
1.4 General approach to the study 4
1.5 Baseline landscape character 5
1.6 Woodland types considered in the study 5
1.7 The sensitivity assessment 7
1.8 Conclusions on sensitivity and guidance 9
1.9 The need for more detailed appraisal of specific proposals 9

2 PILOT AREA 1 - SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT 10

2.1 Introduction 10

3 PILOT STUDY AREA 2 25

3.1 Introduction 25

4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 36

4.1 Introduction 36
4.2 Pilot Area 1 36
4.3 Pilot Area 2 37
4.4 Conclusions 37
4.5 Observations on the process of landscape capacity assessment 38

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of this landscape capacity study is to consider opportunities for new woodlands to be accommodated in two pilot areas within the Scottish Borders as part of the Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project.

The study brief requires consideration of current landscape character, utilising the recently revised Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions, and supplemented with further observations on physical character, visual amenity and perceptual qualities gained from field survey of the local landscape. The extent to which landscapes could accommodate new woodlands and forests, without significant change to their character or amenity, needs to be appraised with respect to different types of forests and woodlands. The provision of guidance, from a landscape and visual perspective, on the most appropriate locations, general extent and design criteria for potential forest and woodland creation is also a requirement set out in the brief.

1.2 Guidance on landscape sensitivity and capacity

The study methodology is based on landscape and visual capacity assessment, which uses sensitivity assessment to determine the ability of the landscape character and visual amenity to accommodate changes brought about by new development. Natural England have recently issued *An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment*, June 2019. This replaces Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency, 2004)

The Natural England document states that '*Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value – such as changes to valued attributes of baseline landscape character and the visual resource. Landscape sensitivity assessment is a process that assesses the resilience / robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value - to a defined change, or changes. It can help decision makers to understand likely changes and the nature of change should particular courses of action - the development / land management scenarios – be taken forward*'.

An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment is intended to inform strategic spatial planning and land management. It allows a more strategic assessment of landscape sensitivity, often across a very large area, with regard to the principle of a particular type of change scenario rather than to a specific development in a defined location.

Most landscape capacity studies consider the potential sensitivity of key characteristics of Landscape Character Types to a development type such as housing, aquaculture or wind turbines. The particular characteristics defined as key sensitivity criteria may change according to the nature of the development being considered, although the methodological approach between studies is

generally similar. Visibility and views may be considered as a separate issue or may form part of the assessment of landscape sensitivity as a criterion together with key landscape characteristics.

The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Version 3 (GLVIA3) sets out a methodology for appraising landscape sensitivity which considers susceptibility and value. While this methodology is also advocated in the Natural England approach to sensitivity assessment, this has not been adopted in this study with more emphasis placed on physical and perceptual qualities of landscape. While there are no national or local landscape designations within the two Pilot Areas, other values associated with the landscapes considered in the study are, however, addressed within the perceptual/aesthetic qualities criterion in the sensitivity assessment. This includes consideration of the sense of remoteness or naturalness using wildness mapping data and information on likely access of some landscapes by walkers.

1.3 Definition of terms

The following definitions of terms apply to this study:

Landscape character assessment
Landscape character assessment is a standard methodology for identifying, classifying and mapping what is distinctive about landscapes. It helps to understand what makes one landscape different from another. Landscape character relates not only to the physical attributes of the land, such as landform, land cover and settlement pattern, but also to perceptual responses to the landscape.

Landscape sensitivity
Sensitivity relates to landscape character and how susceptible this is to change. In this study, change relates to woodland creation and any findings on landscape sensitivity are restricted to this. Landscapes may have different sensitivities to other forms of change or development. Sensitivity is assessed by considering the effect of different types of woodland on the physical and perceptual characteristics of landscapes. In this study, the nature of views and visibility are also considered in determining sensitivity.

Landscape capacity
The terms landscape sensitivity and capacity are often used interchangeably in Scotland to refer to landscape studies that assess a landscapes susceptibility to a particular form of development. Within the context of this study, capacity relates to the extent of woodland that can be accommodated without significant detrimental effects occurring on the character of a landscape.

1.4 General approach to the study

The approach to the study has been informed by analysis of the potential impacts (both positive and negative) and landscape sensitivities associated with woodland creation. It has involved the following key tasks:

- Review of Scottish Natural Heritage's Landscape Character Assessment (updated online version 2019)
- Identification of the woodland types to be considered in the sensitivity assessment in collaboration with the Steering Sub-Group and definition of the landscape and visual sensitivity criteria to be used in the assessment
- Field work to verify key characteristics of Landscape Character Types and to assess landscape and visual sensitivity to the agreed woodland types using identified sensitivity criteria.
- Guidance on the siting and design of woodlands within each Landscape Character Type.
- Provision of an overview of landscape and visual sensitivities across each Pilot Area, recommendations on strategic landscape and visual considerations for new woodlands and on the methodology for any future landscape capacity studies for woodland creation.

1.5 Baseline landscape character

The Landscape Character Types (LCTs) identified in Scottish Natural Heritage's national database form the basis of the assessment. These have been verified, and more detailed character information recorded, during field survey work. LCTs have not been considered in isolation and the study additionally therefore also considers the wider context to each LCT in terms of their contribution to scenic composition and the broader character of the Scottish Borders landscape. The LCTs lying within each of the Pilot Areas are shown on Figures 1 and 2. Figure 3 shows LCTs lying in the wider area.

An introduction to the sensitivity assessments undertaken within each of the Pilot Areas explains which LCTs have been considered in detail. Some LCTs occur in both Pilot Areas and separate detailed sensitivity assessments have only been undertaken where key characteristics differ.

The operational Langhope Rig wind farm is located within the *Rolling Moorland* LCT and may restrict opportunities for woodland creation. The nearby Barrel Law wind farm is currently at Appeal. A 275-ha productive woodland at Cacrabank within the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT has been recently approved although planting operations have not yet commenced. For the purposes of this capacity study (which is a pilot scheme) the baseline landscape and visual character is assumed to be without the Barrel Law wind farm proposal and the approved Cacrabank woodland but to include the existing Langhope Rig wind farm.

1.6 Woodland types considered in the study

1.6.1 *Introduction*

The woodland types to be considered in the sensitivity assessment were discussed with the Steering Sub-Group. A joint decision was taken to focus on the key characteristics and differences between woodland species without considering the visual and landscape effects of any management systems such as clear felling, thinning etc in order to simplify the sensitivity assessment and make it relevant in a context where management could change in future.

Riparian woodlands, small broadleaved copses, mixed or coniferous shelterbelts and game covert woodlands are not considered in the detailed sensitivity assessment. Riparian woodlands would invariably have a beneficial effect on landscape character in terms of increasing visual diversity. In upland areas this type of woodland could form an integral part of a larger woodland scheme but even if forming an isolated woodland, it would be strongly related to an existing landscape feature and would thus appear 'tied down' and natural in its siting.

Small broadleaved copses, for example filling a corner of a field, would also be likely to have beneficial effects on landscape character, although one exception to this might be where they form small isolated features on an expansive open hill side and could appear to be 'floating' with a poor relationship to landscape scale.

Shelterbelts (which could be mixed species or coniferous) and game covert type woodlands are also not considered in the sensitivity assessment. In the Scottish Borders these commonly have a strongly geometric form and they can often have a poor fit with landscape scale, particularly when forming small isolated features sited on an open hill side.

The UK Forestry Standard provides guidance on siting and the design of very small woodlands as described above, especially in relation to landscape scale. This study provides more specific guidance in relation to smaller woodlands generally, also identifying where opportunities may exist to ameliorate any negative landscape and visual effects of existing plantings within each of the Landscape Character Types considered in the sensitivity assessment.

The following woodland types are considered in the sensitivity assessment:

1.6.2 *Small to medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodlands*

This size of woodland could range from a small patch on a hillside to a woodland which, for example, wrapped around the lower slopes of a hill, covered a whole hill or filled a broader valley or basin. The proposed woodland area could be up to approximately 300 hectares in area. This type of woodland would predominantly comprise broadleaved trees which have distinct seasonal colour and textural qualities as well as variations in tone, growth rates and in the degree of lightness between species and also when compared with the majority of coniferous trees. Open space and some coniferous species could form a component of larger woodlands in this type. Planting densities for broadleaved woodlands tend to be less than those of coniferous woodlands and this, together with seasonal change, commonly emphasises landscape features and the underlying landform[1].

1.6.3 *Small to medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands*

These woodlands would be similar in size to the above woodland type but would predominantly comprise coniferous species. The majority of coniferous trees have little seasonal variation, a denser and darker character than broadleaved species

[1] Forestry Grant Scheme Woodland Creation guidance requires stocking of 1,600 per hectare for native broadleaves and 2,500 per hectare for conifer woodlands largely comprising Sitka spruce.

and generally a more uniform rate of growth. Broadleaved species and open space would form an integral part of the more extensive woodlands in this type in line with the UK Forestry Standard.

1.6.4 *Large-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands*

Large-sized woodlands could, for example, extend to occupy a number of hills and/or valleys or a more expansive upland plateau area and would be likely to be upwards of 300 hectares in area. These woodlands would largely comprise coniferous species which would have similar characteristics to those identified above. Broadleaved species and open space would form an integral part of these woodlands in line with the UK Forestry Standard.

It has been assumed in the sensitivity assessment that all woodlands would conform with the requirements and best practice guidance on siting and design set out in the UK Forestry Standard. Not all the woodland types identified above, however, are considered in detail in the sensitivity assessment; some of the Landscape Character Types are too small scale to consider large-sized woodlands.

1.7 The sensitivity assessment

The capacity study considers the sensitivity of key characteristics of each landscape character type or sub-type to different types of woodland creation. The assessment process uses a range of sensitivity criteria to do this based on key landscape and visual characteristics.

1.7.1 *Landscape and visual sensitivity criteria*

The assessment set out in this study considers the sensitivity of key landscape and visual characteristics to different types/scales of woodland. Table 1 sets out the sensitivity criteria considered in the assessment and the potential sensitivities associated with them.

Table 1: Sensitivity criteria

Topic	**Description of potential sensitivities** *(these will vary depending on the woodland type being assessed)*
Landform	Features such as sheer scree slopes, distinctive knolly summits and deep gorge-like valleys would increase sensitivity while smoother, simpler landform features would reduce sensitivity to larger commercial woodlands. Smaller native woodlands may accentuate and complement some of these features and the judgements made would therefore need to consider the extent of these landform features within the LCT and the qualities of each woodland scenario in drawing conclusions on sensitivity.
Land cover	Increased sensitivity is likely to be associated with occasional heathery hill slopes, marsh/bog and scrub, which make a strong contribution to landscape diversity, water bodies and areas of intact and distinctive walled pastures. The rolling hills of the Scottish Borders are

	commonly covered with pastures which extend well up steep hill sides. Small coniferous and mixed shelterbelts are also a key characteristic although in some areas these can conflict with the often smoothly rolling landform. Extensive spruce-dominated forests are also present within both the study areas. Consideration would therefore need to be given to potential positive, neutral or negative effects where additional planting could either enhance existing poorly designed woodlands (ie. by creating a better fit with landform) or increase scenic diversity or conversely where increasing the amount of woodland could be perceived as negatively 'tipping the balance' of open to planted land and decreasing scenic diversity.
Landscape context	Each LCT will have varying sensitivities to different types of woodland sited within it but it will also be important to consider the wider landscape i.e. how the LCTs come together to create wider landscape composition, for example, narrow valleys tightly contained by steep-sided hillsides and rounded capped tops or the backdrop the hills provide to farmed and settled hill fringes and farmland east of the study areas. Effects of woodland creation on the overall pattern of wooded/open hill tops and open valley floors will be considered in the assessment.
Views and visibility	There are few promoted viewpoints in the study areas and views are principally experienced from settlements and from roads within valleys. Hill paths offer opportunities for wider visibility. It will be important to also consider views and visibility from outside the study areas in order to consider wider scenic composition and perceptual effects. Sequential views, experienced from roads, will be assessed.
Perceptual qualities	Loss of openness and potential diminishment of perceived naturalness and wildness will be considered. Colour differences between different tree species and the degree of contrast with the generally pale grassland characteristic of the Borders, changes to the perceived enclosure of space and cumulative effects with existing woodlands (potentially affecting the perception of traditional farming practices) are other factors likely to be considered.

