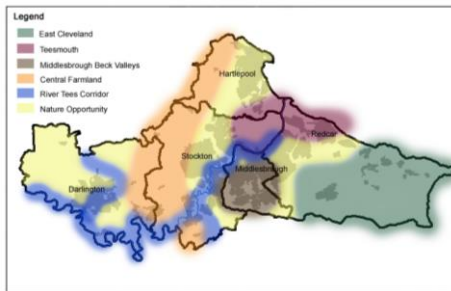


## Biodiversity Opportunity Area: Central Farmland – North West Hartlepool CF BOA I

### 1. Background



The Tees Valley can be divided into five broad areas of landscape type. The BOA's comprise the key areas for potential biodiversity enhancement within these larger areas where targeted maintenance, restoration, creation, mitigation and offsetting measures should be adopted to enhance biodiversity and in turn help to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. Collectively the BOA's form a strategic network, representing a significant environmental asset for the Tees Valley

**TVNP Priority 1:** Protect and enhance the geodiversity and biodiversity of the Tees Valley ensuring the conservation, restoration and creation of key landscapes and habitats, including mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

**TVNP Priority 2:** Work at a landscape scale to restore and deliver robust ecological networks that demonstrate a wide range of environmental, social and economic outcomes.

**NPPF: para. 109:** The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...; recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, ...establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

**NPPF: para. 117:** plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries; identify and map components of the local ecological networks (including) areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation; preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations

### 2. Overview:

The BOA falls within the [NCA Profile: 15: Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau \(NE435\)](#)

**Characteristics of Central Farmland area:** Patchwork agricultural landscape including areas of increasingly scarce unimproved neutral grassland, ponds, hedgerows, small wetlands, a broken corridor of woodland from Crimdon Dene to Wynyard to community forests and the river Tees. A large percentage of many breeding populations of bird species of key importance in the Tees Valley are present within this Landscape Area

**Characteristics of BOA:** Undulating farmland classification encompasses predominately arable farmland, areas of pasture, minor beck valleys, rounded hillocks and sparsely wooded areas. Scattered farmsteads and other small-scale rural developments. The geology is unique within the Tees Valley. The Magnesian Limestone aquifer that sits below the area is an important source of drinking water for surrounding urban areas. Corridor especially linking Crimdon Dene to Wynyard woodlands.

**Local authorities affected:** Hartlepool Borough Council

Landscape Character Assessment areas: [Hartlepool Landscape Character Assessment 2000](#)

### 3. Profile:

**3.1 Geology and Soils:** Durham Magnesian limestone plateau with Ford, Roker and Seaham formation over lain with Devensian glacial deposits of till and sand and gravel.

#### 3.2 Biodiversity:

**3.2.1 Statutory-designated sites:** [Central Farmland area designations](#)

**LNR:** Hart to Haswell Walkway

**SSSI:** Hart Bog – unfavourable declining condition

#### 3.2.2: Non-statutory sites,

**LWS:** HP8 Beacon Hill Marsh, HP17 Whelly Hill Quarry, HP42 Butts Lane Field Margins, HP16 Bellows Burn Marsh, HP13 Thorpe Bulmer Dene & West Crimdon Dene, HP3 Hart to Haswell Walkway incorporating Crimdon Road Verge and HP36 Hartville Meadow.

**LGS:** LGS 4 Whelly Hill Quarry and LGS6 West Crimdon Dene.

#### 3.2.3: Priority habitats and priority species NERC Act S.41

[Central Farmland area priority habitat & species;](#) [Priority habitats and species in the Tees Valley](#)

**Tees Valley BAP Priority habitats:** Ancient semi natural woodland, deciduous woodland, Tees Valley priority ponds, arable field margin, hedgerows (some of which may pre-date 1700), (taken from Priority Habitat Inventory for England)

**Tees Valley BAP Priority species:** Great crested newt, Harvest Mouse, Brown Hare, Barn Owl, Corn Bunting, Grey Partridge, Tree Sparrow. S41 bird species: Bullfinch, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Lapwing, Linnet, Marsh Tit, Reed Bunting, Skylark, Starling, Willow Tit, Yellowhammer.

