LCT 2: Coalfield Lowland Terraces

Description

Location and extents

4.17 This LCT occurs within the Tyne and Wear Lowlands which occupy the eastern edge of the Durham Coalfield. The LCT is constrained to the north, east and south by the escarpment of the Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau that rises sharply forming a distinct boundary between the two different bedrock types. The LCT extends south and west into County Durham covering an area of gently rolling topography that forms a transitional landscape between the Magnesian Limestone escarpment and the Wear Valley to the west.

Key characteristics of the Coalfield Lowland Terraces

4.18 Key characteristics of the Coalfield Lowland Terraces LCT:

- Lowland transitional landscape between the Magnesian Limestone escarpment to the east and Wear Valley to the west;
- Underlying Carboniferous Coal Measures are masked by thick layers of glacial deposits;
- The topography is gently rolling or flat in areas of boulder clay, with a more undulating terrain associated with river valleys, and with the remains of glacial moraines;
- Agricultural land use is mixed but predominantly arable with semi-regular patterns of medium and large-scale fields bounded by low hawthorn hedges and pockets of recently planted woodland;
- Former colliery workings and spoil heaps have now been reclaimed, with large tracts of recently restored land;
- Fragmented by industrial and residential development, the landscape includes corridors of open space between settlements, often with urban fringe character;
- Large industrial complexes and industrial estates are present;
- Long and relatively open views across County Durham from the elevated foot slopes of the Limestone Escarpment to the west; these become less frequent towards the low lying Wear Valley.

4.19 The Coalfield Lowland Terraces LCT has been subdivided into three character areas. These are described below.
2a Usworth Lowland

4.20 This character area covers the flat agricultural and industrial land north of the River Wear, between Washington and Sunderland. This character area extends northwards into South Tyneside.

Figure 4.2 Location of Usworth Lowland

4.21 This area is almost entirely flat, with an elevation between 30m and 45m except in the north west where it wraps around the north of Usworth. The area is bounded by the urban edge of Washington to the west, and the A19 dual carriageway to the east. It forms part of a wider area of undeveloped agricultural land between Sunderland, Washington, Gateshead and South Tyneside, and is identified in South Tyneside’s Landscape Character Assessment as also forming part of the Boldon Fell character area (Area 31).

4.22 Land cover across the northern part of this LCA consists of large scale arable fields bordered by remnant and weak hedgerows with sparse tree cover. There are a few isolated farms in this area but little other development. Some woodland occurs along the River Don, and though some of this is in South Tyneside it contributes to the character of this area. South of the A1290, which bisects the area, industrial development becomes the main land use. Nissan and Vantec occupy a substantial section of this character area, incorporating numerous very large buildings, hardstandings, a test track and ten wind turbines. New and old woodland contains the development from some angles, though it is highly visible from elevated locations.

4.23 This area also includes the A1231 dual carriageway, and the Pattinson Industrial Estate to the south. The latter includes business premises with views over the wooded Wear Valley (LCT 3). The whole area is crossed by a number of high voltage electricity lines, with large pylons appearing to overwhelm many landscape features and interrupting views. Roads, including the minor ones, are typically busy with traffic.

4.24 The landscape has an open character, which enables views over to the Boldon Hills to the north east, in South Tyneside. Views looking south towards Sunderland are limited by the large industrial structures associated with the Nissan car factory. The area has a generally low recreational value, with a limited number of underused public footpaths and bridleways. The Great North Forest Heritage Trail passes through the north between Washington and West Boldon, and there are footpaths around Barmston Pond Local Nature Reserve, which supports a range of
Bird life. A number of local wildlife sites cover plantations and grasslands around the Nissan factory, and the ponds and burns further north. This flat landscape was previously used as a RAF station during the First and Second World Wars. It later became Sunderland Airport, and today the North East Aviation Museum occupies part of the airfield north of the Nissan factory.

Clockwise from top left: view across the flat landscape to the Nissan wind turbines; flat agricultural land to the north of the Nissan Car Plant; the entrance to the Nissan car plant; bridleway at Nissan Way.

2b Penshaw to Houghton Open Spaces

4.25 This area covers the open spaces around and between the settlements of Penshaw, Newbottle and Houghton-le-Spring. It includes Herrington Country Park, land south of New Herrington, and the areas between Fence Houses and Newbottle. These areas are linked by their history of industrial use and their settlement fringe character. This character area is bounded by the limestone escarpment in the north and east and extends west towards Bournmoor in County Durham.