1.7.2 *Cultural heritage*

Sensitivities related to cultural heritage features, for example the landscape setting to a Scheduled Monument, are not considered in this landscape capacity study.

1.7.3 *Field assessment*

The sensitivity assessments have been informed by extensive field work within and in the area surrounding the two pilot areas. Views and character have been assessed from roads, footpaths and from key hill summits.

The assessment considers both positive and negative effects of woodland creation. The nature of effect will be principally determined by the scale of woodland proposed, its location and its composition but based on the assumption that the design of woodlands will comply with UK Forestry Standard.

1.8 Conclusions on sensitivity and guidance

In terms of overall findings, consideration has been given as to how much additional woodland can be accommodated without the essential characteristics of this part of the Scottish Borders landscape being significantly diminished. While the definition of landscape sensitivity outlined in Natural England's *An Approach to Sensitivity Assessment* rests on the *resilience or robustness of a landscape to withstand change without undue negative effects on its landscape and visual baseline*, woodland creation is different from many other types of development in that it can have a beneficial landscape and visual effect dependent on the size and composition of woodlands.

An overall landscape and visual sensitivity rating is given for each type of woodland within each LCT. This has been arrived at by considering the combined weight of evidence set out in the sensitivity assessment using professional judgement, rather than using a numerical scoring system. Adverse and beneficial effects associated with different types of woodland creation are clearly stated.

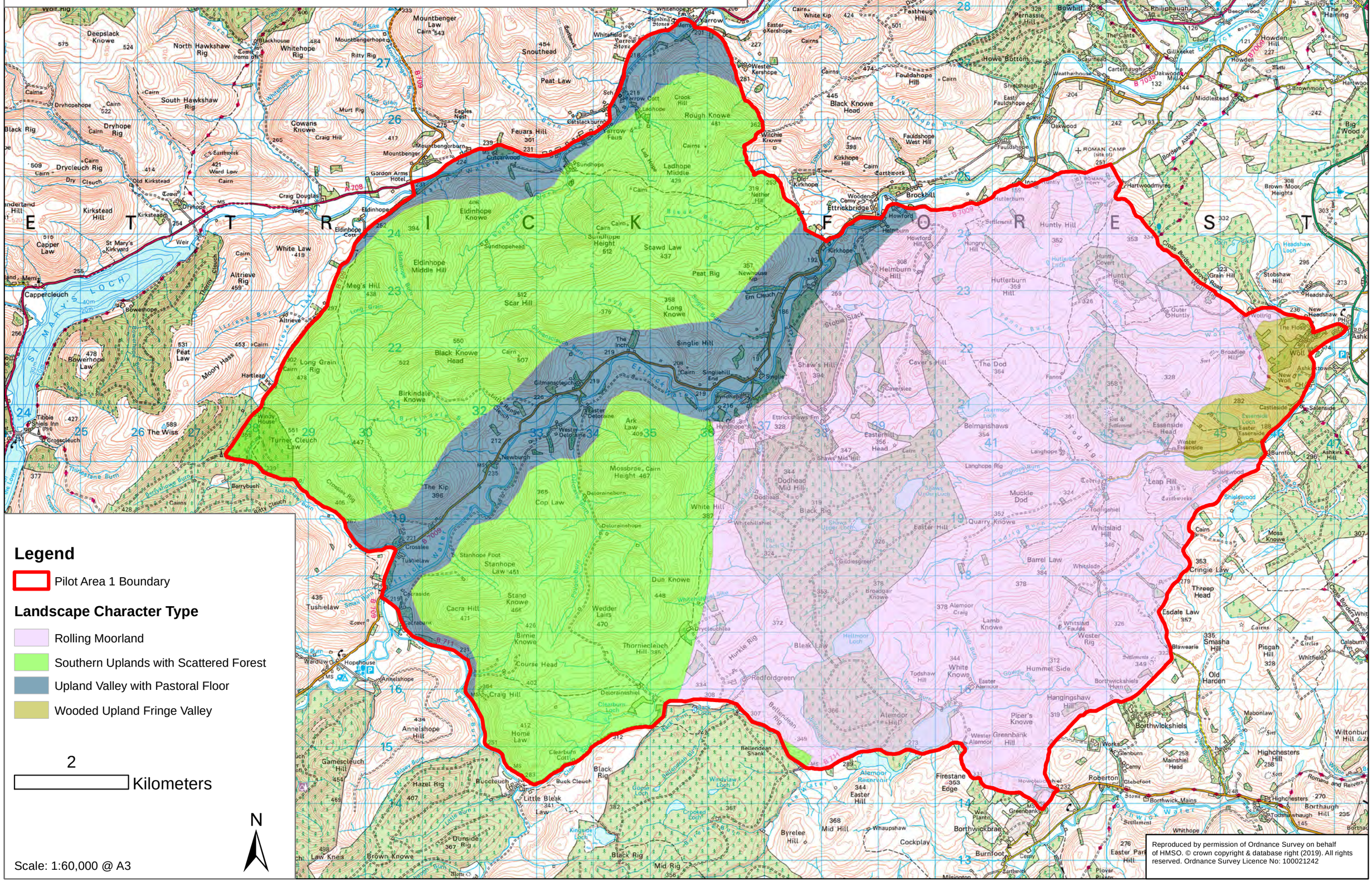
The UK Forestry Standard sets out general design guidance for new woodlands. This study provides more detailed and specific guidance on siting and design of new woodlands relevant to each LCT within the pilot areas.

1.9 The need for more detailed appraisal of specific proposals

The assessment identifies constraints in analysis and at a strategic scale and applicants would need to consider landscape and visual effects at a more detailed level for specific woodland proposals.

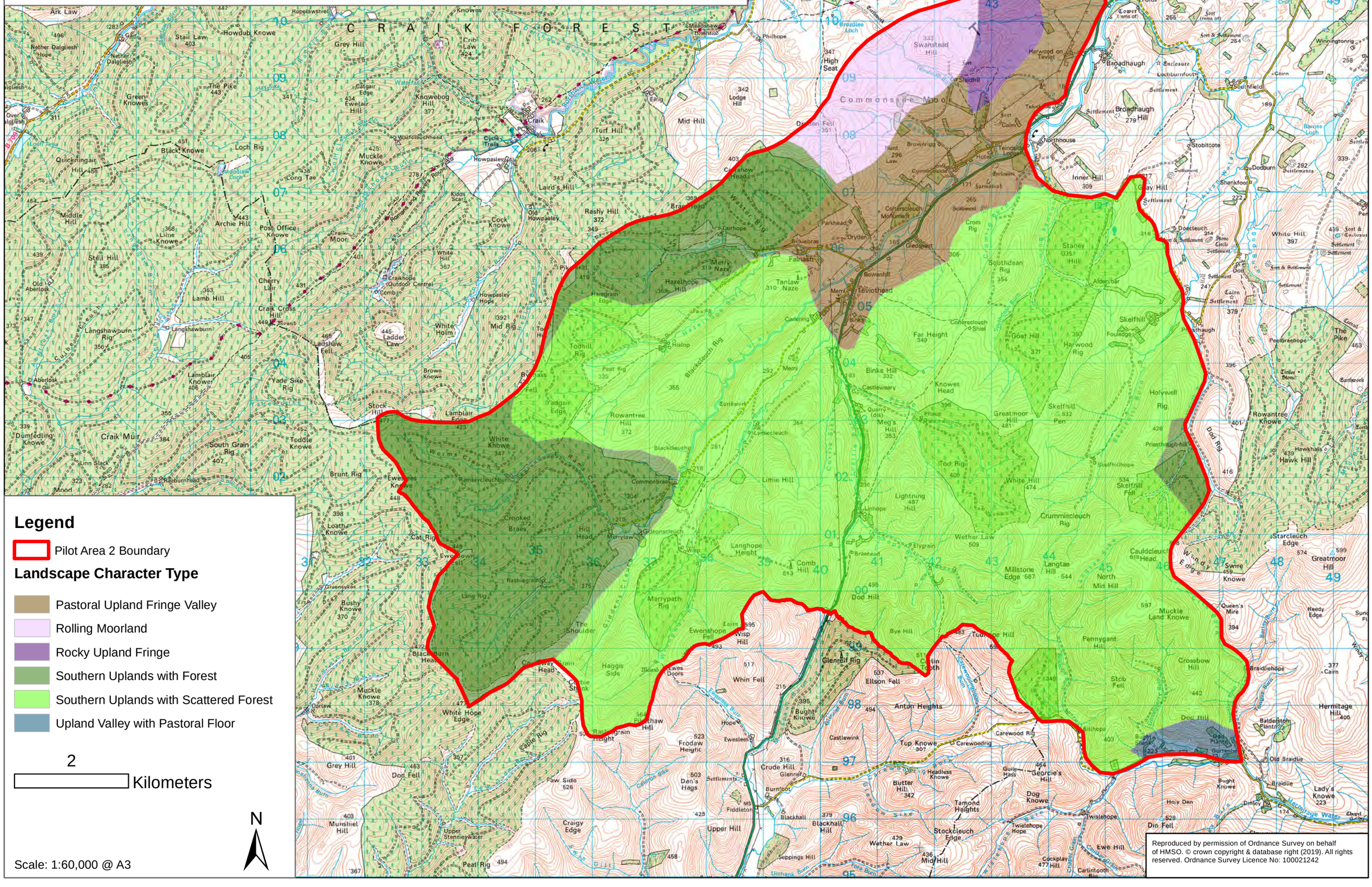
Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project - Landscape Capacity Study

Figure 1: Pilot Area 1 Landscape Character Types



Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project - Landscape Capacity Study

Figure 2: Pilot Area 2 Landscape Character Types

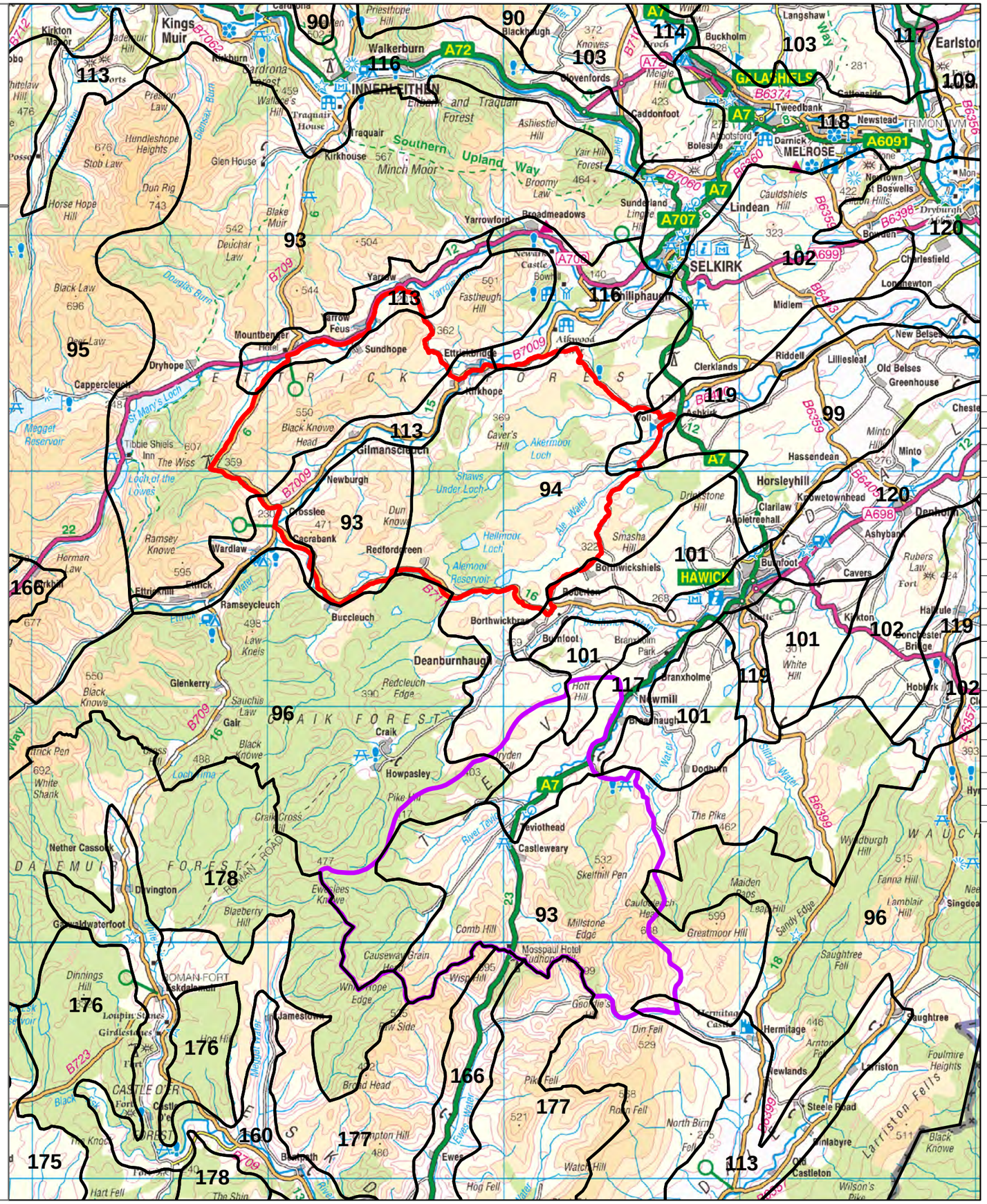


Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project - Landscape Capacity Study

