

Crosby Ravensworth Common  
Agri-environment scrub and woodland proposals  
around Plantation Blocks  
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment



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## Introduction

Natural England is negotiating a new agri-environment scheme with active commoners on Crosby Ravensworth Common for commencement January 2021.

The common is 1892 ha and currently has 18 commoners actively using their grazing rights.

Agri-environment agreements have been in place with the commoners for the last 20 years, to help them improve and enhance the range of limestone and upland habitats, which are the reason why most of the common is designated as both a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area for Conservation (SAC). The agri-environment agreements have particularly focused on improving the condition of grazed habitats on the common – through re-introducing cattle grazing and reducing sheep numbers to sustainable levels.

A Section 38 application was submitted to Planning Inspectorate in March 2020 – s38 application reference: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102.

Following this submission it was agreed to fell four plantation blocks and replant with low density broadleaf tree species. The area immediately around the plantations would be planted with scrub species. It is proposed to erect a single fence to protect the scrub and woodland species, and to enable them to establish as a single landscape feature.

This LVIA has been undertaken to assess these planting proposals. It complements the LVIA submitted as part of the Section 38 application for the rest of Crosby Ravensworth Common.

The proposed scheme seeks to establish 8.78 ha of broadleaf planting and 13.72 ha of associated scrub planting in four areas of the common.

The planting will take place at Dina Gill (site 1), Land near Seal Howe (site 2 & 3) and West of Howe Nook (site 4). The areas will be fenced for a period of up to 20 years to enable the trees and scrub to establish well. Each plant will be protected by a short plastic plant guard to prevent damage from rabbit grazing.

Although the proposed areas for planting are relatively small the plans for planting are complex because they involve two separate schemes. The replanting of the felled plantation footprints will be administered through the Forestry Commission's Felling Licence consenting scheme. The planting of scrub around the plantation footprints will be carried out via Natural England's Countryside Stewardship scheme. They have differing requirements for stocking density and species selection.

The design approach is to make sure that the design of each planting area is consistent, and that that each planting area reads in the landscape as a single unified landscape feature. Working with Lowther Estate, as landowner, and with the Forestry Commission, suitable density and species choice for the replanting of the plantation footprints have been agreed to ensure that they will not be visually distinguishable from the surrounding scrub planting – which will be planted via the Countryside Stewardship agreement.

The broadleaves species and mix is: Hawthorn (25%), Hazel (14%), Rowan (15%), Sessile Oak (10%), Downy Birch (10%), Crab Apple (5%), Holly (4%), Gean/Bird Cherry (4%), Wych Elm (4%), Dog Rose (3%), Silver birch (2%), and Aspen (2%).

The scrub planting species and mix is: Hawthorn (30%), Hazel (20%), Rowan (15%), Juniper (8%), Sessile Oak (4%), Blackthorn (4%), Crab Apple (4%), Downy Birch (3%), Dog Rose (2.2%), Gean/Bird Cherry (2%), Wych Elm (2%), Silver birch (2%), Aspen (2%), and Holly (1.8%).

Each scrub area will have up to 40% open ground within the fenced area. The density will be varied from dense to sparse to help avoid hard edges as well as benefit wildlife.

# Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

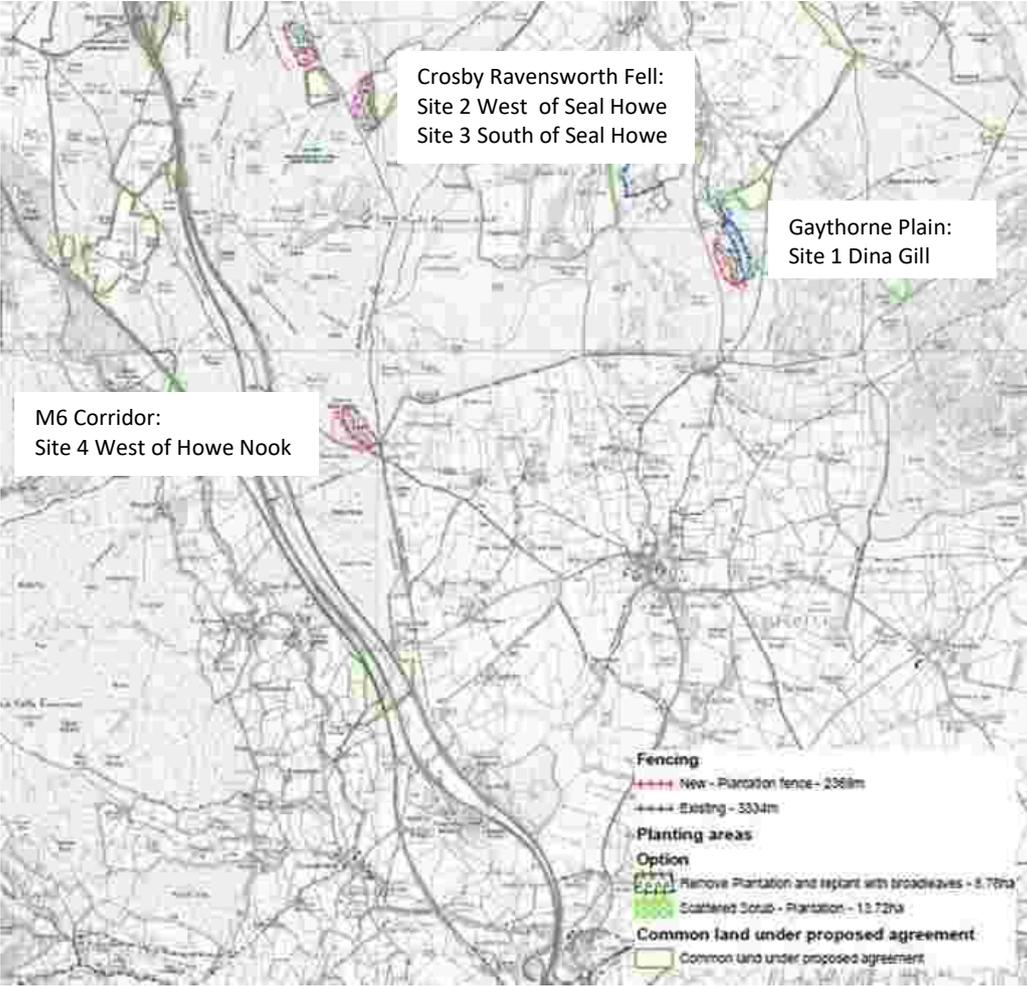
## Project Description

The landscape and visual effects of the proposals have been assessed in three parts of the Common – Gaythorne Plain, Crosby Ravensworth Fell and M6 Corridor.

The assessment considers the effects of landscape and visual changes of temporary fencing and tree and scrub planting based on a 20 year establishment period.

Consideration is given to the combined effects of all four sites and the proposed fencing, scrub and wood pasture planting in s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102, to the landscape character, views and visual amenity of the area.

The four plantation sites are identified on the map below.



## Area 1: Gaythorne Plain

### Site 1: Dina Gill

#### Area description

Gaythorne plain is located on the eastern side of the common. It is characterised by undulating open common with rough grazing, limestone outcrops, occasional tree clumps and small plantation blocks. It lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102, includes three sites that are proposed for planting in this area. One of these sites (1a) includes the plantation block and adjacent area that is considered by this assessment.

**Site 1(a)** is south of Blasterfied Farm, west of Orton Scar and east of an unclassified road that runs north to Gilts Bridge and intersects the site. The site is gently undulating with a Dina Gill creating a sinuous feature in the centre of the site. It is largely open rough grassland, with small areas of heather and rocky outcrops adding interest and a change in texture and colour below Orton Scar. The Scar forms is a prominent and distinctive limestone feature to the west of the site. There is large coniferous plantation block to the west of the gill. The coast to coast path crosses the plain at Dina Gill.

The area reflects the general open common characteristics of the wider landscape to the south, east and west, and contrasts with the wooded farmland to the north, where copses and small areas of woodland criss cross the landscape.

This proposal amends the original s38 application (Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102) by restocking the felled plantation area with broadleaved trees (not scrub) and planting scrub (not wood pasture) on land immediately adjacent to the plantation area. Wood pasture continues to be proposed in the wider area beyond the scrub.

## Area 2: Crosby Ravensworth Fell

### Site 2 and 3 Land near Seal Howe

#### Area description

Crosby Ravensworth Fell forms a large central part of the common. It is accessible by a series of bridleways and public rights of ways. It lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The open common is very gently undulating with significant areas of heathland interspersed with grassland. A substantial part of the area has been managed for grouse shooting in the past which has led to the heathland characteristics. This activity has now ended, and the land is no longer being actively managed for shooting. There are small walled enclosures to the north, with some scrub and broadleaved shelterbelts. There are also two fenced conifer plantations. Blea Beck and Black Dub form features running across the Fell, providing a strong connection with adjacent farmland and Crosby Gill. The gill and its woodlands form a distinctive feature to the north east of the fell. From the centre of the fell there are open views east across a patchwork of managed heathland and across farmland from the fringes of the Fell. Views to the north of the fell are contained by rising land.

The two conifer plantation blocks in the northern part of the area were identified as site 2e in the original s38 Application (Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102).

**Site 2e:** Land around Seal Howe has two coniferous plantations that will be felled and are proposed to be replaced with scrub planting.

This proposal amends the original s38 application. It is now proposed to fell the conifers and restock them with broadleaved species (not scrub). Land immediately west of each of the plantations will be planted with scrub species. Fencing will be erected around the woodland and scrub planting for each of the two sites.

