

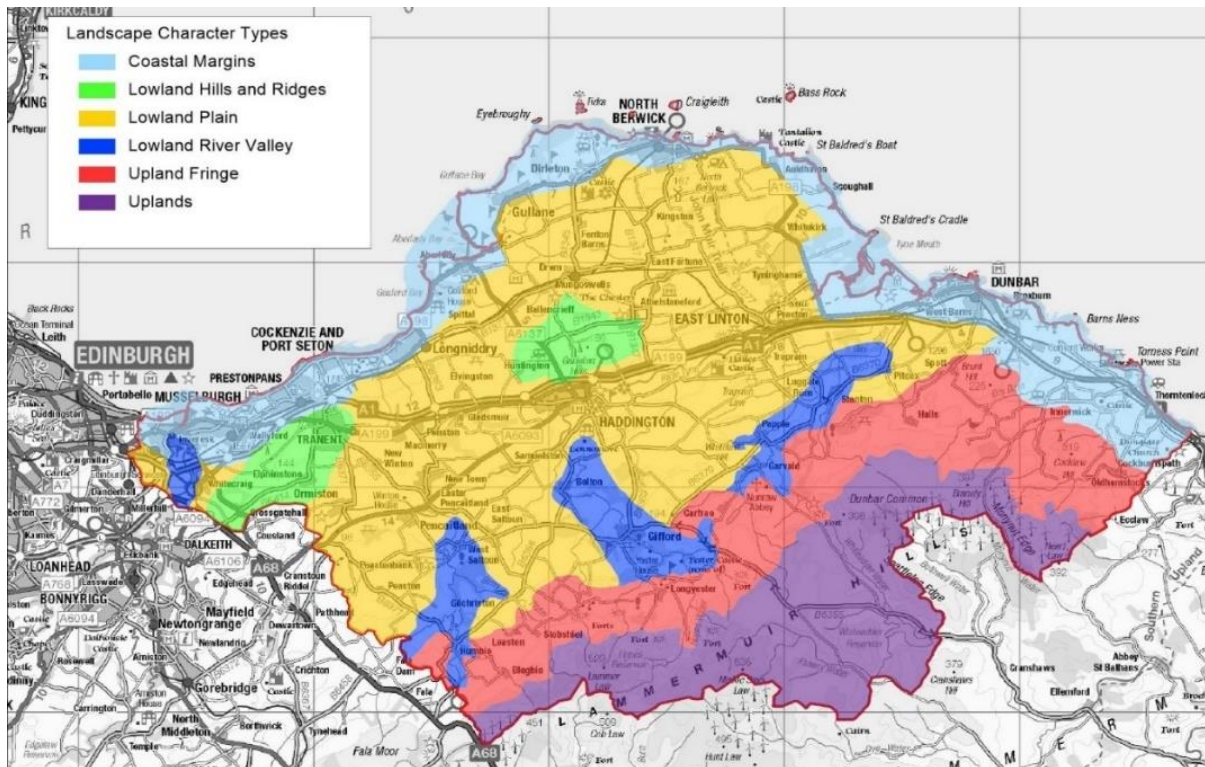


## Tree and Woodland Strategy

### APPENDIX B: Landscape Character and Woodland Creation Opportunities

# Landscape Character and Woodland Creation Opportunities

The most relevant elements for woodland and tree planting for each landscape character type are summarised below. Key opportunities for woodland creation including locations and types of woodland or tree planting are identified for each landscape character type. This section should be referred to in combination with the mapping in the Spatial Guidance section when planning woodland creation or tree planting. This will ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places.