Figure 3: Landscape Character Types in Wider Area

Legend

- Landscape Character Type Boundary
- Pilot Study Area 1
- Pilot Study Area 2



LCT Map No.	LCT
90	Dissected Plateau Moorland
91	Plateau Grassland - Borders
93	Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest - Borders
94	Rolling Moorland
95	Southern Uplands - Borders
96	Southern Uplands with Forest - Borders
99	Rolling Farmland - Borders
101	Rocky Upland Fringe
102	Upland Fringe with Prominent Hills
103	Undulating Upland Fringe
109	Lowland Margin with Hills
113	Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor
114	Pastoral Upland Valley
116	Upland Valley with Woodland
117	Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley
118	Settled Upland Fringe Valley
119	Wooded Upland Fringe Valley
120	Lowland Valley with Farmland
160	Narrow Wooded River Valley - Dumfries & Galloway
161	Pastoral Valley - Dumfries & Galloway
166	Upland Glens - Dumfries & Galloway
175	Foothills - Dumfries & Galloway
176	Foothills with Forest - Dumfries & Galloway
177	Southern Uplands - Dumfries & Galloway
178	Southern Uplands with Forest - Dumfries & Galloway

2 PILOT AREA 1 - SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

2.1 Introduction

The following LCTs are present within this pilot area:

- *The Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest – Borders*
- *Rolling Moorland*
- *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor*
- *Wooded Upland Fringe Valley*

The sensitivity of these LCTs to different woodland types is assessed in the following tables.

Pilot Area 1 - LCT 093 Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest - Borders

Location
This LCT covers the high and largely open hills lying either side of the Ettrick Valley within Pilot Area 1. The LCT extends beyond the boundary of the Pilot Area I to the south-west, north and north-east. The boundary between this LCT and the adjoining *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT is generally aligned to exclude more settled and patterned lower valley sides although steeper hill slopes which lie close to the southern side of the Rivers Ettrick and the Yarrow valleys are included in the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT. For this reason, sensitivity to all types of woodland is considered in the assessment below.

Topic and summary description	**Large-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**Small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**Small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodland**
Landform A pronounced rolling landform with higher domed or cone-shaped summits. The hills are generally between 400-600m elevation. Ridges are often separated by deep, steep-sided valleys although expansive shallow basins are also present NW of Ettrickbridge and in the Clearburn Loch area. The hills are tight-knit and higher in the west of the Pilot Area with Black Knowe Head, Craig Hill, Home Law and Cacra Hill being particularly well-defined. Hills are predominantly smooth but patterned with minor clefts, gullies, scree and rock outcrops in places.	The more well-defined, rugged and higher hills, which form a focus in views from adjacent valleys, would be sensitive to densely planted coniferous woodland which could diminish their rugged and open character and prominence. Distinctive landform features such as scree slopes, narrow + deeply incised valleys, more complex hummocky fluvio-glacial features and rocky outcrops are also sensitive to this type of woodland as it would mask intricacies. Smoother shallow basins and lower hill slopes where landform is simpler would be less sensitive. ***High-medium sensitivity***	The more well-defined and higher hills which form a focus in views from valleys would be sensitive to densely planted coniferous woodland which could reduce their rugged and open character and prominence. Distinctive landform features such as scree slopes, more complex hummocky fluvio-glacial features, narrow+ deeply incised valleys and rocky outcrops are also sensitive to this woodland type as it would mask these intricacies. Smoother shallow basins and lower hill slopes where landform is simpler would be less sensitive. ***High-medium sensitivity***	This type of woodland would generally have a beneficial or neutral effect in terms of the ability of more irregularly spaced natural regeneration or planted native woodlands to accentuate rather than mask landform variations. **Not sensitive**
Landcover Grass and heather moorland cover these uplands. Grassland generally occurs on lower areas and comprises unimproved grazing with patches of rushes and bracken. There is little	The simple landcover of this LCT reduces sensitivity although areas with a more pronounced pattern of intact stone dykes and other distinctive features should be avoided.	The simple landcover of this LCT reduces sensitivity although areas with a more pronounced pattern of intact stone dykes and other distinctive features should be avoided. ***Medium-low sensitivity***	This size of woodland could be easily sited to avoid any sensitivities and could enhance the diversity of landcover in this LCT. ***Low sensitivity***

woodland of any kind. Stone dykes pattern lower hill slopes and traditional circular sheep stells are also a feature. Clearburn Loch and its associated wetlands add diversity.	***Medium-low sensitivity***		
Scale This upland landscape has a generally large scale although this is reduced in narrow valleys and on the often more complex outward facing hill slopes at the transition with the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor LCT*.	This size of woodland would generally fit with the scale of the larger scale core of these uplands although smaller hills and valleys lying at the transition with the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT are of increased sensitivity to extensive woodland cover. ***Medium sensitivity***	This size of woodland could fit with the scale of this landscape. ***Low sensitivity***	This size of woodland could fit with the scale of this landscape. ***Low sensitivity***
Landscape context This LCT comprises steep slopes, cut by deeply incised burns, and often pronounced hill tops which backdrop and form a focus in views from the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys which are classified as the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT. In terms of the broader strategic context, this LCT (which comprises largely open and relatively high hills) borders the extensive, predominantly non-native coniferous Craik Forest which lies to the S within the generally lower rolling plateau of the *Southern Uplands with Forest* LCT. The *Southern Uplands* LCT occurs to the W of the pilot area where it covers particularly high, rugged and well-defined hills in Upper Tweedsdale and the Moffat area. The large Elibank and Traquair Forests	Large-scale, predominantly coniferous, woodland creation on much of the steep-sided outward hill slopes could mask the more complex and/or dramatic valley sides which provide a backdrop to the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT. This would produce a more uniform colour and pattern (and increased impression of darkness to the characteristic pale hues of grass-dominated landscapes), diminishing the textural and scenic contrast and diversity that presently occurs between open grass and heather moorland-covered hill slopes, rolling walled pastures on lower slopes and smooth improved pastures on floodplains. Large-scale woodland covering the majority of this LCT in this pilot area	The steep hill slopes lying within the LCT which backdrop the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys and more pronounced hills which form a focus from these valleys would be sensitive to densely planted coniferous species. More gently sloping valley sides and less visible basins lying at the transition between the valleys and this LCT (which could accommodate this size of woodland) would be less sensitive Medium-sized woodlands would be likely to have less of a cumulative effect on the balance of open ground to woodland in the broader context of the pilot area. There is more scope for this size of woodland to be sited so it is more visually discrete (for example, in shallow basins or on lower slopes rather than extending onto more prominent upper slopes and over hill	This type of woodland would have a **beneficial** effect as it could enhance scenic diversity. Predominantly broadleaved woodlands would provide a marked contrast with the older coniferous forests in the wider area. ***Not sensitive***

are present within the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT to the north of the pilot area.	could appear to merge the extensive forest areas of Craik and Elibank and Traquair in sequential views from roads and from hill summits. ***High sensitivity***	tops). Woodland margins would need to be carefully designed to fit with the smaller scale and character of the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT, using increased proportions of broadleaves for example to integrate with existing woodlands and enhance scenic diversity. ***Medium sensitivity***	
Views and visibility These uplands form the backdrop to views from the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys. The high and rugged hill of Black Knowe Head forms a key landmark feature in these views. Some hills lying on the outer edges of these uplands, such as the sheer-sided Megs Hill, Arks Law, Cacra Hill, Home Law and Craig Hill (which form a dramatic eastern edge to the Ramkle Burn), are particularly visible with interior basins and valleys more hidden from roads and settlement. Rare minor roads crossing these uplands allow close views into the interior of these uplands and some of the hills are accessed by walkers with hills such as Black Knowe Head and Wedders Lair particularly noted in guides and blogs.	The high hills which form a focus in views from roads and settlement within the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys, and from the B711 along the dramatic Ramkle Burn, are highly sensitive to extensive coniferous woodland covering summits and steep/rugged slopes. This woodland type could lessen the distinctiveness of individual hills as well as affect the scenic composition of often diverse views. Views from the minor roads which cross these uplands, from popularly accessed hills and from roads and settlements within adjacent valleys could be restricted by this woodland type. ***High sensitivity***	The high hills which form a focus in views from roads and settlement within the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys, and from the B711 along the dramatic Ramkle Burn, are highly sensitive to dense coniferous woodland covering summits and steep/rugged slopes. The medium-sized woodland type could however be sited in more discrete basins and on lower slopes to minimise effects on key views. Views from the minor roads which cross these uplands, from popularly accessed hills and from roads and settlements within adjacent valleys could be restricted to some degree by this woodland type. ***High-medium sensitivity***	Small/medium broadleaved woodlands would be likely to enhance scenic diversity. ***Not sensitive***
Perceptual qualities This is a large-scale landscape, open and exposed on the hills and with a distinct sense of seclusion experienced from interior hills away from roads. The presence of low intensity grazing, with	The sense of seclusion and openness that can be experienced in these hills would be significantly diminished and naturalness further reduced by this type and scale of woodland (which could affect the	Medium-sized woodlands would also affect the sense of seclusion and naturalness although avoidance of the more dramatic higher hills could minimise effects on perceptual qualities. The reduced extent of this	Predominantly broadleaved woodlands could (depending on the species used) heighten the sense of naturalness and therefore could have beneficial effects in terms of this criterion.

some field boundaries and tracks evident, reduces naturalness although this landscape is relatively little modified. Sheer slopes and rocky outcrops present in some areas (most notably in the Ramkle Burn in the SW of the pilot area) contribute to the perception of ruggedness and drama associated with parts of these uplands.	majority of this LCT). ***High sensitivity***	woodland type would allow for its siting on more visually discrete lower slopes and basins which could be perceived to be less wild. Cumulative effects of multiple woodlands would however need to be carefully considered. ***Medium sensitivity***	***Low sensitivity***

Overall sensitivity

Sensitivity is **High** to large-sized woodlands, **Medium** to small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands and **Low** to **Not Sensitive** for small/medium sized predominantly broadleaved woodlands.

