



Location and Context

The *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* Landscape Character Type occurs in three of the Tweed tributaries in the central Borders (Kale Water and Borthwick Water, Upper Teviot and Lower Leader Water), together with the Bowmont and Eye further to the east and north. It is a diverse valley type of medium scale.

Key Characteristics

- Medium scale pastoral valley with flat floor enclosed by upland fringe pastures, often with rough grassland and moorland covered hills above.
- Smooth large scale landform modified in places by bluffs and moraine on valley floor, scree slopes or rock outcrops on valley sides.
- Narrow, often wooded tributary side valleys.
- Broadleaf woodlands and scrub on bluff slopes and scattered trees along river banks, occasional coniferous plantations and shelterbelts on valley sides.
- Valley floor pastures enclosed by drystone dykes with occasional hedgerows, interspersed with occasional patches of scrub, coarse grass and rushes.
- Scattered villages, farmsteads and mansion houses with policy woodlands.

Landscape Character Description

Landform

The *Pastoral Upland Fringe Valley* landscape is similar in many respects to the *Pastoral Upland Valley* type represented by the Gala and Eddleston, but is distinguished from them in being generally less influenced in character by the surrounding hills.

The valleys have been carved in a range of rock types which influence their local characteristics. The Kale and Bowmont valleys have been formed in the Devonian Lavas of the Cheviot Foothills, the lower Leader in the Old Red Sandstone, with the remainder underlain by Silurian rocks. The glacial drifts and soils derived from these parent materials give further diversity. Landform is generally large in scale, often showing modification by fluvial and glacial action which has shaped steep bluffs and minor undulations at the edges of the valley floor. The upper valley sides are predominantly smooth, occasionally roughened by surface boulders, scree and minor rock outcrops. There is generally a diversity of small scale

geomorphological features.

Landcover

The predominant landcover in this landscape type is permanent pasture which 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. In some areas the surrounding uplands have a stronger influence, with the steep heather moorland and coarse grassland covered hill slopes, extending down to the valley floor. Tree cover in this landscape type most commonly consists of narrow broadleaf woodland strips 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, occasional shelterbelts and policy woodlands.

Settlement

Settlement consists mainly of farmsteads, small villages and occasional mansion houses on the river terraces and lower valley slopes. Hawick, one of the region's principal centres, and Earlston, an important secondary centre, are located within their respective valleys at the transition with the wider lowland character areas. Buildings are typically built of local stone with slate roofs, and are often sheltered by small broadleaved tree groups. The twin villages of Town Yetholm and Kirk Yetholm, in the Bowmont Valley, have a distinctive blend of architectural styles. The buildings are grouped around village greens and a few are still thatched-roofed, giving a character more reminiscent of England. Evidence of earlier agricultural land use includes fine examples of cultivation terraces, especially in the more remote and less intensively farmed Kale and Bowmont valleys. Those at Braemoor Knowe, near Morebattle in the Kale Water valley, are among the finest examples of their kind in Scotland. The Teviot, Eye and Leader valleys all carry major trunk roads which gives them high visual sensitivity.

Perception

The landscape is typically medium in scale, and enclosure by the adjoining uplands is generally less strong than in the related upland valley types. Views are of moderate range, with intermediate horizons formed by woodland strips or by the contours of side-valleys.

Variation

Each valley has distinctive features;

- The Kale Water and Bowmont Water valleys are steep-sided, well-defined and enclosed by adjacent Cheviot Uplands. There is gorse, scattered trees and scrub patches on the valley floor and sides. Yetholm's twin villages have distinctive character with a mix of stone, harled and thatched building types.
- In the Upper Teviot valley the landscape is medium-scale, open in character, and has gently and moderately sloping sides rising to surrounding rough grass covered upland and upland fringe landscapes. Electricity pylons and the busy A7 trunk road have strong visual impact.
- The Borthwick Water valley is medium-scale, with intermittently enclosed parts. There are scattered trees and scrub prominent in the lower valley.
- The Eye Water valley includes the upper part of the Pease Burn. It is a narrow to medium-scale valley enclosed by rolling farmlands. Scattered trees and scrub woodland grow on river-cut bluff slopes. At Penmanshiel woodland and the wind farm are prominent. A trunk road, railway and power lines follow the valley floor and have strong visual impact in places.
- The Lower Leader Water valley has the distinctive twin peaks of Black Hill and White Hill locally prominent in the lower stretches. It has an intimate, enclosed character created

by landform, with widespread broadleaf and coniferous woodlands. The A68 trunk road is prominent along the valley floor, and there are views of Leaderfoot viaduct and the adjoining road bridge from minor roads.

This is one of 390 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Borders LCA (ASH Consulting Group), published 1999.