4.26 Lowland landscape with gentle undulations that slopes generally westward towards the River Wear. The area is drained by the Herrington Burn which flows south west, and the tributary Moors Burn from the south. The landform of the area is partly man-made, the result of large-scale industrial land uses and subsequent restoration. This area includes the sites of Herrington and Lambton Collieries, and the Lambton Coke Works, all of which have been cleared and restored.
4.27 Generally a peri-urban area with a limited amount of productive agricultural land. The landscape wraps around the settlements of Penshaw, Shiney Row, New Herrington, Philadelphia, Houghton-le-Spring, High Dubmire and Fence Houses. Playing fields, industrial estates and vacant land blur the urban/rural boundary throughout this area. The most undeveloped part of the area are the large fields south of New Herrington, which adjoin the Limestone Escarpment (LCT 6). There are isolated houses and industrial land uses around Sedgeletch, where the open space narrows to a corridor around the Moors Burn, separating High Dubmire from Houghton-le-Spring.

4.28 Herrington Country Park is located on reclaimed land, and represents a substantial outdoor recreational facility within the region, with walking and cycling routes, ponds, and extensive woodland planting. It is overlooked by the Magnesian Limestone escarpment, and the distinctive Penshaw Monument to the north. To the south of Shiney Row, the former Lambton Coke Works has been reclaimed as a second major open space, known as Elba Park. Both these parks are connected into adjacent settlements by footpath networks.

4.29 Extensive recent woodland planting in this area includes Russell Wood as well as the two parks. Foxcover Wood in Herrington Country Park is a local wildlife site, and there are two proposed LWS at Philadelphia Pond, Success Railway Cutting and Sedgeletch Ponds.
Clockwise from top left: Lake within Herrington Country Park; view over the Country Park from Penshaw Hill; view south over Penshaw open spaces from Penshaw Hill; view of West Herrington below the escarpment.

2c Rainton Lowland

4.30 This area includes the landscape to the west of Houghton-le-Spring and Hetton-le-Hole, which wraps around the settlement of East Rainton. The character of this area extends westward into County Durham. The Rainton Lowland is differentiated from other areas of this LCT by the low ridge, rising to 114m, on which East Rainton is built, and which extends south west into County Durham. This ridge shares some characteristics with the Coalfield Ridge (LCT 1), including the availability of long westward views, looking over the Wear Valley.

4.31 A gently rolling landscape that slopes generally to the north west towards the River Wear. To the south and east the area adjoins the rising ground of the Limestone Escarpment (LCT 6). The area is drained by the Hetton Burn and its tributaries, which flow north and north west to join the Moors Burn near High Dubmire.

4.32 Land cover comprises large to medium size arable fields bounded by weak hedgerow cover, with smaller fields of pasture or grassland. There are numerous recent woodland plantations throughout this area, and concentrated on the reclaimed land of Rainton Meadows and Hetton Houses Wood. Woodland follows burns and former railway lines through this landscape. Rainton Meadows incorporates semi-natural grasslands and ponds. The area is surrounded by settlements (LCT 5): Colliery Row and Houghton-le-Spring to the north, Hetton-le-Hole and Easington Lane to the east; and East Rainton in the centre. The Rainton Bridge Business Park is located in this area, which is bisected by the A690 dual carriageway.
4.33 There are several local wildlife sites covering woods and wetlands in this area. Hetton Bogs LNR (SSSI) and SSSI and Hetton Houses Wood ancient woodland lie to the east, and there is a further SSSI at Joe’s Pond. Rainton Meadows is operated by the Durham Wildlife Trust as a publicly accessible nature reserve with a visitor centre. The Great North Forest Heritage Trail crosses this area, as well as the Walney to Wear (W2W) cross-country cycle route linking Hetton-le-Hole to Pittington.

4.34 Historically this area has long been exploited for its coal reserves. The various pits of the Rainton Colliery were located across this area: land associated with the North Pit has been reclaimed to build Rainton Bridge Business Park; and land associated with Rainton Meadows Pit and Nicholson’s Pit now forms Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve. The colliery operated until 1978, and was served by numerous railways, the lines of which can still be traced in the landscape.
Guidance and strategy

**Sensitive features for the Coalfield Lowland Terraces LCT**

4.35 The key sensitive features, issues and trends within this landscape are listed below, and guidelines for this area are set out in **Table 4.2**.