Large-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands would be likely to adversely affect the contrast which occurs between these largely open uplands and adjacent valleys. They could also mask landform features and prominent hills and affect views and the perceptual qualities associated with these uplands. There is greater scope for medium-sized predominantly coniferous and broadleaved woodlands to be accommodated in this landscape. Key constraints include the need to avoid planting over the summits and more rugged upper slopes of the well-defined higher hills in this LCT which provide a focus in views from adjacent valleys. This constraint would restrict the extent of land available to accommodate the large-scale predominantly coniferous woodland type. Some of these hills appear to be accessed by walkers which may additionally increase sensitivity. These hills include Black Knowe Head, Home Law, Megs Hill, Ark Law and Craig Hill. Sheer slopes, which provide a dramatic backdrop to the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys, scree and rock outcrops and more complex ridges and hummocky landform features are also constraints to the creation of predominantly coniferous woodlands as is the more diverse wetland basin around Clearburn Loch. The smoother and more gently graded shallow basins and lower hill slopes within this landscape would be generally less sensitive.

Siting and Design Guidance

Medium-sized predominantly coniferous or predominantly broadleaved woodlands could be accommodated in this LCT although they should be sited in shallow basins and on lower and less pronounced hills and lower hill slopes. Where minor roads cross these uplands, care should be taken to retain some key elevated views to focal hills such as Black Knowe Head, into deeply incised valleys and into the settled valleys. The cumulative effects of multiple medium-sized woodlands in this LCT should be carefully considered particularly in terms of views from the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys where some steep slopes and higher hill tops should be kept open for the benefit of maintaining scenic diversity. A greater proportion of broadleaved species should be used at the interface of this LCT with the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT to interlock with existing riparian and farm woodlands and link with broadleaved trees marking field boundaries. This measure would also minimise the creation of an expansive and uniformly dark backdrop of dense conifer planting on the steep slopes back-dropping the farmed and settled valleys which have a distinctive pastoral character and display the generally pale green hues characteristic of the Borders landscape.

Occasional broader, more smoothly undulating basins lie within this LCT

Prominent well-defined small hills lying at the edge of the Ettrick Valley

Steep scree slopes of Cacra Hill loom above the narrow valley of the Ramkle Burn

Some of the higher hills within this LCT have complex, knolly summits

Pilot Area 1 - LCT 094 Rolling Moorland

Location
This landscape lies adjacent to the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT in the eastern part of the Pilot Area. It also occurs in a small part of Pilot Area 2. The *Rolling Moorland* comprises an upland plateau with less distinct and lower hills than the *Southern Uplands* character types. The *Rolling Moorland* LCT extends beyond the eastern and southern boundaries of the pilot area. This landscape forms a generally less dramatic edge to the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT (the Ettrick Valley) than the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT. While this LCT is largely simple and expansive at its core, it also includes smaller hills and more diverse landcover features on its outer fringes. All woodland types are considered in the assessment below.

Topic and summary description	**Large-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**Small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**Small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodland**
Landform The gently rolling landform ranges from 200m to around 340m elevations and the topography is characterised by smooth hills and ridges separated by shallow basins or valleys. While this landscape generally has a simple landform, more defined small hills are present on the outer edges of this landscape where the landform has increased complexity, for example where it abuts the Ettrick Valley in the Shaw's Hill area and in the SE near Borthwickbrae and around the Ale Water valley.	The predominantly gently undulating and simple landform of this landscape is generally less sensitive to large-scale coniferous woodland although more complex edge hills are of higher sensitivity to densely planted conifers which would be likely to mask their distinctive steep-sided form and often strongly interlocking pattern. ***Medium sensitivity***	The predominantly gently undulating and simple landform of this landscape is generally less sensitive to small/medium scale coniferous woodland although more complex edge hills are of higher sensitivity to densely planted non-native productive forest which would be likely to mask their distinctive steep-sided form and often strongly interlocking pattern. ***Medium sensitivity***	This type of woodland would generally have a beneficial or neutral effect in terms of the ability of more irregularly spaced natural regeneration or widely spaced planted native woodlands to accentuate rather than mask landform variations. ***Not sensitive***
Landcover This LCT is mainly covered with coarse grassland, patchy heather and bracken and is used for extensive sheep grazing. Rushes occur in wetter areas and blanket peat is also present within higher basins. Areas with a distinctive field pattern occur on some outer fringes close to the Ettrick Valley and the small lochs and Alemoor	The simple landcover of this LCT reduces sensitivity although areas of improved pasture with a stronger field pattern should be avoided and the setting to lochs protected to ensure a balance of enclosed fields, open hill tops and mature woodland is retained to conserve scenic diversity. New woodlands have the	The simple landcover of this LCT reduces sensitivity although areas of improved pasture with a more pronounced field enclosure pattern should be avoided and the setting to lochs protected to ensure a balance of enclosed fields, open hill tops and mature woodland is retained to conserve scenic diversity. New	Areas of improved pasture with a pronounced field enclosure pattern remains sensitive. This type of woodland would be likely to enhance the limited visual diversity of landcover characteristic of much of this LCT. ***Low sensitivity***

Reservoir add interest to the landscape. Coniferous forest covers the western part of this LCT, centred on the shallow basins and low ridges around Shaws Upper Loch. This forest generally has a poor fit with the undulating landform with many angular margins and is also of low visual diversity predominantly comprising even-aged spruce. Smaller poorly designed geometric coniferous plantations in the Caver's Hill area are also present and these are more widely intrusive. An operational wind farm is located in this LCT.	potential to ameliorate poor margins and enhance diversity of existing coniferous plantations. Operational wind farm development may limit the extent of woodland that can be accommodated and/or its design/appearance. ***Medium sensitivity***	woodlands have the potential to ameliorate poor margins and enhance diversity of existing coniferous plantations. Operational wind farm development may affect the design/appearance of nearby woodland. ***Medium sensitivity***	
Scale Broad gently undulating ridges, valleys and loch basins have a larger scale although more intricate landform, small farm buildings, small woodlands, individual trees and enclosed farmland reduce scale on the more settled fringes of this LCT.	This size of woodland could fit with the larger scale of the more gently undulating plateau lying at the core of this landscape although smaller scale hills and valleys would be more sensitive. ***Medium sensitivity***	This size of woodland (which ranges from small to medium) could fit with the varying scales of this landscape. ***Low sensitivity***	This size of woodland (which ranges from small to medium) could fit with the varying scales of this landscape. ***Low sensitivity***
Landscape context There is a gradual transition between the *Rolling Moorland* LCT and the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT which lies in the west of the pilot area. Landform and landcover is more complex at the transition with the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor*, the *Wooded Upland Fringe Valley* and the *Upland Valley with Woodland* LCTs with a smaller scale pattern of existing woodlands evident.	The *Rolling Moorland* LCT is less visible than the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT and as such the visual connection of new woodland sited in this landscape with extensive non-native productive forests lying to the SW and N of this LCT would be less perceptible. The outer edges of this LCT are, however, more sensitive in that they provide the immediate backdrop to the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT. Large woodlands could produce a more uniform colour and pattern to	Medium-sized woodlands would fit with the scale and pattern of woodlands in the well-wooded lower Ettrick Valley (the *Upland Valley with Woodland* LCT lying outside the pilot area) which is influenced by the Bowhill and Philiphaugh Estates particularly if they included a high proportion of broadleaved species. Sensitivity is increased at the transition with the smaller scale valleys and care would be needed to ensure that multiple woodlands of this size did not diminish the scenic	This type of woodland would be likely to have a beneficial effect on the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* particularly if it were located within tributary valleys and on lower hill slopes, wrapping around and accentuating the more complex landform on the fringes of this LCT and enhancing wider scenic diversity. ***Not sensitive***

	the valley sides, diminishing the textural and scenic contrast and diversity that presently occurs between open grass and heather moorland-covered hill slopes, rolling walled pastures on lower slopes and smooth improved pastures on floodplains. ***Medium sensitivity***	diversity of these adjacent landscapes. ***Medium-low sensitivity***	
Views and visibility The relatively subdued and even elevation of the *Rolling Moorland* LCT generally reduces its prominence in views from roads and settlement within adjacent valleys and on the southern and eastern edges of the pilot area. Elevated views from hill summits and minor roads in the surrounding area tend to focus on the higher, more pronounced hills within the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* than on this simpler moorland plateau. There are some signposted walking routes in this LCT and close views of wind farm development and poorly designed coniferous woodland influences close views.	While the creation of large predominantly coniferous woodlands in this LCT would be likely to adversely affect close views from footpaths and tracks, it could also present opportunities to enhance the visual experience by ameliorating existing poorly designed woodlands. The relatively subdued nature of this upland plateau reduces sensitivity with respect to longer views from other LCTs although the fringes bordering more settled valleys have increased visual sensitivity. ***Medium sensitivity***	Medium sized woodlands would be likely to have minimal effect on key views and there would be scope to set them back from well-used footpaths. This woodland type also has the potential to ameliorate existing poorly designed woodlands and enhance visual character. ***Medium-low sensitivity***	Broadleaved woodlands would be likely to enhance scenic diversity and the experience gained from walking in this upland landscape. ***Not sensitive***
Perceptual qualities Wind farm development and large-scale productive non-native coniferous forestry characterises this landscape and reduces the sense of naturalness and openness.	This size of woodland would significantly reduce the remaining more open and less modified eastern part of the *Rolling Moorland* LCT in the pilot area (although the sense of wildness in these areas is compromised by nearby wind farm development and forestry). ***Medium sensitivity***	This size of woodland would have less of an effect on the perception of openness although cumulative effects of multiple woodlands may change this. ***Medium-low sensitivity***	Broadleaved woodlands would generally have a beneficial effect, enhancing the sense of naturalness that can be experienced in the less modified parts of this landscape. ***Not sensitive***

Overall sensitivity
Sensitivity is **Medium** to large-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands, **Medium-low** to small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands and **low/not sensitive** to small/medium sized predominantly broadleaved woodlands.

All woodland types could potentially be accommodated in this landscape although the presence of operational wind farm development (Langhope Rig) may restrict large-sized woodland creation. Key constraints include the more complex fringes of small hills and valleys where this LCT abuts the settled Ettrick Valley and the Ale Water Valley in the SE of the pilot area. These areas are more prominent in views from nearby roads and settlement and would be particularly sensitive to predominantly coniferous productive woodlands which would mask the irregular small-scale landform and more varied landcover of enclosed pastures. The immediate setting of lochs and Alemoor Reservoir is also sensitive due to the need to retain the scenic contrast between open hill ridges, enclosed farmland and the, often dense, coniferous woodland which lies close to these water bodies. The smoother and more gently graded shallow basins and low ridges lying at the core of this generally subdued and less visually prominent landscape (in comparison with the higher and more pronounced *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT) would be less sensitive to the creation of large and medium-sized woodlands. Sensitivity would be further reduced for woodlands which predominantly comprise broadleaved species.

Siting and Design Guidance
A greater proportion of broadleaves should be planted at the interface with the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT (the Ettrick Valley) and on the SE fringes of this LCT within the pilot area to enhance diversity and minimise the creation of a darkened, potentially overbearing effect on these narrow valleys which are back-dropped by the steep slopes of the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest*. Smaller-scale complex landform and improved pastures on lower slopes, which often has a distinctive field enclosure pattern contrasting with rougher open grazing, should be retained although smaller broadleaved woodlands could be established in these more sensitive areas. New productive coniferous woodland(s) should be designed to ameliorate poorly designed existing woodlands and to increase species diversity, incorporating a significant proportion of broadleaves. Careful design should be undertaken adjacent to footpaths and close to settled interior valleys to allow some open views and diverse woodland edges.

This LCT forms a backdrop of lower and more uniform uplands to the Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor (Ettrick Valley)

A gently undulating upland plateau with coniferous woodlands covering the western part of the LCT

More complex small hills with a strong pattern of walled pastures lie at the transition with the Ettrick Valley

Wind farm development located in the Rolling Moorland LCT

Sparsely settled valleys within the core of the Rolling Moorland LCT

Prominent poorly designed coniferous woodlands on Caver's Hill above the Ettrick Valley

Pilot Area 1 - LCT 113 Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor

Location
This LCT covers the valleys of the Upper Ettrick and Upper Yarrow within the pilot area. These valley landscapes have a small to medium scale being generally narrow and often strongly contained by the steep hill slopes of the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT.
Large woodlands would not fit with the scale of this landscape and would result in significant adverse effects on the character and appreciation of often intricate field boundary pattern, settlement and small woodlands. The large-size predominantly coniferous woodland type is therefore not considered in the assessment below.