## Coastal Margins

This is a diverse area of land this giving a variety of opportunities for tree planting and woodland creation. Urban uses predominate from the outskirts of Edinburgh to Port Seton, with sporadic settlement further east. In these urban areas, especially in the west, we are looking at improving canopy coverage, providing a setting for settlement and preventing visual coalescence

Outwith settlement, where the land is generally agricultural or used for recreation, we are looking to



create a coastal mosaic habitat incorporating farmland, woodland and scrub, coastal dune and grassland habitats. Policy woodlands of designed landscapes are a significant feature, and there is potential for strengthening this with further planting or natural regeneration. Woods in association with farmland are also characteristic of parts of this area. Some existing shelter belts would benefit from management.

The area is fringed by coastal grassland, dune systems, beaches, and estuaries. These are valued for their openness. The Strategy does not support tree planting that is incompatible with maintaining this open character, although some small-scale woodland expansion could be accommodated.

The Council owns or has management agreements along most of the coast and removes some areas of invasive scrub and successional tree growth (see Invasive species above) to encourage coastal grassland. There are some areas of non-native plantation woodland (for example at Yellowcraig plantation or at John Muir Country Park) which would naturally be dune land or coastal grassland. Replacement of these woodland areas with grassland or other coastal habitat may be preferable for biodiversity however they do also have recreational value and public engagement on the future of any such sites is desirable.



#### KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Creation of coastal mosaic habitat incorporating woodland and coastal dune and grassland habitats, and strengthening connections between areas of woodland at the coast
- Hedgerows with hedgerow trees along existing or new field boundaries
- Woodland creation in deans (for example Seton and Longniddry deans, Dunglass, Dry Burn) where this does not conflict with retaining other valued habitat
- Structural planting in association with new development and regeneration; important areas are around Cockenzie/Blindwells and Innerwick

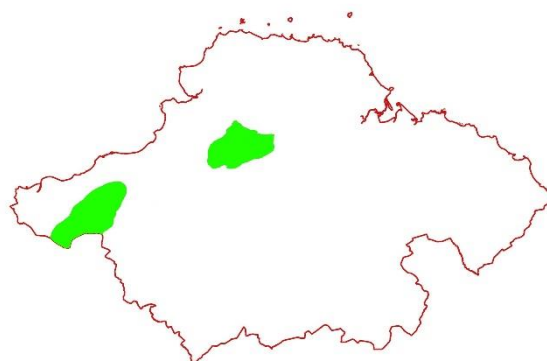
- Further shelter belt and small-scale farm woodland planting: care is needed to avoid blocking key views to the coast
- Musselburgh Ash Lagoons/Levenhall/Preston Links: the Council will manage this area for recreation and bird life. Further tree planting is being carried out here.
- Retain or bring settlement fringe woodlands into management for improved accessibility
- Reinforce the character of Gardens and Designed Landscapes through appropriate tree planting and woodland creation
- Tree planting to enhance green networks and green infrastructure in association with the Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme and Musselburgh Active Travel Project



## Lowland Hills and Ridges

East Lothian has two distinct areas that fall into this landscape character type. The Garleton Hills are widely visible, rising above the arable plain. The rugged terrain and generally poorer soil quality of their higher parts mean this land is suitable only for grazing or even unsuitable for agriculture at all. Areas of woodland here are mainly limited to patches of ancient woodland on rocky knolls – though there is a larger area at Kilduff as well as some plantation there, at Cogtail Burn and on the slopes of Byres Hill.

The second area of lowland hills and ridge is at Tranent/Elphinstone, where the northern end of the Mayfield / Tranent ridge extends into East Lothian. There is a general lack of tree cover here, with Carberry designed landscape containing the only woodlands of note, though there has been some more recent planting at the adjacent Smeaton Bing. At the eastern end of the



ridge there is a lack of landscape detail: the altered field pattern and scarcity of mature trees is mainly due to former opencast mining.

The rugged aesthetic of the Garletons should be maintained, and outward views, especially from the top of Byres Hill, Skid Hill and from Fa'side towards Edinburgh should be retained.



## KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Link areas of ancient and native woodland via hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting [Target 3C]
- Expand and restructure mixed species woodland at the Cogtail burn linked to landscape structure around Athelstaneford
- Potential opportunity in the west of the area around Bangle Hill
- Mixed shelter belts at Barnes and Alderston (which appear on the Roy maps) could be replicated in other parts of the area. [Target 5]
- Hedgerow, shelterbelt and small-scale farm planting as well as areas of native woodland to increase landscape diversity at the eastern end of the Tranent/Mayfield ridge [Target 5 and 3A]
- May be potential in the lower parts of the Garletons and southern side of the Mayfield/Tranent ridge for more significant tree planting; [Target 1]
- Create or reinforce hedgerow boundaries, though where stone boundaries exist these should not be replaced with hedges. [Target 3C]
- Planting on the Tranent/Mayfield ridge in line with the [Climate Evolution](#) Vision [Target 7A]



## Lowland Plain

The Lowland Plain is gently undulating land between the coastal margins and the uplands to the south. Arable use is at the core of the character of this area. An abundance of mixed small-scale shelterbelts strengthen its chequerboard field pattern, with clipped hedgerows and occasional stone walls and fences marking field boundaries. Many of the larger woodlands here are managed at least in part for timber production though recreational use is also important, such as at Butterdean and Binning Wood.



Policy woodlands of designed landscapes are significant portion of woodland here – at Tynninghame, Gosford, Balgone, Winton, Lennoxlove, Fountainhall and others. Mature trees and woodland are also a defining feature of local designed landscapes such as Newbyth House, Setonhill, Elvingston or St Germaines. Outwith the designed landscapes, woodland north of the Tyne is generally confined to small farm woods, shelterbelts, and areas of riparian woodland. South of the Tyne, there are some other larger areas of woodland areas at Butterdean/Cuddie Wood, Bolton Muir and Saltoun Big Wood. There are few areas of ancient woodland; this is more frequent in the north though there is some at Colston Wood, Glen Wood and Big Wood in the south also.

The River Tyne is a major feature running through the area. Riparian planting here and along the A1 corridor (as identified in East Lothian’s Green Network Strategy) would allow connection of the more wooded river valleys which contain its tributaries.

Within the lowlands of East Lothian, new productive broadleaf and mixed species woodlands may be more suited to the landscape character than mainly coniferous planting. Existing broadleaf and mixed species woodlands could also be brought into positive management to increase the supply of quality hardwoods.

Field trees, hedgerow trees, shelter belts and small-scale broadleaved woodlands are also important features of the landscape character of the lowlands. Where these exist, they may have the potential to be brought into productive use. New plantings of these features provides not only a future source of quality hardwoods, but also helps to strengthen landscape character.

### KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Expanding native woodland planting along the Tyne to connect woodland in the river valleys is an ambition of the East Lothian [Green Network Strategy](#). [Target 2B]
- Improving connectivity and landscape structure through a reintroduction of hedgerows, hedgerow tree planting and small farm woodlands and shelterbelts [Target 3C, 5]

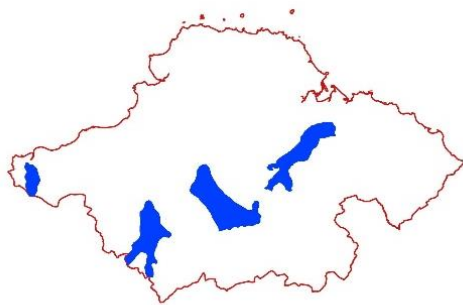


- Strengthen an overall sense of place through using hedges and hedgerow trees
- Respect landmark feature of Traprain Law
- Reinforce the character of Gardens and Designed Landscapes through appropriate tree planting and woodland creation, including restructuring of policy woodlands particularly where these are PAWS [Target 3E]
- Retain or bring settlement fringe woodlands into management for improved accessibility and recreation [Target 4B]





## Lowland River Valleys



The river valleys are the most wooded of the landscape character types, much being ancient or semi-natural in origin. These areas offer

The policy woodlands of designed landscapes can be significant, for example at Saltoun Hall, Keith Marischal and Johnstounburn in the Humber valley and Yester, Colstoun and Lennoxlove in the Gifford valley. The designed landscapes of Whittingehame and Biel contribute extensive areas of productive mixed and broadleaf estate woodlands to the Whittingehame

valley. These dense, generally well managed mixed and broadleaf estate woodlands dominate the valleys. The Humber Water contains one of East Lothian's largest sections of ancient woodland of semi-natural origin, connecting to ancient woodland of plantation origin at Saltoun Forest and Petersmuir.