- Negative impact of infrastructure, including major roads and industrial and business parks.
- Recreational value of parks, footpaths and cycleways.
- Settlement fringe character of parts of the landscape.
- Maintenance of the distinction between settlements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths/Opportunities/Challenges</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Major roads                      | Seek to integrate any new roads through careful alignment.  
Preserve access routes for pedestrians and cyclists.  
Seek to maintain green network connections, compensating any loss of woodland, trees or open space with new publicly accessible spaces. | Allow major roads to become a barrier to access to and from areas of parkland and open space. |
| Industrial estates and complexes | Seek opportunities to enhance and extend landscaping and integrate new buildings into the landscape.  
Utilise native species which occur locally, e.g. Grey Poplar.  
Aim to enhance maintenance of landscapes in and around industrial and commercial premises, including woodland and hedges. | Permit industrial/commercial development that will adversely encroach on the Green Belt and block green corridors through this already fragmented landscape. |
| Parks, open spaces and access    | Enhance accessibility including maintaining and upgrading links between communities and recreational areas.  
Seek opportunities to enhance routes through the area, e.g. the footpath / bridleway at Barmston Lane, and better links into South Tyneside and Gateshead.  
Promote pedestrian and cycle access to work places.  
Provide links to wider networks, for example between the River Wear Trail and neighbouring areas.  
Enhance features of the functional floodplain / Lumley Park Burn catchment. | Permit settlement and industrial development that will encroach on the open space and parkland.  
Allow recreational routes to become neglected or obstructed.  
Allow development that urbanises/further modifies the streams or has any negative impact to water quality and flood incidences |
| Settlement fringe                | Seek opportunities to enhance and strengthen settlement boundaries, for example woodland belts. New development may offer such opportunities. | Permit piecemeal development which will further erode the distinction between urban and rural in this landscape. |
| Settlement separation            | With reference to Green Belt policy and supporting studies, ensure careful consideration of development proposals which could erode the distinction between settlements in this area. | Permit infill of strategic green corridors which separate settlements. |
Landscape strategy

4.36 For each area within this LCT, an initial assessment of landscape value has been made and an overarching landscape strategy has been assigned. The guidelines in Table 4.1 should be applied in the context of this landscape strategy.

2a Usuth Lowland

4.37 The key aspects and features of this area which contribute to landscape value are set out below.

- Large undeveloped area within north Sunderland, which acts as a settlement break between Sunderland and Washington.
- Continuous with large area of similar farmland to the north, in South Tyneside.
- North East Aircraft Museum is a visitor attraction and also illustrates the history of this landscape as an airfield.
- Barmston Pond Local Nature Reserve provides ecological interest in the area.

4.38 Based on an assessment of the landscape of this area against the landscape value criteria set out in Appendix 1, the overarching strategy for this area is set out below.

Landscape enhancement towards a high-biodiversity area incorporating potential for recreation within and around the existing and potential future commercial development. The existing limited hedges and tree cover in the north should be maintained and this structure enhanced as part of any new proposals. The open aspect of land between Sunderland and South Tyneside should be retained in line with Green Belt purposes where applicable. Views to Boldon Downhill enhance the sense of place of this location. Connections could be improved through better green networks around the existing land uses, linking up currently isolated features such as the Barmston Pond nature reserve. Pedestrian and cycle links between adjacent residential areas and the River Wear would improve recreational opportunities and routes to work.

2b Penshaw to Houghton Open Spaces

4.39 The key aspects and features of this area which contribute to landscape value are set out below.

- Open space resources of Herrington Country Park and Elba Park, with walking and cycle routes.
- These open spaces reflect substantial investment in the restoration and enhancement of this landscape.
- Extensive recently planted woodlands forming a valuable habitat network.
- Important landscape setting of settlements within the Coalfield Villages (see LCT5).

4.40 Based on an assessment of the landscape of this area against the landscape value criteria set out in Appendix 1, the overarching strategy for this area is set out below.

Landscape enhancement towards a series of linked, accessible and biodiverse open spaces, edged by strong settlement boundaries. The value of open spaces will be increased by better links with neighbouring spaces and settlements, and by improving the experience of the existing links. New settlement expansion will present opportunities to create new, more robust settlement boundaries in place of urban fringe, and an enhanced setting for these villages (see LCT 5). New road proposals in the area should allow for non-motorised links, and for retention of green networks for wildlife through this fragmented landscape. Interventions should reflect on the area’s industrial heritage, and its setting at the foot of the limestone escarpment. Existing high-quality open spaces will be protected: these include Herrington Country Park and its setting in relation to the limestone escarpment, as well as Elba Park.
The key aspects and features of this area which contribute to landscape value are set out below.