Topic and summary description	**small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodland**
Landform Glaciated relatively narrow valleys with sloping sides and flat floor, river bluffs and glacial moraine. Frequently incised 'V'-shaped tributary valleys. Bluffs and terraces eroded by river meanders. The steepness of the valley sides varies with some areas more rolling and gently graded, for example on the northern side of the Yarrow, and some notably steep and dramatic, at the SW end of the Ettrick. Small but pronounced hills, including Feuars Hill and Deuchar Hill on the north side of the Yarrow and Singlie Hill and The Kip on the north side of the Ettrick, are included in this LCT.	Occasional small, but pronounced, hills which lie on the edge of these valleys would be sensitive to densely planted coniferous woodland which could reduce their prominence. Distinctive landform features such as more complex fluvio-glacial features and steep slopes above rivers, and the flat floodplain which strongly contrasts with more rugged valley sides, are also sensitive to densely planted coniferous woodland which would mask intricacies and reduce contrast between landform features (for example the flat valley floor and hummocky ground often associated with tributary burns). Lower hill slopes, where landform is more gently graded, would be less sensitive. ***High-medium sensitivity***	This type of woodland would generally have a beneficial or neutral effect in terms of the ability of more irregularly spaced natural regeneration or widely spaced planted native woodlands to accentuate rather than mask landform variations. The flat and predominantly open valley floor (which provides a scenic contrast with often steep and rugged valley sides) is, however, sensitive to more extensive woodland cover. ***Low sensitivity***
Landcover Improved pasture used for sheep grazing on valley floor, usually divided into small and medium-sized fields by stone dykes. Some lower valley sides have a markedly rolling landform covered with well-managed walled pastures. Occasional patches of bracken and rush, scrub and rough grassland in wetter floodplains. Valley sides are covered by a	This woodland type is most likely to be planted on valley sides and to extend into the adjacent *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* and *Rolling Moorland* LCTs. Dense coniferous woodland would have a darkening effect on these valleys which currently have a predominantly pastoral character. Stronger patterns of walled fields on lower rolling valley sides and the open valley floor would be	Widely spaced broadleaved trees would provide a lighter woodland character which would enhance the character of these pastoral valleys. Areas with a distinctive field enclosure pattern (whether individual tree species or stone dykes) on lower hill slopes and the valley floor would be sensitive. ***Low sensitivity***

rough mosaic of unimproved grassland in larger fields. Occasional coniferous and mixed woodlands and narrow ribbons of broadleaved riparian woodlands (with some larch and spruce planted along the Yarrow in places). Mature field trees are prominent in the Tushielaw area of the Ettrick in the SW of the pilot area and diverse mixed woodlands surround Ettrickbridge and the Hyndhope area. Wood pasture has been recently established on lower valley sides near Yarrow Feus. Small settlements are commonly located at bridging points and farmsteads on lower slopes.	sensitive as the contrast between smooth open fields and walls, individual trees and riparian woodlands could be diminished. Less richly patterned lower hill slopes would be less sensitive and where medium-sized woodlands form part of a larger scheme at the transition between LCTs, there is also scope to include substantial broadleaved planting to tie in better with the character of landcover in these valleys. ***High-medium sensitivity***	
Scale These valleys are relatively narrow and often strongly contained by the steep slopes of the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT. They are more open where broader tributary valleys are present. Small woodlands, individual trees, enclosed fields and buildings contribute to the small to medium scale of this landscape.	This size of woodland could fit where it forms part of a bigger scheme at the transition with adjacent upland landscapes although it would overwhelm the scale of these generally narrow valleys (if planted on valley floors and on more complex lower rolling hill slopes) where small scale features could be subsumed. ***High-medium sensitivity***	Broadleaved trees would produce a more open and less dense wooded character although smaller scale features remain sensitive especially to multiple planting schemes. ***Low sensitivity***
Landscape context The *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* and the *Rolling Moorland* LCTs provide strong containment to these valleys. The steep-sided higher hills of the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* make a particularly strong contribution to the richly scenic composition experienced within the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys. The extensive coniferous Craik Forest strongly influences the upper Ettrick Valley to the SW of the pilot area.	Medium-sized coniferous woodlands could be accommodated to minimise cumulative effects with more extensive woodlands located in the wider context SW of the pilot area although multiple woodlands located in part, or wholly, in these valleys could lessen the contrast between farmed valleys, rugged open hills and more forested uplands. ***High-medium sensitivity***	This type of woodland would have minimal effects on adjacent upland landscapes and would also increase wider scenic diversity. ***Not sensitive***
Views and visibility Roads are aligned through these valleys and as well as accommodating local traffic they are also well-used by cyclists. Settlements and dispersed farms and residential buildings are also present. Views are	This size of woodland is more likely to be sited on valley sides at the transition with adjacent upland landscapes and as such it would be unlikely to restrict views from roads and settlements (which tend to be sited on lower slopes just above the	Well-sited medium-sized broadleaved woodlands would be likely to enhance scenic diversity although key views from roads and settlement should be conserved. The open valley floor is sensitive and multiple schemes could adversely

confined by the valley form although range across and along the length of the valleys, with the higher well-defined hills within the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT, the settlements sited in the valley (these often emphasised by the mixed woodlands surrounding them), small but well-defined hills on the edges of these valleys and the open floodplain of the rivers forming key foci. Woodlands sited within these valleys occasionally limit views although also contribute to the scenic experience of travelling through these valleys. These valleys are seen from higher hills and the occasional elevated roads which cross the uplands.	flood plain). The open valley floor and more visually diverse lower slopes and small but well-defined hills which form key foci in views from roads and settlement are sensitive. Multiple schemes could adversely affect views from within these valleys and those from the adjacent uplands. ***High-medium sensitivity***	affect the composition of views from within these valleys and from the adjacent uplands ***Medium-low sensitivity***
Perceptual qualities These valleys are settled and farmed and although not wild, there is a sense of timelessness associated with their traditional farmed landscape and built character.	Medium-sized coniferous woodlands are more likely to be located at the transition between this LCT and adjacent uplands. As such they would not significantly affect the perceptual qualities associated with these traditional farmed valleys although sensitivity could increase for multiple schemes (where they could displace the predominantly pastoral character of these valleys) or if woodlands were planted on the highly sensitive valley floors. ***Medium sensitivity***	Medium-sized broadleaved woodlands would have beneficial effects on the character of these valleys although traditional well-managed walled pastures are sensitive and the balance of farmland to woodland would need to be carefully considered in terms of accommodating multiple schemes. ***Medium-low sensitivity***
Overall sensitivity Sensitivity is **High-medium** to medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands and **Low** to medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodlands. Key constraints comprise the open farmed valley floor, areas of occasional more complex landform (including fluvio-glacial features), well-defined small hills lying on the edges of these valleys (principally Feuars Hill and Deuchar Hill on the north side of the Yarrow and Singlie Hill and The Kip on the north side of the Ettrick) and rolling lower slopes with a strong field pattern. Individual broadleaved trees along field boundaries, stone dykes, riparian woodlands, farms and small settlements and the winding form of the Ettrick and Yarrow Water on the floodplain enriches character and this is complemented by often rolling lower slopes featuring a strong field enclosure pattern of drystone dykes and the backdrop of steep hill slopes at the transition with the adjacent *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* and *Rolling Moorland* LCTs. Multiple medium-sized woodlands could diminish the scenic richness of these valleys, although broadleaved woodlands (whether comprising an individual scheme or forming part of a larger productive woodland extending into the adjacent uplands) would have less of an		

effect than coniferous plantations which would contrast with the characteristic pale hues of these pastoral landscapes.

Siting and Design Guidance
Medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands should not be located on valley floors, on small but well-defined hills or on the more rolling and richly patterned lower valley sides. They would be more appropriately sited on more gentle hill slopes and extending into the adjacent *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT and with substantial broadleaves planted on lower edges and extending up burns to interlock with existing riparian and farm woodlands and individual field trees within these valleys. The cumulative effects of multiple medium-sized coniferous woodlands on this LCT should be carefully considered with the aim being to avoid the creation of a uniformly dark expanse of dense conifer planting on the steep slopes back-dropping these valleys which would adversely affect their distinctive pastoral character.

Medium-sized broadleaved woodlands should also not be planted on the floodplain and on more patterned rolling lower valley sides but could be planted on steeper slopes, within side valleys and on occasional well-defined small hills. This type of woodland would enhance scenic diversity in these valleys. Existing spruce planted within riparian woodlands should be felled and replaced with broadleaves and field trees, which are already present in some areas, should be planted to link with new broadleaved woodlands on valley sides.

Black Knowe Head forms a landmark hill seen from both the Yarrow and Ettrick Valleys

Mixed woodlands cover steep lower slopes above the river and can merge with clumps of broadleaves around settlement

Riparian woodlands snaking along the river and walled pastures on the valley floor

The steep and often rugged slopes of the Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest LCT backdrop these valleys

Field trees are characteristic of the upper Ettrick – Craik Forest is visible in the background

The scenic contrast between the rugged hills of the Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest LCT and the farmed valley

Pilot Area 1 - LCT 119 Wooded Upland Fringe Valley

Location A small part of this LCT lies on the eastern side of the Pilot Area where it covers the upper valley of the Ale Water where an interlocking pattern of small hills, side valleys and Essenside Loch is present. This landscape has a strong similarity with the outer edges of the *Rolling Moorlands* LCT in the Alemoor and Bothwickshiels which is characterised by a complex landform of small folded hills. Large woodlands would not fit with the small scale of much of this landscape and would also result in significant adverse effects on its complex landform and landcover. The large, predominantly coniferous woodland type is therefore not considered in the assessment below.		
Topic and summary description	**Small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**Small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodland**
Landform Deeply incised narrow upper valley of the Ale Water and its tributaries. Open rolling slopes above rivers and small interlocking and often hummocky hills gradually merge with the smooth and more expansive slopes of the adjacent *Rolling Moorland*.	Complex hummocky small hills and intricately rolling landform would be sensitive to densely planted coniferous woodland which would mask the intricate landform which is a key characteristic of this landscape. More gently graded upper hill slopes would be less sensitive. ***High-medium sensitivity***	This type of woodland would generally have a beneficial or neutral effect in terms of the ability of more irregularly spaced natural regeneration or widely-spaced planted broadleaves to accentuate rather than mask landform variations. ***Low sensitivity***
Landcover Narrow valley floors and lower side slopes are often well-wooded with some semi-natural fragments of oak and birch and alder riparian strips. Small angular conifer plantations occur on upper valley sides and larger coniferous woodlands lie at the transition of this LCT with the adjacent *Rolling Moorland* LCT. Small walled fields and the mix of broadleaved woodlands and mature field trees give a richness of texture and colour to this landscape. The small Essenside Loch nestles between small rolling hills.	This woodland type is most likely to be planted on upper valley sides and to extend into the adjacent *Rolling Moorland* LCT. Distinctive walled fields on lower rolling valley sides contrast with well wooded valley floor/sides and woodland of this scale could adversely affect the balance of open space/woodland and the richness of colour, tone and texture which contributes to the character of this diverse landscape. ***High-medium sensitivity***	Broadleaved trees would provide a lighter woodland character which could enhance this landscape although the retention of distinctive rolling walled pastures is important in retaining the scenic contrast of open ground/woodland. ***Low sensitivity***
Scale This landscape is strongly enclosed by landform and a framework of generally small woodlands. It has a small to medium scale.	Smaller woodlands of up to 50ha would fit better with the scale of this landscape (and the existing pattern of woodlands). ***Medium sensitivity***	Smaller woodlands of up to 50ha would fit better with the scale of this landscape (and the existing pattern of woodlands). ***Medium sensitivity***
Landscape context This landscape borders the *Rolling Moorland* LCT	Effects on adjacent landscapes would be minimal due to the limited inter-visibility of this part of the	Effects on adjacent landscapes would be minimal due to the limited inter-visibility of this

