



### Location and Context

There are two areas of *Undulating Farmland and Hills* Landscape Character Type within the Glasgow and Clyde Valley. They are located in central and eastern South Lanarkshire between Douglas and Biggar, separated by the broad upland valley of the River Clyde and the *Rounded Landmark Hills* of Tinto and Dungavel. The area forms a transition between the *Southern Uplands* and the lower lying farmlands of the Clyde Basin; the Southern Upland Fault is close to the southern edge of this area.

### Key Characteristics

- A varied landform of rounded hills, ridges and undulating farmland.
- Transition between *Plateau Farmland* to the north and the higher *Southern Uplands - Glasgow & Clyde Valley* and *Plateau Moorlands - Glasgow & Clyde Valley* to the south and west.
- Farmland, mostly pastoral, with a notable range of tree and woodland cover.
- Distinctive pattern of shelterbelts and field boundaries on lower hill slopes.
- Some areas of coniferous woodland, larger in the south of the area.
- Becoming generally higher and more open with poorer pasture towards the south-west, although the highest hill, Black Mount is at the eastern reaches.
- Settlement is sparse and mostly consists of scattered farmsteads and very occasional small villages.
- Areas and features of historic and archaeological significance.
- A predominantly rural and pastoral character that contrasts with the busier adjacent river valleys.
- Views to distinctive hills nearby, the southern uplands beyond and, more closely, to adjacent wide upland river valleys.

### Landscape Character Description

#### *Landform*

The *Undulating Farmland and Hills* Landscape Character Type forms the foreground to the

*Southern Uplands – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* and the *Plateau Moorlands - Glasgow & Clyde Valley* from the *Plateau Farmlands*. They lie to the north west of the Southern Uplands Fault and comprise an area of rounded hills ranging from 200 to 520 metres in height. The underlying geology is varied, including lavas of Silurian to Devonian age (398-444 million years) with interbedded sandstones and conglomerates of the Lanark Group. There are also igneous intrusions of a similar age. The area is significantly faulted and has been modified by periods of glacial and fluvial erosion. The more resistant pockets of rock have withstood the process of erosion. The transition to neighbouring areas of *Plateau Moorland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* and farmland is very subtle.

*Undulating Farmland and Hills* run in a belt north-eastwards from the *Plateau Moorland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* Landscape Character Type in the west. It forms a transitional landscape between the high, open hills of the Southern Uplands and the plateau farmland and intervening valleys to the north. The LCT is divided into two groups by the upland valley occupied by the River Clyde. The landform is varied and undulating around 250-350 metres. Heights increase to the south-west where this Landscape Character Type merges with the higher *Plateau Moorland – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* Landscape Character Type. The smoothly sloping ground has a range of forms, including horseshoe-shaped ranges of low hills, e.g. Rough Knowe to Ewe Hill in the west, while other hills have a slightly conical form with long shoulder slopes, e.g. Black Hill (373 metres) above Douglas Water. The highest single hill summit is in the east, where Black Mount rises to over 520 metres, forming an elongated hill on the same orientation as the Southern Uplands Fault. Several of the smaller hills are also locally significant, such as Quothquan law (325 metres) which is an isolated hill on the eastern side of the Clyde, or Carmichael Hill (353 metres) west of the Clyde. Several summits are topped with old forts, monuments or trig points, and these reinforce the landmark role of these relatively low hills. Adjacent larger hills - Tinto Hill (701 metres) and Dungavel (510 metres) - are in the *Southern Uplands – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* Landscape Character Type and form particular landmarks.

#### *Landcover*

The *Undulating Farmland and Hills* Landscape Character Type exhibits some variety of landcover types, tending to reflect comparatively minor differences in elevation or exposure. There are some arable fields, but livestock grazing is more common. The lower slopes typically have a pastoral character with medium to large sized fields, enclosed by fences, drystone walls, hedges and shelterbelts. The last are a particular feature of the hills' lower slopes and of the farmland around, reflecting the importance of shelter in this semi-upland landscape. There is also some planting of biomass fuel crops on lower slopes. Some woodland belts, tree groups, shelterbelts and forests are components of minor policy landscapes which are locally significant features. With increasing altitude, the proportion of rougher grazing rises.

#### *Settlement*

Settlement is comparatively sparse, confined to a number of hamlets and a scatter of farmsteads on the more gentle and sheltered lower slopes. The principal exception to this pattern is the market town of Biggar, with a mediaeval core, which is located on the boundary with the broad upland river valley. Archaeological evidence suggests that this landscape was intensively occupied during the Neolithic period onwards and the legacy of

subsequent occupants can be seen in the form of ceremonial and settlement sites, hill forts and castle sites. There is a relatively dense concentration of archaeological remains in this area. Many of these are testament to the importance of the Clyde Valley as a communication route in the past. Several major and more minor roads cross the area, threading their way between the low hill tops and ridges. The small settlements have mediaeval origins, and this reinforces the long-settled nature of this area. The overall character now, however, is rural, comparatively remote and sparsely populated.

### *Perception*

The height of this area, above the neighbouring river valleys, gives a sense of expansiveness, but the pastoral landcover and amount of shelterbelts and other woodland types means that there is a limited sense of exposure. This contrasts with the neighbouring *Southern Uplands – Glasgow & Clyde Valley* outliers, notably Tinto. In addition to these adjacent hills, several of the in this Landscape Character Type have recognisable profiles, including Black Mount, Quothquan Law and Castle Hill. The views from these hills in all directions are important. The area has a character of pastoral tranquillity and a sense of time depth from long settlement that contrasts with both the busy transport corridors and the more untamed hill ranges nearby.



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.