- Rainton Meadows is an important nature reserve and visitor attraction.
- Hetton Bogs is a local nature reserve (LNR) and SSSI.
- Substantial investment in restoring and enhancing the landscape of this area, evidenced by the nature reserve and business park.
- Southern area is more intact, with less impact of past mining activities.
- Crossed by historical rail routes, now used as footpaths and cycle routes.
- The area provides a functional floodplain associated with the Moors Burn.

Based on an assessment of the landscape of this area against the landscape value criteria set out in Appendix 1, the overarching strategy for this area is set out below.

**Landscape enhancement** towards an area of biodiverse farmland and open space, with good quality multi-functional green networks linking into the adjacent settlements. The area provides setting and accessible open space for these settlements, and its value will be enhanced by providing additional links and improving existing ones. The series of wildlife reserves in this area make it one of the most biodiversity-rich locations in Sunderland, with the added bonus of being readily accessible. Opportunities should be taken to build on this network, extending it into neighbouring areas and into the business park, for example. New residential or commercial development in this area will present opportunities to provide stronger settlement boundaries in place of urban fringe. The high quality accessible landscapes at Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve will be protected, along with their settings.
LCT 3: Incised Lowland Valley

Description

Location and extents

4.43 This LCT covers the incised valley of the River Wear in the western half of the city. It extends along the river valley from the A182 at the Council boundary, as far upstream as South Hylton. The LCT comprises the incised valley and adjacent low-lying ground bounded by Washington to the north west. In the south the LCT is bounded by the rising ground of Penshaw Hill, part of the Limestone Escarpment LCT. To the south west the LCT continues along the Wear into County Durham.

Key characteristics of the Incised Lowland Valley

4.44 Key characteristics of the Incised Lowland Valley LCT:

- Steeply incised lowland valley;
- Tidal river with exposed mud flats at low tide;
- Densely wooded river banks with native and ancient woodland;
- Adjacent superficial geology formed of Pelaw clay, glacial till, and alluvium;
- Occasional riverside buildings and landmark bridges, though limited settlement;
- River terraces with medium sized arable and pastoral fields; and
- Distinct area with a quiet enclosed character.

4.45 There is one landscape character area with the Incised Lowland Valley LCT, which is described below with reference to its valued features.
3a Weardale

Figure 4.5 Location of Weardale

4.46 This character area covers the incised valley of the River Wear located in the western half of Sunderland. It includes the lower area of the Biddick Burn valley to the south of Washington.

4.47 The River Wear is incised across the sedimentary rocks of the coal measures and the glacial deposits which overlie them. The resulting river valley runs from south west to north east, relatively straight except for a tight meander west of the A19. The river itself is tidal throughout this stretch of the valley, with un-canalised soft river edges providing a naturalistic estuarine character along most of the steeply sloping river banks.

4.48 Along the south side of the river, and in the north east, there are areas of agricultural land cover including arable fields, pastoral fields and horse paddocks bounded by remnant hedgerow cover. These are subdivided by woodland blocks and a golf course. The steep river banks have a particularly good coverage of native deciduous woodland. The north side of the river is more fragmented, with undeveloped areas comprising pasture and amenity grassland, but still set within a dense woodland network. Most of the riverside woodlands are identified as local wildlife sites.
Residential areas and commercial development in Washington flank the north side of the river. Though these are generally screened from view. Development within the valley includes the small riverside village of Cox Green and the residential area of Mount Pleasant, adjacent to older houses at Penshaw Bridge. There are a number of farmsteads in the area. The river is crossed by a series of bridges. Penshaw Road Bridge is a bow-string girder structure built in 1900. The Victoria Viaduct was constructed in 1838 using local sandstone from Penshaw Quarry. Although now disused it is a grade II* listed building. Along the riverside are numerous sites of former staithes, collieries, industrial works, and ship yards.

The recreational value of this LCA is high with much of the northern side of the river being publicly accessible. Recreational areas include James Steel Park, Princess Anne Park at Fatfield, and the Wearside Golf Course. These are linked up by the River Wear Trail and Weardale Way, which follow the riverside, and are connected to a good network of public footpaths and cycle routes, including the C2C Cycleway to the north. The Washington Wetland Centre is a major wildfowl reserve and visitor attraction.