which comprises a more open and simple landscape. There is limited inter-visibility between this landscape and adjacent landscapes in the wider area.	*Wooded Upland Fringe Valley* with other LCTs and the presence of the larger scale and simpler *Rolling Moorland* LCT which already accommodates larger coniferous woodland (and which therefore reduces sensitivity to this woodland type) ***Low sensitivity***	part of the *Wooded Upland Fringe Valley* with other LCTs. This woodland type could soften margins of existing coniferous woodlands located in the adjacent *Rolling Moorland* LCT and therefore enhance character. ***Not sensitive***
Views and visibility There is limited visibility of this landscape due to the screening effect of landform and woodland although there are some restricted views from minor elevated roads, footpaths and settlement in the locality.	The delight of sudden views over this scenically diverse valley from elevated minor roads and paths could be adversely affected by coniferous planting on a scale where the balance of open ground and woodland were significantly altered. Variations in texture, colour and tone in this landscape would also be diminished. ***High-medium sensitivity***	Well-sited broadleaved woodlands would be likely to enhance scenic diversity although some open views should be retained, and the balance of open ground/woodland carefully considered, to retain the scenic richness of this landscape; this may restrict the extent of woodland that can be accommodated. ***Medium-low sensitivity***
Perceptual qualities A small-scale, traditionally farmed and intimately-scaled landscape which can feel secluded.	Coniferous woodland (comprising medium-sized >50ha and multiple schemes) could adversely affect the perception of the traditional farmed character of this landscape. ***High-medium sensitivity***	Broadleaved woodlands would have beneficial effects on this landscape as they would appear more natural in character. Traditional well-managed walled pastures are sensitive however and the balance of farmland to woodland would need to be carefully considered in terms of accommodating medium-sized and multiple schemes. ***Low sensitivity***
Overall sensitivity Sensitivity is **High-medium** to small/medium-sized, predominantly coniferous woodlands and **Low** to small/medium-sized, predominantly broadleaved woodlands. Key constraints comprise the complex and interlocking rolling landform of this intimately scaled valley, distinctive well-managed walled pastures on lower valley sides and the richly scenic contrast between open ground and generally small mixed woodlands. Medium-sized and multiple woodlands could alter the balance of open ground to woodland and diminish the scenic richness of this valley, although broadleaved woodlands would have less of an effect than coniferous plantations which would contrast with the diverse colour, tone and texture of this landscape. **Siting and Design Guidance** Small woodlands of up to 50ha could fit better with the scale of this landscape. Well-sited broadleaved and mixed woodlands could additionally enhance character and relate to the existing pattern of small woodlands and shelterbelts present in this landscape. The balance of open ground to woodland should be carefully considered when planning and designing woodlands with the aim of conserving the scenic richness of this landscape. Notably hummocky small hill tops should be left open as should areas of productive strongly enclosed walled fields.		

Mature mixed woodland wrapped around the base of small hills at the head of the Ale Water Valley

More extensive coniferous woodlands are present at the transition with the Rolling Moorland LCT

Small knolly hills covered with rough grassland and patchy heather

The mix of small woodlands and walled pastures are key characteristics of this LCT

3 PILOT STUDY AREA 2

3.1 Introduction

The following LCTs lie within this Pilot Area:

- *The Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest – Borders*
- *The Southern Uplands with Forest – Borders*
- *Rolling Moorland*
- *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley*
- *Rocky Upland Fringe*
- *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor*

The *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* and the *Rolling Moorland* LCTs also occur in Pilot Area 1. A separate sensitivity assessment has been undertaken for the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* in Pilot Area 2 as this has some different characteristics to the area of *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* lying in Pilot Area 1, particularly in terms of its relationship with the adjacent Teviot Valley. The *Rolling Moorland* LCT is similar in both the Pilot Areas and as only a very small part of this LCT occurs in Pilot Area 2, and it is also not readily visible from other LCTs in this Pilot Area, no separate sensitivity assessment has been undertaken.

No sensitivity assessment has been undertaken for the *Southern Uplands with Forest*. This is because this LCT is densely forested within the Pilot Area and there is consequently no scope for additional woodland creation. This LCT is however considered in the sensitivity assessment for the adjacent *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* in terms of the wider landscape context and cumulative effects.

A very small area of the upper Hermitage Water which is classified as *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* also occurs in the SE corner of this Pilot Area. No sensitivity assessment has been undertaken of this LCT.

Pilot Area 2 - LCT 093 Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest - Borders

Location This LCT covers the high and largely open hills lying at the watershed of the River Teviot within Pilot Area 2. The southern boundary of Pilot Area 2 is contiguous with the Dumfries and Galloway/Scottish Borders border. The *Southern Uplands* LCT lies to the south of the boundary of Pilot Area 2 within neighbouring Dumfries and Galloway and comprises an extensive and largely open rolling upland plateau. The valley of the Ewes Water (within which the A7 is aligned) is defined as *Upland Glen* LCT in the south within Dumfries and Galloway. The extensive Craik and Eskdalemuir Forests, which lie to the west of the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* in the Pilot Area, are classified as *Southern Uplands with Forest* LCT in both Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway.			
Topic and summary description	**large-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodland**
Landform A homogenous landform of smoothly rolling hills with rare higher domed or cone-shaped summits. The hills generally range from 350-550m and they are dissected by deeply incised narrow glens. While the hills are steep-sided there are few, if any, scree slopes and rocky outcrops. The hill of Skelfhill Pen is a key landmark feature because of its distinctive form and height although Lightening Hill and Wisp Hill are also prominent.	The more well-defined and higher hills which form a focus in views from valleys would be sensitive to densely planted coniferous woodland which reduced their prominence and appreciation of their form. Coniferous planting would mask deeply incised valleys and more rugged hill slopes. Smoother, more gently graded lower hills would be less sensitive. ***High-medium sensitivity***	The more well-defined and higher hills which form a focus in views from valleys would be sensitive to densely planted coniferous woodland which reduced their prominence and appreciation of their form. Coniferous planting would mask deeply incised valleys. Smoother lower hills would be less sensitive. ***High-medium sensitivity***	This type of woodland would generally have a **beneficial** effect in terms of the ability of more irregularly spaced natural regeneration or widely spaced planted native woodlands to accentuate rather than mask landform variations although the summits of the most prominent well-defined hills should be kept open. ***Low sensitivity***
Landcover Grass and heather moorland cover these uplands. Grassland generally occurs on lower areas and comprises unimproved grazing with patches of rushes and bracken. Medium-sized coniferous woodlands cover some lower hills and fill occasional valleys. There is very little broadleaved woodland and existing coniferous woodlands have, in some areas,	The simple landcover of this LCT reduces sensitivity although areas with a more pronounced pattern of intact stone dykes and other distinctive features should be avoided. New woodland planting could ameliorate the poor design of existing coniferous woodlands. ***Medium-low sensitivity***	The simple landcover of this LCT reduces sensitivity although areas with a more pronounced pattern of intact stone dykes and other distinctive features should be avoided. New woodland planting could ameliorate the poor design of existing coniferous woodlands. ***Medium-low sensitivity***	Broadleaved woodland would have beneficial effects in increasing the visual diversity of this landscape. It could also ameliorate the poor design of existing coniferous woodlands. ***Not sensitive***

a poor fit with landform, hard margins and a lack of visual diversity in terms of species and age class. Stone dykes enclose pasture on lower hill slopes.			
Scale This upland landscape has a generally large scale although this is reduced in narrow valleys.	This woodland type could generally fit with the scale of this landscape although the narrow valleys are sensitive. ***Low sensitivity***	This woodland type could generally fit with the scale of this landscape although the narrow valleys are sensitive. ***Low sensitivity***	This woodland type could generally fit with the scale of this landscape. The intimate scale of valleys could be accentuated by widely spaced broadleaved trees. ***Not sensitive***
Landscape context This LCT forms a backdrop of rolling uplands which provide a distant backdrop to the upper Teviot Valley (classified as the *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* LCT)[2]. In terms of the broader strategic context, this LCT (which comprises largely open hills) borders the extensive, predominantly non-native coniferous Craik and Eskdalemuir Forests which lie to the west of this LCT within the *Southern Uplands with Forest* LCT. The *Southern Uplands* LCT occurs to the south of the Pilot Area in Dumfries and Galloway where it covers an extensive and largely open rolling upland plateau.	The distance of the higher hills within this LCT from the Teviot Valley reduces sensitivity in that there would be minimal effects on the setting and backdrop to this more diverse farmed valley. Large size woodland covering the majority of this LCT in this Pilot Area could appear to extend the extensive forest areas of Craik and Eskdalemuir although this would only be likely to be experienced from hill summits and rare long views from the A7 (see views and visibility criterion). The rolling nature of the uplands on which these existing forests are located tends to foreshorten views resulting in the true extent of woodland cover not being readily appreciated. ***Medium sensitivity***	The distance of the higher hills within this LCT from the Teviot Valley reduces sensitivity in that there would be minimal effects on the setting and backdrop to this more diverse farmed valley. Medium sized woodlands would be likely to have less of a cumulative effect on the balance of open ground to woodland in the broader context of the Pilot Area. There is more scope for this size of woodland to be sited so it is more visually discrete (for example, on lower hills and slopes rather than extending onto more prominent upper slopes and over more prominent hill tops). ***Medium-low sensitivity***	Broadleaved woodland would be likely to have a **beneficial** effect as it would enhance visual diversity and appear very different to existing coniferous forests in the wider area. ***Not sensitive***

[2] One of the key differences between this area of *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* and the same LCT which lies in Pilot Area 1 is that it does not provide immediate containment to the Teviot Valley while the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* in Pilot Area 1 comprises steep and often rugged hill sides which directly backdrop and strongly contain much of the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys.

Views and visibility The A7 is aligned in a deeply incised valley through these uplands although views are strongly contained by steep hill slopes. There are some long views to these uplands from the A7 where it is aligned through the more open Teviot Valley in the northern part of the Pilot Area. The rugged slopes of Lightening Hill are particularly prominent in views from the A7 and glimpses into side valleys, for example the steep-sided cleft of Linhope Burn, are also important. A high voltage transmission line is aligned close to the A7 in the southern part of the Pilot Area and influences the character of views. Few of the hills within this LCT appear to be commonly accessed by walkers – Skelfhill Pen is the exception and walkers' blogs and websites note this hill and the smaller hills of Doecleugh and Penchrise which lie to NE of the Pilot Area boundary. The extensive Craik Forest inhibits views into this LCT from the west. Settlement is located in more contained valleys limiting views into the core of these uplands.	These uplands are distant from settlement and there are few minor roads and footpaths within them. Views from the A7 to these uplands are distant and briefly glimpsed in the northern part of the Pilot Area and strongly contained by steep slopes in the southern part and this reduces sensitivity. Woodlands could be designed to enhance views from the A7, for example by focussing broadleaves on steep slopes and/or leaving the most rugged (Lightening Hill which forms a key focus seen from the route) and sheer hill slopes open. The NE part of this LCT around Skelfhill Pen is visually sensitive because it appears to be a key focus for walkers. ***Medium sensitivity***	These uplands are distant from settlement and there are few minor roads and footpaths within them. Views from the A7 to these uplands are distant and briefly glimpsed in the northern part of the Pilot Area and strongly contained by steep slopes in the southern part and this reduces sensitivity. Woodlands could be designed to enhance views from the A7, for example by focussing broadleaves on steep slopes and/or leaving the most rugged (Lightening Hill which forms a key focus seen from the route) and sheer hill slopes open. The NE part of this LCT around Skelfhill Pen is visually sensitive because it appears to be a key focus for walkers. ***Medium sensitivity***	Small/medium sized broadleaved woodlands would be likely to enhance scenic diversity although prominent hill tops should be kept open. ***Low sensitivity***
Aesthetic/Perceptual qualities A large-scale upland landscape, open and exposed on the hills and often strongly enclosed in the valleys. Masts, a transmission line, coniferous forestry and the busy A7 reduce the sense of wildness although the less accessible hills to the east of the Pilot Area within this LCT can feel secluded.	The eastern part of this LCT is particularly sensitive to large scale forestry in terms of perceptual qualities ***Medium sensitivity***	There would be greater scope for small to medium sized predominantly coniferous woodlands to be sited away from the more sensitive eastern part of this LCT ***Medium-low sensitivity***	Broadleaved woodlands would generally have a beneficial effect, enhancing the sense of naturalness that can be experienced in the less modified parts of this landscape. ***Not sensitive***

Overall sensitivity

Sensitivity is **Medium** to the large and small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands and ***Not sensitive*** to the small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodland types. Key constraints include the need to avoid planting on the well-defined and prominent hills of Skelfhill Pen (which additionally forms a focus for walkers in the area), Lightening Hill and the notably higher rounded summit of Wisp Hill. The narrow and deeply incised valleys which dissect these uplands are also sensitive to planting which would mask their form and detract from views glimpsed from the A7. Smoother and more gently graded lower hills and slopes present in this landscape would be less sensitive.

