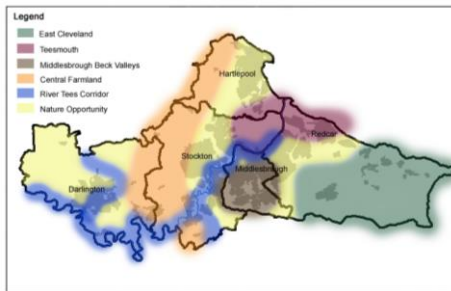


Biodiversity Opportunity Area: Central Farmland – Stockton-Darlington farmland CF BOA IV

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: 23 Tees Lowlands \(NE439\)](#)

Characteristics of landscape 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: A mostly flat, sometimes gently undulating area which is contained by rising ground to the north and south. Bishopton Vale becomes broader and more open to the east of the area. Enclosed farmland under a mix of arable and pastoral cultivation. Southern boundary along A66, eastern boundary along Stockton urban fringe. Main biodiversity value is opportunity to link Wynyard Woodland Chain BOA to the north and Darlington Stockton track bed BOA to the south. Farmland birds

Local authorities affected: Darlington Borough Council; Stockton Borough Council

Landscape Character Assessment areas:

[Darlington Landscape Character Assessment map](#) Landscape Character area: Bishopton Vale

Landscape Character Assessment – Stockton Landscape Character area: West Stockton Rural Fringe

3. Profile:

3.1 Geology and Soils: mid to late Permian sedimentary rocks, mainly mudstones and sandstones. dominant soil type in the area - slowly permeable, seasonally wet soils which are slightly acidic, loamy and clayey.

3.2 Biodiversity:

3.2.1 Statutory-designated sites: [Central Farmland Landscape Area Designations](#)

SSSI: Briarcroft Pasture – unfavourable recovering

3.2.2: Non-statutory sites,

LWS: Redmarshall Road Verge, Whinney Hill to Sandy Leas Lane Verge, Back Lane Road Verge, Darlington Lane Road Verge(s)

Sites of biological interest (from Phase 1): Elton Moor Farm (grassland), Elton Moor Wood, Pitfield Pond, Stoney Flatts.

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

[Central Farmland Landscape Area Habitats and Species](#). [Priority habitats and species in the Tees Valley](#)

Priority habitats: Traditional orchards, deciduous woodland, lowland meadow, (taken from Priority Habitat Inventory for England). Tees Valley priority ponds

Priority species: Great crested newts, harvest mouse (along A66 corridor), brown hare, 19 bird species from the UK BAP including; skylark, lesser redpoll, common linnet, cuckoo, yellowhammer, reed bunting, grasshopper warbler, yellow wagtail, spotted flycatcher, house sparrow, tree sparrow, grey partridge, willow tit, marsh tit, dunnock, bullfinch, starling, song thrush and lapwing, Pepper saxifrage

3.2.4: Further important habitats. Formerly large area of unimproved neutral grassland to the east of Yarm Back Lane (now allocated for housing)

3.2.5: Further important species. Saw-wort which is locally scarce

3.2.6: Ancient woodland presence: none

3.2.7: landscape-scale conservation activity:

3.3 Archaeology:

Scheduled monuments: Motte and bailey castle (Castle Hill) Bishopton; Larberry Pastures remains of Iron age settlement; Shrunken medieval village, Sadberge.

3.4 Access:

3.4.1. Country Parks: None

3.4.2 Cycleways: e.g. National Cycle Routes 1 on the edge

3.4.3 PRoW: Public footpaths & bridleways present

3.5 Key Ecosystem Services:

Agricultural production, water storage; pollination services; flooding regulation? Electricity generation (wind turbines) recreational (windsurfing, walking, Locality details in [Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy](#) and any open space categories

3.6 Socio-Economic:

3.6.1 Employment: Agriculture, windsurfing centre, equestrian,

3.6.2 Housing/employment land allocations: Large area to the west of Stockton

3.6.3 Community involvement: None at present

3.6.4 Agri-environment schemes: North East Region Theme Area HLS: x 1 entry level stewardship agreement; x3 entry level plus higher level environmental stewardship agreements; x 3 countryside stewardship middle tier agreements

4. Objectives & proposals:

Description of main opportunities and threats in this area.

Objective 1: Positive management of existing sites derived from [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#) outcomes,; Briarcroft Pasture SSSI to achieve 'favourable condition' by 2020. LWS in the BOA are in positive management by 2020.

Objective 2: Habitat restoration & creation.

- Extend area of protection to Briarcroft Pasture SSSI Lowland meadow– create a buffer zone
- Unimproved neutral grassland sites create buffer zones around these
- Traditional orchard sites buffer, extend
- Hedgerow planting
- Ensure LWS road verges management is maintained

Objective 3: Socio economic including; access, public involvement

- Green infrastructure links.

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.