The steep changes in level, limited vehicle access, and narrow lanes in his area create a strong sense of seclusion and tranquillity which is in stark contrast to the city that surrounds it. Worm Hill at Fatfield is associated with the local legend of the "Lambton Worm".
Guidance and strategy

**Sensitive features for the Incised Lowland Valley LCT**

4.52 The key sensitive features, issues and trends within this landscape are listed below, and guidelines for this area are set out in **Table 4.3**

- Prominence of the Victoria Viaduct and Penshaw Road Bridge.
- Wooded skyline when viewed from the river banks.
- Negative impact of A19 running through the LCA.
- Recreational value of trails, paths and cycleways.

**Table 4.3 Guidelines for the Limestone Escarpment LCT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths/Opportunities/Challenges</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prominent bridges</td>
<td>Enhance accessibility including links to local recreational areas and wider networks.</td>
<td>Allow development which would challenge the prominence of the viaduct or other valued bridges, either locally or in the wider landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlands and wooded skyline</td>
<td>Maintain the character of wooded skylines by ensuring long-term maintenance of woodlands. Continue to protect this key land cover type, including promotion of access and understanding. Manage invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam.</td>
<td>Permit expansion of settlement or industrial estates that would encroach on the skyline. Allow woodlands to become neglected. Allow the further spread of invasive species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft river edges</td>
<td>Continue to support and enhance local access (from the bank on foot/bike, and from the river by boat) to safe areas of river bank.</td>
<td>Permit expansion of canalisation or other inappropriate riverside developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational trails, paths and cycleways</td>
<td>Continue to maintain recreational routes, and develop routes that link in with the Victoria Viaduct to enhance its recreational value.</td>
<td>Permit development that will encroach on or obstruct recreational routes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Landscape strategy

4.53 For each area within this LCT, an initial assessment of landscape value has been made and an overarching landscape strategy has been assigned. The guidelines in Table 4.1 should be applied in the context of this landscape strategy.

3a Weardale

4.54 The key aspects and features of this area which contribute to landscape value are set out below.

- This LCA has a high recreational value with parks, footpaths and cycleways where experience on the landscape is important.
- Area acts as a popular access point to the river.
- Represents an area of open space and provides tranquil qualities within the densely populated urban area.
- Area has a strong scenic quality composed of wooded banks and landmark features such as Victoria Viaduct.
- The only major river valley within the Sunderland city council area.
- Wooded areas and undeveloped river bank provide sense of enclosure.

4.55 Based on an assessment of the landscape of this area against the landscape value criteria set out in Appendix 1, the overarching strategy for this area is set out below.

**Landscape protection** of the existing wooded gorge landscape as a largely undeveloped wildlife and recreation corridor through the area. The existing soft river banks should be retained to preserve the biodiversity value of the tidal river and riparian habitats. Maintenance of the open skyline as seen from the riverside will preserve the quiet, tranquil character of the riverside walks. Carefully considered development could enhance the value of open space by providing positive utilisation for underused locations. Promotion and upgrading of footpaths and cycleways will enhance recreational access and improve the open space value of adjacent farmland. Biodiversity value will be enhanced by managing the Wear woodlands, and ensuring their connection, via woodlands and hedges, to habitat networks spreading out into adjacent farmland, settlement and business parks.
LCT 4: Urban New Town

Description

Location and extents

4.56 This LCT covers the new town of Washington in the north west of the Council area. The new town has a distinct settlement character unlike other built-up areas within Sunderland, but with features which are common to new town developments in other parts of the UK.

Key characteristics of the Urban New Town

4.57 Key characteristics of the Urban New Town LCT:
- Low-lying, gently sloping landscape, with detailed features largely obscured by urban development;
- Distinct hierarchy of transport infrastructure, from major dual carriageways which dissect the area, to distributor roads and residential culs-de-sac;
- Historic village cores surrounded by extensive post-war urban development, the result of strictly planned and controlled expansion;
- Dense green network of open spaces and woodlands providing connectivity of access but often obscuring views;
- Self-contained residential areas, separated by roads and green space, each united by common house designs, materials and densities, often with ‘themed’ street names; and
- Large-scale commercial and industrial buildings occupy their distinct zones within the new town structure.

4.58 There is one landscape character area within the Urban New Town LCT. This is described below with reference to its valued features.

4a Washington

4.59 This character area covers the residential, commercial and industrial areas of Washington occupying the north west of Sunderland City Council area. Washington is bounded by the A1 and A194 to the west, the Wear Valley to the south, and by the A1231 and railway line to the north east. It occupies the south-facing slopes which shelf down from Springwell Rise.