The upper valley slopes are generally less wooded with fields defined by mixed hedgerows and oak and ash hedgerow trees. In addition to policy woodland some of the designed landscapes have areas of wood pasture and parkland generally on the higher land.

The Esk has somewhat different character and pressures to the more rural river valleys due to its location close to an urban area. There are also significant historic environment considerations for tree planting around the Esk. The Esk has an attractive cycling and walking route through Musselburgh and towards Whitecraig. The woodland link along the River Esk into Midlothian should be retained.

Woodland management is ongoing within the majority of the designed landscape and farm estates within the river valleys. Woodland creation should respect and enhance the historic setting and characters of the designed landscapes and the surrounding parkland and countryside. Woodland creation and expansion along paths in river valleys should take care to avoid creating dark, unsafe or unwelcoming areas. Woodland management also must consider invasive species which can be a particular issue along rivers.

### KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Expansion of productive and native woodland within the river valleys: strengthening the broadleaf and yew network of these valleys and linking them to woodland around the River Tyne [Target 3A, 3B,]
- Improve natural flood management including woodland creation in the upper reaches and respecting and reinforcing the role of natural flood plains (ELC Green Network action) especially at the Esk
- Link woodland at the Esk through to the designed landscape at Carberry, via Whitecraig [Target 3B]
- Succession planting in areas of wood pasture and parkland

- Restore and maintain hedgerows at field boundaries and reinstate hedgerow trees to retain the rural character of minor roads and fields at the edges of valleys [Target 3C]



*Recent Woodland Planting within the Humbie River valley*

## Upland Fringe

The upland fringe is an extensive sweep of hill slopes forming an east-west band stretching along the northern edge of the Lammermuir Hills transitioning from enclosed lowland landscape to open upland. It is a landscape modified during glaciation with a complex landform of steep deans and cleughs and dramatic gravelly knolls contrasting with more rolling hill slopes above. Steep valley sides are uncultivated and sometimes clothed by deciduous woodland or areas of gorse, bracken and scrub. Much of this area is highly visible across the lowland area of East Lothian, with some coniferous shelter belts forming noticeable landmarks on the hillslopes.



This area has the widest mix of woodland cover types. Extensive stretches of ancient native sessile oak woodland occur along several cleughs including at Deuchrie and Rammer Woods, Woodhall, and the Lammermuir Deans (East Lammermuir Deans SSSI). There are further areas of ancient woodland both of semi-natural origin such as at Pressmennan, East Hopes and Pishwanton and of long established plantation origin including around Thurston and High Wood to the east, Snawdon and Blinkbonny to the centre, and Brown Dod to the west. Medium scale coniferous plantations cover many of these ancient woodland areas. Mixed species shelterbelts, tree clumps and areas of mixed woodland are evident across the area, generally related to farm buildings.

Large expanses of arable fields with clipped mixed hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees of beech, oak, ash and sycamore are found on the lower ground. However the boundaries of unimproved pasture of good rough grassland on the higher ground bordering the Lammermuir Hills are often stone walls or fences. Consideration could be given to planting hedgerows and hedgerow trees alongside fences in these locations where appropriate.

