



### Location and Context

The *Plateau Farmland - Glasgow & Clyde Valley* Landscape Character Type occurs on the lower slopes of all the Plateau Moorland areas encircling Glasgow and the Conurbation. They are characterised by their transitional location between the sheltered landscapes of *Rolling Farmland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* and *Broad Valley Lowland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley*, and exposed uplands and moorlands.

The *Plateau Farmland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* is located in the following areas Barrhead, Western Plateau and Central Plateau, falling within North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, East Renfrewshire and Glasgow Local Authority areas.

### Key Characteristics

- Extensive, open, flat or gently undulating landform.
- Dominance of pastoral farming, but with some mosses surviving.
- Limited and declining tree cover.
- Visually prominent settlements and activities such as mineral working.
- Rural character of the Plateau Farmland has reduced as tree cover has declined and the visual influence of settlements, transport infrastructure and mineral working has increased.

### Landscape Character Description

#### *Landform*

The underlying geology of the *Plateau Farmland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* is predominantly carboniferous millstone gr and carboniferous limestone, bands of which encircle the Glasgow coal basin. The Plateau Farmlands landscape also encircles the city, being at the edge of the uplands which define the basin in which Glasgow has developed.

The landform is predominantly flat, gently sloping or slightly undulating. The *Plateau*

*Farmlands* are higher than the *Rolling Farmlands – Glasgow & Clyde Valley*. In contrast to the more sheltered valleys and gorges and the *Rolling Farmlands*, this is an exposed landscape, the uniformity of landform offering very little shelter from wind. Drainage in the *Plateau Farmland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* often takes the form of very meandering streams through broad and shallow valleys. Streams on the *Plateau Farmland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* have little visual impact on the landscape. A few fluvio-glacial features exist on the lower edges of the plateau farmlands. An escarpment of varying prominence marks the northern edge of the moors, and the transition to lower farmland or urban areas.

### *Landcover*

Agricultural land use is fundamental to the character of this landscape, dominated by pastoral farming consisting mostly of sheep farming with some cattle farming. Some important mosses and patches remain unreclaimed and unimproved. Recent initiatives, such as the Slamannan Bog Restoration Project, have restored areas of degraded raised bog. Because of the uniformity of the landform, fields tend to be large, rectilinear and evenly spaced, suggesting rationalisation and improvements during the 18th and 19th Centuries. Field boundaries are increasingly defined by post and wire fences. However, many older beech and hawthorn hedges still exist in various states of repair. In higher areas, drystone dykes and ditches can be found.

Tree cover is generally limited to a few windblown trees along field boundaries. However, there are also patterns of deciduous and coniferous shelterbelts which define and shelter the fields, sometimes enclosing them altogether (e.g. near Newbigging). Some of these are remnants of policy landscapes and designed landscapes and where these occur they make an important contribution to landscape character, sometimes providing valuable screening in the otherwise open landscape. The general trend in the tree population is towards over-maturity. Large areas of forestry occur in several areas of the *Plateau Farmland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley*, for example to the north of Carnwath and Carstairs. Many more recent commercial forestry areas are located on higher, less productive ground.

Parts of two important designed landscapes, Hamilton High Parks and the Falls of Clyde (parts of the Falls of Clyde World Heritage site also lie within the area) are included in the character type. These have important visual and philosophical connections with the steep-sided wooded river valleys below, which lie within different character areas. The same principle also applies to other landscapes where the river valley is included, for example Rouken Glen and Cranley House.

The extensive agricultural use of the plateau farmlands means that there are few areas of conservation significance. Exceptions include two SSSIs at Hamilton High Parks and a number of raised bogs/mosses in South Lanarkshire which are both Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation (Waukenwae, Braehead and Cranley mosses).

### *Settlement*

Settlement in this Landscape Character Type tends to be sparse and confined to a scatter of farmsteads which are often identifiable from a distance by their sheltering woodlands. Again, these woodlands tend towards over maturity and are often in decline. A few larger

settlements exist on these plateaux, most notably the new towns of Cumbernauld and East Kilbride. At Cumbernauld, a dense woodland framework has been used to structure and set the urban form into its context. The few existing settlements are extremely prominent in the landscape because of the height of the land and the lack of sheltering/screening landform. Hamilton, Motherwell, Larkhall and Carluke, for example, are visible over a wide area, including from parts of the Clyde Valley. The lack of complex landform makes these plateau areas easier to build on. The new settlement of Maidenhill, near Newton Mearns, is being developed. Eaglesham, which largely lies within the area, represents an important example of a planned village and is characterised by traditional single storey and 2-storey houses flanking a large green, partly planted with trees and shrubs.

Transport and communication routes also tend to favour this uniform and accessible landscape and it houses major roads, rail lines, pylons and telegraph poles, all of which have considerable impact in the exposed landscape. Areas of opencast coal mining, both restored and unrestored, are usually prominent, and occasional landfill sites, also occur in this area. There are numerous single and small-scale wind turbines which, in this open transitional landscape, can be seen from adjacent moorland and hills, roads and settlements within the Landscape Character Type, and from within the Clyde Valley where the edges form the backdrop to the valley lowlands. Waulkmill Glen Reservoir and the associated Ryatt Linn, Littleton and Balgray Reservoirs date from the 1840s and were the first waterworks scheme to bring fresh water into Glasgow. The area around the reservoirs contain a number of features relating to their function including draw-off towers, dams, sluice houses, over-spills and distinctive iron railings decorated with flowers.

### *Perception*

There are wide views across this open, transitional Landscape Character Type, but few visual foci. The area appears in the foreground when seen in views from or towards adjacent moorland and hills. The edges of this landscape are visible from within the Clyde Valley, forming the backdrop to the valley lowlands. There are some rural areas which have a tranquil character.

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 Glasgow and Clyde Valley LCA (Land Use Consultants), published 1999.