4.60 The underlying landscape is almost completely obscured by urban development, composed of housing, commercial and industrial areas, landscaped parklands, and recreation grounds. Topography only plays a key role along the southern edge, adjacent to the Wear Valley, and along the incised valley of the tributary Biddick Burn.

4.61 Residential areas comprise housing estates built predominantly during the 1960s and 1970s including: Donwell; Concord; Sulgrave; Albany Village; Blackfell; Oxclose; and Biddick. Each of these has a unity of layout and design, and is self-contained: visually screened from neighbouring areas; and physically separated by road infrastructure. Connectivity is provided by a dense green network which infiltrates throughout the new town. Landscaped parks and planted woodlands separate and enclose distinctive areas of residential housing. Several of these woodlands and open spaces are identified as local wildlife sites, including much of Princess Anne Park.

4.62 The new town is dissected by two major dual carriageways: the north-south A182; and the east-west A1231, with the partly-dualled A195 looping around from south west to north. Together with the adjacent A1(M) and A194(M), the flyovers, roundabouts and other large road infrastructure are prominent features within this area. For the most part, road infrastructure is well screened by woodland planting.
4.63 Earlier settlement is evident at Washington Village, focused on the Old Hall which dates back to the 12th century. The structure of the medieval village, now a conservation area, can be discerned, although there are few other buildings from before the 19th century. At Great Usworth, like Washington Village identified as a ‘historic village’, a similarly historic settlement layout is preserved, though with very few early buildings in place. Less remains of medieval Little Usworth, though this was developed in the 19th century, with Front Street still serving as a local centre. Victorian properties are evident at Concord, Sulgrave, Harraton and New Washington (Columbia), each associated with coal mine(s). These scattered villages were forged together from 1964 onwards as Washington New Town was designated and implemented.

4.64 Much of the area of the new town was formerly occupied by coal mines, with old maps showing numerous pits and railways. Of these, only Washington F Pit survives intact: the grade II listed engine house is now an industrial museum. Modern industry is concentrated in large-scale business parks, located mainly on the periphery of the town.
Guidance and strategy

**Sensitive features for the Urban New Town LCT**

4.65 The key sensitive features, issues and trends within this landscape are listed below, and guidelines for this area are set out in Table 4.4

- Negative impact of major roads running through the settlement.
- Recreational value of open space, footpaths and cycleways.
- Distinct character of each individual area of the settlement.
Table 4.4 Guidelines for the Urban New Town LCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths/Opportunities/Challenges</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major roads</td>
<td>Allow major roads to become a barrier to access into areas of parkland or using footpaths and cycleways.</td>
<td>Maintain strong network of mature, high quality open spaces through the settlement. Continue to maintain and promote access for all across the settlement, linking to wider networks along the river and to workplaces around Washington.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open space, footpaths and cycleways</td>
<td>Maintain the diverse character of individual estates and housing areas. Promote appreciation of the development of the post-war new town.</td>
<td>Permit settlement and industrial development that will encroach on the open space. Allow distinct character areas to be eroded by uniform development. Allow demolition of older, traditional buildings: instead promote sensitive restoration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Landscape strategy

4.66 For each area within this LCT, an initial assessment of landscape value has been made and an overarching landscape strategy has been assigned. The guidelines in Table 4.1 should be applied in the context of this landscape strategy.

4a Washington

4.67 The key aspects and features of this area which contribute to landscape value are set out below.

- A distinctive character deriving from its development as a planned new town.
- Washington Village conservation area provides a historical dimension to this predominantly 20th century residential area.
- High levels of open space, woodland and off-road walking and cycling routes permeate the settlement.
- Semi-natural parklands along the Biddick Burn and River Wear.

4.68 Based on an assessment of the landscape of this area against the landscape value criteria set out in Appendix 1, the overarching strategy for this area is set out below.

**Landscape enhancement** towards an interconnected urban area featuring high quality open spaces and biodiverse habitats throughout the settlement. The new town layout provides the existing framework, and enhancement of the experience of these routes and spaces will increase their usage and value. Biodiversity will be enhanced through management of grass, planting and woodlands. Links to the Wear valley, Barmston Pond and the other more substantive open spaces will be retained and upgraded where necessary. Maintenance of the separate character of each of the different housing areas will retain a sense of diversity, which will be augmented by reflecting the older history which is evident in pockets of the new town. Green links will be provided to employment sites in this and in adjacent areas.