This area has some of the largest areas of land in the 'Preferred' category, largely along the Lammermuir slopes. There may be opportunity to expand areas of productive and native woodland here. However consideration should be given to the importance of the visibility of glacial geological features and retention of the small-scale topographic diversity provided by glacial features such as kame terraces, and melt-water channels. Tree planting should also not harm the overall open visual character focusing northwards towards the plain and avoid interrupting key views identified in the Special Landscape Area SPG including from West Steel, Blackcastle Hill, Whitecastle Hill Fort, Doon Hill. Woodland creation should also not harm the setting

### Recent planting in the upland fringe

Arnotts Loan Oak Wood 16FGS12143 is a native broadleaf planting scheme. Located within the Rammer Cleugh SSSI which is partly designated for its native oak woodlands. The objectives of the planting are to restore and diversify the native oak woodland while improving the connectivity of the native woodland habitat.

This woodland is also a woodland carbon code project.

The species mix planted for this scheme is:

#### **Native Broadleaves (100% of the area)**

Oak	60%
Birch	20%
Hazel	10%
Rowan	1%
Alder	4%
Aspen	0.5%
Juniper	0.5%
Native Shrubs	4%

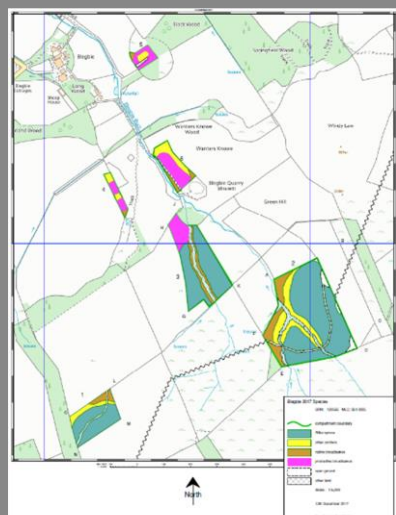
of the traditional village of Oldhamstocks or key views of it from the surrounding hills. Cleugh bottoms, in particular, also have potential for unknown archaeology.



*Upland oakwood clothing the slopes of Woodhall Dean in the upland fringe*

#### **Recent planting in the upland fringe**

Blegbie 17FGS20877 is a mixture of small farm woodland and productive conifer elements. The objectives of the planting are to create and expand into an alternative farm enterprise for the future which will fit in with the current farm enterprises.



The species mix planted for this scheme is:

#### **Conifer Option (87.5% of the area)**

Sitka spruce	66%
Scots pine, European larch, Douglas fir	11%
Rowan, silver birch & alder (native)	10%
Sycamore & birch	4%
Designated Open Ground	9%

#### **Small or Farm Woodland Option (12.5% of the area)**

Sycamore & silver birch	55%
Scots pine & European larch	30%
Silver birch, rowan and alder (native)	10%
Designated Open Ground	5%

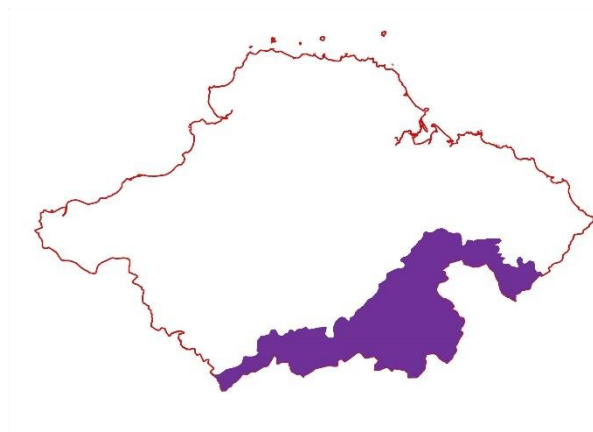
### **KEY OPPORTUNITIES**

- Native woodland and scrub expansion within cleughs, linked to the Upland Plateau and into Scottish Borders Council area, alongside appropriate retention and management of native ancient oak woodland and juniper scrub, whilst reinforcing visual and ecological contrasts between open hill slopes and steep valley sides. [Target 2A] (ELC Green Network action)
- Enhance existing pattern of shelterbelt and field boundary woodland and integrate farm buildings through sensitively designed farm woodland expansion; [Target 5]