**3.2.4: Further important habitats.** Unimproved neutral grassland,

**3.2.5: Further important species.** yellow sedge, crested hair grass (all HP8 Beacon Hill Marsh).

**3.2.6: Ancient woodland presence:** Nearest are the denes of Thorpe Bulmer, Nesbitt & Crimdon Dene – all LWSs. PAWS north of Crimdon Beck (in County Durham)

**3.2.7: Landscape-scale conservation activity:** On-going management of Tees Forest planted woodlands at East Grange & Hart Moor Farms. Support ELS and HLS agri-environment schemes.

**3.3 Archaeology:** Signs of industrial heritage e.g. Whelly Hill Quarry

**Scheduled monuments:** None present

#### 3.4 Access:

**3.4.1 Country Parks:** None - closest is Summerhill CP on western fringe of Hartlepool

**3.4.2 Cycleways:** Hart to Haswell Walkway, Local route adjacent to Hart Bog

**3.4.3 PRoW:** Public footpaths & bridleways present including key permissive routes.

**3.5 Key Ecosystem Services:** agricultural production, energy generation (wind turbines), pollination services; flooding regulation recreational (walking, low level nature observation)

#### 3.6 Socio-Economic:

**3.6.1 Employment:** agriculture,

**3.6.2 Housing/employment** land allocations: None, though two small housing plots in Hart Village and swathe of housing along western fringe of Hartlepool town; no major employment land.

**3.6.3 Community involvement:** Hartlepool Countryside Volunteers are active throughout the borough (managed by Hartlepool BC).

**3.6.4 Agri-environment schemes:** North East Region Theme Area HLS: x 1 entry level environmental

stewardship agreement, x 4 entry level plus higher level environmental stewardship agreements,

#### 4. Objectives & proposals:

**Objective 1:** Positive management of existing sites derived from [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#) outcomes: All LWS in the BOA are in positive management by 2020:

- Hart Bog SSSI to achieve 'favourable condition' by 2020.
- Hart to Haswell LNR/LWS to remain in favourable condition.
- Crimdon Road Verge to achieve favourable status (scrub encroachment).
- Beacon Hill Flush to have a landowner agreed Management Plan and be in favourable condition.

**Objective 2:** Habitat restoration & creation.

- Expanding, buffering and connect existing grassland, wetland and woodland sites
- Protect and expand Magnesian Limestone grassland for the benefit of wildlife and sense of place.
- Bring Whelly Hill Quarry LWS back into favourable condition for Magnesian Limestone grassland.
- Safeguard fen on Bellows Burn Marsh LWS by protecting from nutrient enrichment and removing conifer plantation.
- Improve status of Hartville Meadow LWS (neutral grassland). (NB: ploughed up in February 2017).
- Build on the area's historic hedgerow network to establish new hedgerows and boundary trees where these will enhance habitat connectivity and help to reduce surface water flows and soil erosion.
- Promote environmental and wildlife best practice farming techniques
- Promote and supporting farmers to create feeding and breeding habitat for scarce farmland birds (e.g. leaving more over winter stubble)
- National Vegetation Classification (NVC) surveys of unimproved grassland areas – more data needed

**Objective 3:** Socio economic including; access, public involvement.

- Maintain strong access provision along Hart to Haswell Walkway and north into Co Durham.

#### 5. Nomenclature

BOA – Biodiversity Opportunity Area

HLS – High Level Stewardship

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest

LNR – Local Nature Reserve

LWS – Local Wildlife Site

LGS – Local Geological Site

PAWS – Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site

PRoW – Public Rights of Way

NERC Act s.41 – Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Section 41: Species of Principal Importance in England

BOA Objectives & Targets for the whole of the Tees Valley will be compiled in a summary table.