Siting and Design Guidance

Large and small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands could be accommodated providing the more sensitive eastern part of these uplands were left largely unplanted (apart from broadleaves and Scots pine planted to enhance natural features). Skelfhill Pen should be kept open and the landscape setting to this hill protected by avoiding woodland which would intrude on views to it from the small hills located just outside the north-eastern boundary of the Pilot Area. Existing coniferous plantations which lie close to Skelfhill Pen, and which significantly detract from its character, should be restructured in the long term to remove intrusive planting from its upper slopes (the Goat Hill area). These existing woodlands should also be redesigned to achieve a better fit with landform and broadleaves used to soften and grade outer margins and improve visual diversity. The A7 is a key visual sensitivity in this LCT and a dynamic sequence of open and wooded steep slopes should be designed with broadleaved planting concentrated along the road and open space left on steeper slopes and to allow glimpsed views up deeply incised side valleys. Small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodlands would considerably enhance this landscape although the summits of Skelfhill Pen and Lightening Hill should be left open (this is likely to occur anyhow due to exposure and other physical constraints).

The transition between more open moorland in LCT and enclosed pastures and small woodlands in the Teviot Valley

Occasional narrow, deeply incised valleys cut into smoothly rolling hills

Hills generally have a similar form and height with few forming landmark features

Medium-sized coniferous woodlands are present in this LCT – the peaked summit of Skelfhill Pen is seen to the left

The tightly contained narrow corridor of the A7 looking south into Dumfries and Galloway

The shapely form of Skelfhill Pen seen from the eastern boundary of the Pilot Area

Pilot Area 2 - LCT 101 Rocky Upland Fringe

Location A small part of the *Rocky Upland Fringe* is present with much of this LCT extending northwards beyond the boundary of the Pilot Area. Small hills demonstrating the complex 'corrugated' landform characteristic of this LCT are more prevalent to the NE of the Pilot Area and a more transitional landscape occurs where it abuts the *Rolling Moorland* and shoulder slopes of the *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* (Teviot Valley) LCTs. The small extent of this LCT and its small-medium scale precludes accommodation of the large-sized predominantly coniferous woodland and this type is therefore not considered in detail in the sensitivity assessment below.		
Topic and summary description	**Small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**Small//medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodland**
Landform A complex, undulating and angular landform with frequent rugged knolls, ridges and rock outcrops. Strong north-east to south-west grain to landform gives a corrugated appearance. Occasional small lochans and mires	The complex landform characteristic of this LCT would be masked by coniferous planting. Smoother, more gently graded lower slopes and basins at the transition with the *Rolling Moorland* and upper slopes of the *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* LCTs would be less sensitive (although these areas are not extensive and smaller woodlands would relate better to their size) ***High-medium sensitivity***	This type of woodland would generally have a **beneficial** effect in terms of the ability of more irregularly spaced natural regeneration or widely spaced planted native woodlands to accentuate rather than mask landform variations although the small hills with a particularly strongly 'corrugated' form remain sensitive. ***Medium-low sensitivity***
Landcover Landcover is characterised by permanent pastures enclosed by drystone dykes with significant patches of gorse and rushes and scattered small woodlands. Species-rich unimproved pastures are a feature in more complex areas of landform. Broadleaved tree cover is sparse and concentrated mainly in small groupings and shelterbelts associated with steadings and in narrow riparian woodlands within sheltered gullies. Small coniferous woodlands are present on more elevated slopes and clumps of Scots pine also occur in places.	Species-rich grassland would be sensitive although landcover is less sensitive on other parts of this LCT. The setting of small lochs is also sensitive to dense uniform conifer planting. ***Medium sensitivity***	Species-rich grassland would be sensitive although landcover is less sensitive on other parts of this LCT. Broadleaved woodlands would be more likely to enhance visual diversity. ***Low sensitivity***
Scale Intimately scaled enclosed hollows and gullies	Coniferous woodland (and particularly medium-sized woodlands) would detract from the	Broadleaved trees could also mask some landform intricacies although they are more likely

between narrow ridges but can also be open and exposed on higher ground.	appreciation of the small-scale character of much of this landscape as dense, dark and immature planting would appear to fill and flatten landform intricacies which influence scale. Broader and more open slopes however occur at the transition with the *Rolling Moorland* and *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* LCTs and these are less sensitive. Smaller woodlands would fit better with the scale of this landscape. ***High-medium sensitivity***	to comprise widely-spaced plantings which would have less of an effect on the appreciation of landscape scale. Smaller woodlands would fit better with the scale of this landscape. ***Low sensitivity***
Landscape context This LCT abuts the more sweeping and open upper slopes of the *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* LCT (the Teviot Valley) and the *Rolling Moorland* LCTs which have a simpler landform and increased scale. A small part of this LCT backdrops the small-scale diverse valley of the Borthwick Water which lies to the NW of the Pilot Area although the more complex and scenic hills within this LCT lie outside the Pilot Area.	This woodland type would have little effect on adjacent LCTs. Smaller coniferous woodlands could be sited to minimise effects on the Borthwick Water Valley particularly as the most complex and complex hills of the *Rocky Upland Fringe* lie outside the Pilot Area. ***Low sensitivity***	This woodland type would have little effect on the *Rolling Moorland* and *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* LCTs. Smaller predominantly broadleaved woodlands could provide some minor enhancement to the backdrop of the Borthwick Water Valley. ***Not sensitive***
Views and visibility There are distant and panoramic views to the *Southern Uplands* and surrounding valleys from hill tops although this landscape is generally visually contained with very limited visibility from settlement and roads. There is little evidence of this landscape being well-used by walkers.	The visual containment of this landscape reduces sensitivity ***Low sensitivity***	The visual containment of this landscape reduces sensitivity ***Low sensitivity***
Aesthetic/Perceptual qualities An unusual landscape with a distinct sense of place. Harmony between rugged naturalness and the matrix of productive land with its pattern of dykes – a richly textured and diverse landscape which is also hidden and secluded.	Coniferous woodlands could adversely affect the naturalness and richly textured qualities of this landscape particularly if located in areas with a more sensitive complex and diverse character. ***High-medium sensitivity***	Broadleaved woodland could enhance landscape diversity and the sense of naturalness although more complex and diverse features of this landscape are sensitive as it is the combination of different components which are important in the creation of a distinct sense of place. ***Low sensitivity***

Overall sensitivity
Sensitivity is **High-medium** to small/medium-sized, predominantly coniferous woodlands and **Low** to small/medium-sized, predominantly broadleaved woodlands. Key constraints comprise the complex and distinctive landform of this upland landscape, manifest in the pronounced 'corrugated' appearance of small hills. Species-rich grassland and the intimate scale of the core of this landscape (where it occurs in the Pilot Area) are also constraints to all types of woodland. Medium-sized woodlands could diminish the scenic richness of this landscape, although broadleaved woodlands would have less of an effect than coniferous plantations which would contrast with the diverse tones and texture of landform and landcover.

Siting and Design Guidance
Small woodlands of up to 50ha could fit better with the scale of this landscape. Small hills with a particularly complex landform (which are additionally often covered with species-rich grassland) should not be planted. Woodlands would fit better with the simpler landform and broader scale of smoother lower slopes and occasional basins present at the transition of this LCT with the adjacent *Rolling Moorland* and *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCTs. The setting of small lochs should be enhanced by well-designed small mixed or broadleaved woodlands.

Simpler, smoother gently undulating slopes and basins at the transition with the Rolling Moorland LCT

The 'corrugated' landform characteristic of the core of this LCT – this area is covered with species-rich grassland

Small lochs sit in dips and add to the diversity of this landscape

Broader hill slopes on the shoulders of the Teviot Valley, patterned with woodlands and medium-sized walled pastures

Pilot Area 2 - LCT 117 Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley

Location
This LCT covers the valley of the Upper Teviot within Pilot Area 2. This valley has a generally medium scale being generally narrow with containment provided by the adjacent *Rolling Moorland* and *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCTs.
Large woodlands would not fit with the scale of this landscape and would result in significant adverse effects on the character and appreciation of enclosed pastures and small woodlands. The large-sized predominantly coniferous woodland type is therefore not considered in the assessment below.

Topic and summary description	**Small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodland**	**Small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodland**
Landform A generally smooth valley landform with narrow flat valley floor contained by steep lower slopes. The upper slopes of the valley are often smooth and more gently graded and rolling, forming broad shoulders which merge with the *Rolling Moorland* and *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCTs. The valley floor is patterned in places with moraine and bluffs. In some areas the surrounding uplands have a stronger influence, with steeper hill slopes, covered with rough grassland, extending down to the valley floor.	Distinctive landform features such as more complex fluvio-glacial features and the flat floodplain, which strongly contrasts with steep lower valley sides, are sensitive to densely planted coniferous woodland which would mask intricacies and reduce contrast between landform features. Upper hill slopes, where landform is more gently graded, would be less sensitive. ***Medium sensitivity***	This type of woodland would generally have a beneficial or neutral effect in terms of the ability of more irregularly spaced natural regeneration or widely spaced planted native woodlands to accentuate rather than mask landform variations. The flat, open valley floor (which provides a scenic contrast with often steep valley sides) is, however, sensitive to more extensive woodland cover. ***Low sensitivity***
Landcover Permanent pasture predominates and this is occasionally interspersed with arable fields and areas of rushes or scrub vegetation. Fields are medium to large in size, and typically divided by drystone dykes. Tree cover commonly consists of narrow ribbons of mixed woodland on the river-steepened bluffs along the valley edges and in side valleys. Along the flat valley floor, there are fewer trees, mainly confined to scattered broadleaf clumps along the river banks and occasional shelterbelts. Settlement consists mainly of farmsteads sited on the river terraces and lower valley slopes.	Extensive coniferous woodland could have a darkening effect on these valleys which currently have a predominantly pastoral character with an open, light appearance. Stronger patterns of walled fields on lower rolling valley sides and the open valley floor would be sensitive as the contrast between smooth open fields and walls, individual trees and riparian woodlands could be diminished. Less strongly patterned valley sides and the more open areas of semi-improved and rough grazing on upper hill slopes, lying at the transition with upland LCTs are less sensitive. ***Medium sensitivity***	Broadleaved trees would provide a lighter and less dense woodland character which would generally enhance the character of these pastoral valleys. Areas with a distinctive field enclosure pattern and well-managed small valley floor pastures would be sensitive to medium-sized woodlands (but less so to smaller broadleaved woodlands which could visually connect to existing riparian and other woodlands). ***Not sensitive***