- Take opportunities to restructure single species coniferous plantations in line with the UK Forestry Standard whilst recognising the familiarity and land mark function of some of the strips such as the Park Strips and Star Wood; [Target 3A, 3E]
- Conserve and enhance well-developed and maintained beech and thorn hedgerow network on the arable land. Encourage replacement of moribund and lost sections of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. These trees are typically oak and ash and an alternative species for ash should be sought.[Target 3C]

## Upland Plateau

The Lammermuirs are formed of a gently undulating upland plateau dissected by narrow incised gullies of minor burns as well as the wider valleys of Hopes and Whiteadder. Parts of this area are highly visible from the plain below. The area has mainly open, moorland character, which is maintained through management for grouse and rough grazing, though there is also considerable windfarm development in places here. Field boundary features are uncommon except in the lower areas around the Whiteadder Reservoir.



Tree cover consists of large areas of coniferous forestry at the western (at Widow's Knowe) and eastern (at Monynut and Dod Hill) ends of the plateau. There are some small coniferous and broadleaved shelterbelts close to farmsteads and reservoir margins, including ancient woodland around Mayshiel, together with areas of scrubby native woodland within some of the cleughs. The Hopes Water Valley is identified as a local biodiversity site for its river valley with woodland habitat, some ancient.

The top of the plateau is a mosaic of heather and grassland, generally absent of trees. This is currently more due to management for grouse moor than lack of potential for tree growth. The plateau tops do however contain our only montane scrub, the birch and juniper at Lammer Law.

The retention of the open moorland character of this area is Council policy as detailed in the Special Landscape Areas SPG. Planting of tree belts, hedges or larger areas of forestry which would adversely affect the open heather moorland character should be avoided, particularly on moorland tops. Tree planting should also avoid interruption of key views in particular from Lammer Law, Dod Law, Spartleton, Meikle Says Law, Harestane Cairn and Clints Dod.

This area contains the only peat soil in East Lothian with a depth greater than 50cm. Where peatland restoration is possible this is generally preferred to woodland creation (see Policy 15). Although peatland with scattered birch/pine/scrub trees is a woodland type compatible with peatland restoration. Woodland creation to provide habitat to support black grouse in parts of this area is encouraged by the ELC Green Network Strategy.

Some parts of the Lammermuir plateau are unsuitable for tree crops due to the soil type and exposure. Wind farm development may also limit the opportunity for new woodland. There is potential for scattered birch, Scots pine and scrub tree growth in association with heather across much of the plateau. The cleughs offer opportunities for native woodland mixes of upland oak, birch and alder woodlands.



*Hard edged coniferous plantation contrasting with the open moorland and small farm woodland sheltering the farm buildings*

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Native woodland and scrub expansion within cleughs, with elm and hazel on lower slopes, transitioning to oak on the upper more freely draining slopes and scrubby planting on the plateau tops linked to the Upland Plateau and into Scottish Borders Council area, alongside appropriate management of native ancient woodland. [Target 2A, 3A] (ELC Green Network action)
- Create and manage habitat in vicinity of Keithhill and Stobshiel, Whiteadder and Hopes reservoirs, to encourage black grouse, including restructuring of coniferous plantations and increasing native trees and woodland (ELC Green Network action)
- Potential for a wooded link to Scottish Borders Council area, perhaps along the Monynut Valley [Target 2A]
- Increase shelterbelts and small farm woodland around farmsteads and other building groups [Target 5]
- Restoration and maintenance of traditional hedge boundaries within the Whiteadder valley is supported [Target 3C]
- Woodland creation in association with water infrastructure [Target 2B]
- Seek opportunities to restructure large coniferous plantations to reduce the impact of single species, straight edged, even aged plantations in line with the UK Forestry Standard [Target 3A]