Scale Lower parts of the valley have a small-medium scale where woodland and steep side slopes provide containment to the narrow valley floor. Sloping valley sides are generally more open and broader in scale particularly where they merge with upland and upland fringe landscapes.	Medium sized coniferous woodland could fit with the scale of this landscape where it forms part of a bigger scheme at the transition with adjacent upland landscapes although it would overwhelm the scale of the narrow valley (if planted on valley floors and on more complex lower rolling hill slopes). Sensitivity would be reduced for smaller woodlands. ***Medium sensitivity***	Broadleaved trees would have a a more open and less densely wooded character and a reduced effect on the appreciation of smaller scale features. Smaller woodlands would fit with the size of existing mixed shelterbelts and riparian woodlands on the valley floor and middle slopes. ***Not sensitive***
Landscape context The *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* does not strongly contain either side of the Teviot Valley but rather forms a more distant upland edge to the south, where the hills are higher, or a more homogenous backdrop of lower rolling hills merging with the shoulders of the valley to the SE. The *Rolling Moorland* LCT which lies to the west is similarly not prominent in views from the valley.	This woodland type would have minimal effects on adjacent upland landscapes. Medium-sized coniferous woodlands could be located to minimise cumulative effects with more extensive woodlands located in the wider context of the Pilot Area (for example, by being located on the less visible gently rolling shoulders of the valley at the transition with upland landscapes). Multiple woodlands located in part, or wholly, in these valleys could cumulatively lessen the contrast between farmed valleys and forested/open uplands. ***Medium-low sensitivity***	This type of woodland would have minimal effects on adjacent upland landscapes and would also increase wider scenic diversity as it would not appear like existing productive coniferous woodlands located in the adjacent uplands. ***Not sensitive***
Views and visibility The A7 is aligned through this valley and views tend to be confined to the lower valley floor and lower sides and with occasional longer views to the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest*. There is limited visibility of the gently rolling upper slopes of the valley from the valley floor. This landscape is settled although properties are mainly located close to the valley floor or on lower slopes at the foot of side valleys and thus views are often screened by riparian woodland or are limited by steep lower valley sides.	Woodland sited on steep lower valley sides and on the flat valley floor would be visible from settlement and the A7 and minor roads with the open valley floor being particularly sensitive. Woodland located on the rolling shoulders of the valley, at the transition with adjacent upland landscapes, would be less visible. Multiple schemes could adversely affect views from within these valley and rare views from the adjacent uplands. ***Medium sensitivity***	Well-sited medium-sized broadleaved woodlands would be likely to enhance scenic diversity although key views from roads and settlement should be conserved. The open valley floor is sensitive and multiple schemes could adversely affect the composition of views from within these valleys and from the adjacent uplands ***Low sensitivity***

Aesthetic/Perceptual qualities This valley is settled and farmed and there is a sense of timelessness associated with the traditional pastoral farmed landscape and built character. The A7 and high voltage transmission line aligned through the valley are prominent visual features.	Medium-sized coniferous woodlands are more likely to be located at the transition between this LCT and adjacent uplands. As such they would not significantly affect the perceptual qualities associated with these traditional farmed valleys. Multiple schemes, and particularly larger coniferous woodlands planted on the more visible valley floor and lower sides, could change the predominantly pastoral character of these valleys. ***Medium sensitivity***	Small/medium-sized broadleaved woodlands would have beneficial effects on the character of these valleys although traditional well-managed walled pastures are sensitive and the balance of farmland to woodland would need to be carefully considered in terms of accommodating multiple schemes. ***Low sensitivity***
Overall sensitivity Sensitivity is **Medium** to small/medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands and **Low/Not sensitive** to small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodlands. Key constraints comprise the open farmed valley floor, more complex landform (including fluvio-glacial features) and areas with a strong enclosure pattern of stone dykes. Multiple medium-sized woodlands sited within the valley floor and lower sides would be more visible from the A7 and from settlement and could affect the character of this farmed valley. Broadleaved woodlands would have less of an effect than coniferous plantations which would contrast with the characteristic pale hues of these pastoral landscapes. **Siting and Design Guidance** Medium-sized predominantly coniferous woodlands should not be located on valley floors or lower slopes but on the less visible gently rolling upper slopes of the valley at the transition with the *Rolling Moorland* and *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCTs. Smaller mixed or predominantly coniferous woodlands could be located on lower and mid-valley sides, where they could replace and/or ameliorate existing poorly designed angular shelterbelts or form new well-designed plantings. The cumulative effects of multiple coniferous woodlands on this LCT should, however, be carefully considered with the aim being to avoid the creation of a uniformly dark expanse of dense conifer planting which would alter the characteristic pale hues of this pastoral landscape, particularly on the more visible lower sides of the valley. Medium-sized broadleaved woodlands should also not be planted on the more productive valley floor pastures although smaller woodlands could occupy less well-drained areas. Lower valley sides with a strong enclosure pattern of stone dykes should also be avoided although there is scope to accommodate small/medium broadleaved woodlands elsewhere as they would enhance scenic diversity in these valleys and could be linked with existing riparian woodland and small clumps of broadleaves around settlement and in side valleys.		

Steep lower valley sides become more gently rolling, forming broad shoulders which merge with adjoining upland LCTs – the Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest forms a distant backdrop

The broad and more open upper valley sides are patterned in places with walled pastures, small coniferous woodlands and shelterbelts

Smooth pastures on the valley floor - mixed riparian woodlands often cover steep bluffs against the River Teviot

Existing mixed woodlands extend into tributary valleys – the adjacent uplands are generally gently graded, limiting visibility from roads and settlement on the valley floor

4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report summarises the key findings of the sensitivity assessment undertaken as part of the study. It also addresses strategic landscape and visual issues associated with woodland creation in the two Pilot Areas and makes some observations on the landscape sensitivity assessment process.

4.2 Pilot Area 1

4.2.1 *Scope for large, predominantly coniferous woodlands*

The sensitivity assessment concluded that the *Rolling Moorlands* LCT was of lowest sensitivity to this woodland type. This is largely because of the generally simple landform and landcover of this landscape. The operational Langhope Rig wind farm is located in this landscape and this may limit the extent and type of woodland that could be accommodated.

The *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest LCT* has some limited scope to accommodate large woodlands although effects on views, principally from the adjacent Ettrick and Yarrow valleys, and attaining a balance of more open ground to woodland is important in view of the need to retain a contrast with the extensive productive coniferous woodlands lying to the north and south-west of the Pilot Area. Well-defined, higher hills (many of these featuring rugged slopes, areas of scree and complex knolly tops) are of increased sensitivity although some lower hills and smoother (and less visible) basins provide opportunities for this woodland type to be accommodated while minimising landscape and visual effects.

The *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* LCT (covering the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys) and the *Wooded Upland Fringe Valley* LCT would be highly sensitive to this woodland type due to their small scale and diverse character. Both these LCTs border more expansive and larger scale upland LCTs and larger, predominantly coniferous woodlands would be better located in the broader transitional areas straddling these types. The steep hill slopes of the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT provide a distinctive backdrop to the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys and this woodland type could adversely affect the character of these pastoral landscapes and their scenic contrast with often rugged uplands. Substantial broadleaved planting, which will form an essential component of this woodland type, should be concentrated at the interface with these smaller scale LCTs and reflect their character, linking with existing woodlands where possible.

4.2.2 *Small/medium-sized, predominantly coniferous woodlands*

Sensitivity to this type of woodland is reduced within the upland LCTs considered in the Pilot Area with increased scope to accommodate smaller, predominantly coniferous woodlands identified in the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCTs. This is principally due to the ability of smaller woodlands to avoid key constraints such as landmark hills, diverse landform and to minimise effects on adjacent valleys. Some scope also exists to locate smaller coniferous woodlands in the *Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor* and the *Wooded Upland Fringe Valley*

LCTs although there is a need to avoid planting on valley floors, on prominent well-defined hills and areas of more complex landform and on hill slopes with a strong enclosure pattern of stone dykes.

4.2.3 *Small/medium-sized, predominantly broadleaved woodlands*

This type of woodland would enhance scenic diversity in all the LCTs considered in this Pilot Area with the varied tone, texture and form of broadleaved woodlands resulting in often beneficial effects on landscape and visual sensitivities. Productive pastures on valley floors and areas with a strong enclosure pattern of stone dykes were identified as principal constraints.

4.3 Pilot Area 2

4.3.1 *Scope for large, predominantly coniferous woodlands*

The sensitivity assessment concludes that the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* is of lowest sensitivity to this woodland type. This LCT also occurs in Pilot Area 1 where it is of increased sensitivity because it provides a more distinctive backdrop to the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys. In this Pilot Area, the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* comprises more homogenous rolling uplands with relatively few pronounced 'landmark' hills and forms a more distant backdrop to the Teviot Valley. There are already existing coniferous woodlands in this LCT and there is scope to accommodate additional planting which could ameliorate the poor design of some of these woodlands. The landmark hill of Skelfhill Pen and its setting, including key views to it from the small hills lying just outside the north-western boundary of the Pilot Area, and other well-defined hills are key constraints and should be kept free of planting.

4.3.2 *Small/medium-sized, predominantly coniferous woodlands*

The greatest scope for accommodating this type of woodland is in the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* LCT and on the upper slopes of the *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* LCT. Key constraints include the prominent well-defined hills which lie within the *Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest* and the productive valley floor farmland and areas with a strong enclosure pattern of stone dykes within the *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley*. Scope is more limited in the *Rocky Upland Fringe* LCT due to its distinctive landform and landcover with only small woodlands <50ha able to be accommodated in areas with a less complex landform at the transition with the *Rolling Moorland* and the *Pastoral Upland Fringe*.

4.3.3 *Small/medium-sized predominantly broadleaved woodlands*

As noted in 4.2.3 above, this type of woodland would enhance scenic diversity in all the LCTs considered in this Pilot Area. Productive pastures on the floor of the Teviot valley, the intricate landform of small hills lying in the *Rocky Upland Fringe* and areas with a strong enclosure pattern of stone dykes are identified as principal constraints.

4.4 Conclusions

Extensive productive coniferous forest characterises part of the uplands lying in Pilot Area 2 and adjacent to Pilot Area 1. Medium-sized coniferous woodlands are also present within the upland LCTs in both Pilot Areas and smaller coniferous

shelterbelts and woodlands occur within the valley and hill fringe LCTs. Broadleaved woodlands are largely limited to narrow riparian woodlands and small stands around settlement in the farmed valleys and hill fringe LCTs within both Pilot Areas. There is relatively little existing woodland within the Pilot Areas although a notably more wooded character is present adjacent to Pilot Area 1 in the lower Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys associated with estate policies where an intimate mix of conifers and broadleaved species of varying age contributes greatly to the scenic richness of these landscapes.

The key characteristics of the Scottish Borders include the contrast between the farmed and settled valleys and the steep-sided and often rugged hills which contain and backdrop them. More complex landform features, including occasional well-defined higher hills, productive valley floor farmland, field trees and broadleaved woodland and areas with a strong enclosure pattern of stone dykes, are important features which contribute to the composition of the landscape and its visual diversity.

Good design will be essential in attaining positive change and, in some areas, it is recommended that productive coniferous woodlands should incorporate a greater proportion of broadleaved trees than required in current UK Forestry Standard to increase diversity and provide better integration with the existing pattern of woodland and field trees in adjacent settled and farmed valleys. The ability of new planting to ameliorate existing poorly designed woodlands should also be explored.

4.5 Observations on the process of landscape capacity assessment

This pilot study comprises the part of the Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project (RSWCP) within Scottish Borders, a mapping exercise which is intended to give land managers in the defined areas a better understanding of what opportunities there are for new woodland creation, whilst also seeking to deliver wider benefits for the environment and communities in these areas.

This pilot study area boundary cuts through a number of LCTs, leaving just a very small part of the LCT to be assessed which inhibits a wider appraisal of character and the pattern/nature of existing woodlands. The study area for any future landscape sensitivity assessment considering woodland creation should be selected to cover a broader area with whole LCTs included where possible. There may also be a case for excluding areas where extensive forest is already present.

Many of the key landscape and visual characteristics which reduce sensitivity to larger predominantly coniferous woodlands also reduce sensitivity to wind energy developments. There is a potential conflict where operational, consented and application-stage wind energy developments lie in some LCTs as these could significantly affect scope for woodland creation and/or influence their character and appearance which could result in a change to landscape and visual sensitivity.

Annex A: References

Grant, A. 2010. *Landscape Capacity Studies in Scotland* – a review and guidance to good practice. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No 385 and online Toolkit

Historic Environment Scotland (website). *Inventory of Designed Landscapes, Scottish Borders*

Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd Edition, 2013.

Natural England. June 2019 *An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment*

Scottish Borders Council, 2012 *Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy Technical Advice Note*

Scottish Natural Heritage. June 2014. *Map of Wild Land Areas* and *Non-Technical Description of Methodology.*

Scottish Natural Heritage (website). Landscape Character Assessment – Scottish Borders