### Area 3: M6 Corridor

### Site 4: West of Howe Nook

#### **Area description**

The M6 corridor lies at the western edge of the common. A small part of the area (including the plantation site) lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The plantation site West of Howe Nook did not form part of the original s38 application (Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102).

#### **Site 3: West of Howe Nook**

The area is characterised by unenclosed rough grazing rising north towards the central part of the common and Crosby Ravensworth Fell and dropping south towards the M6 motorway. The area retains an open feel. A single conifer plantation sits adjacent to a small quarry workings and features. The plantation and quarry form incongruous features in the landscape.

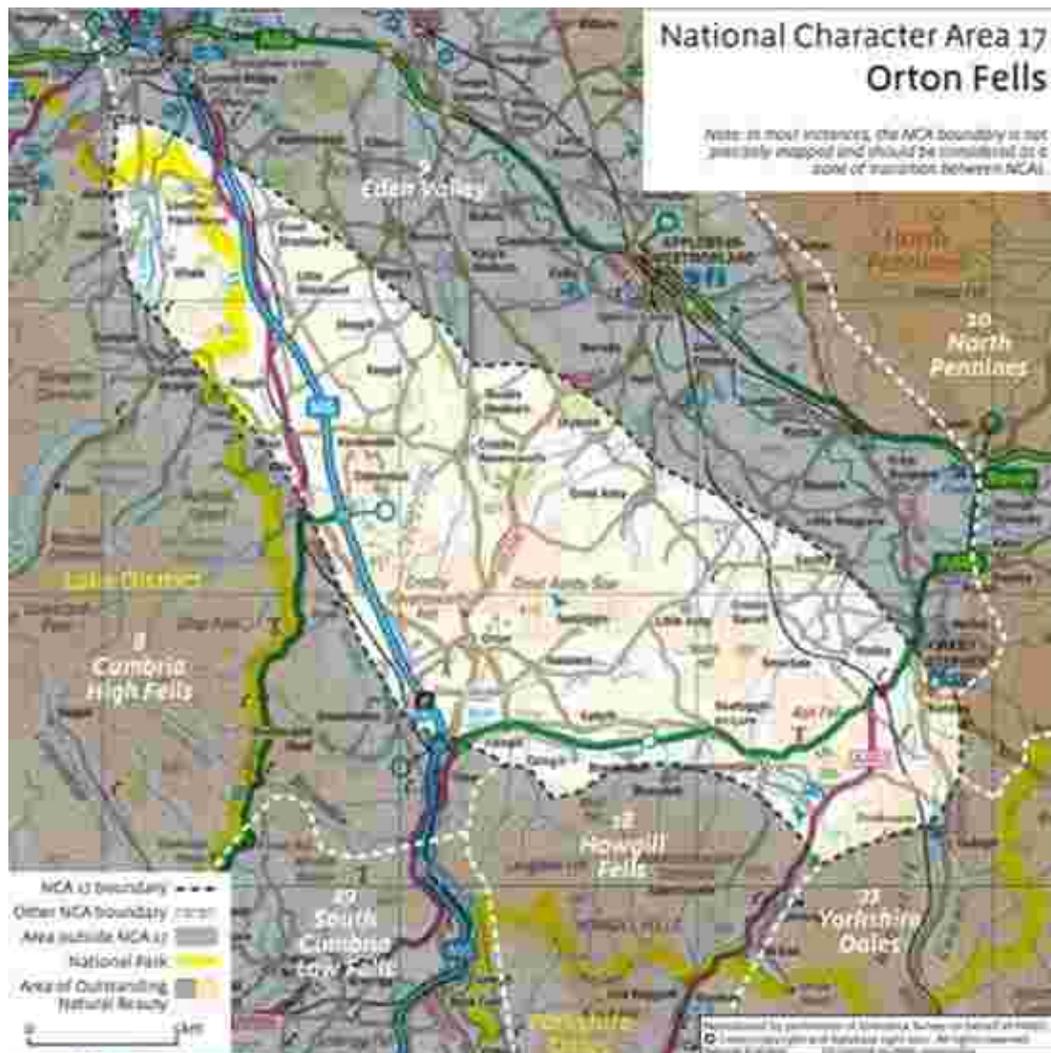
To the east a stone wall provides a strong boundary between the open common and enclosed, improved, farmland. The land drops to the west, with distant, but open, views across wooded farmland towards the Lakeland fells.

# Landscape Effects

## Landscape Baseline

### National Character Assessment

Natural England has produced profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment. Crosby Ravensworth Common and surrounds lie within NCA 17: Orton Fells.



The NCA comprises a limestone plateau with a complex mix of limestone pavements, upland heath, and calcareous and acid grassland. The fells are open, exposed and sweeping, with long-distance panoramic views out to the skylines of the adjacent uplands – the Cumbria High Fells, the Howgills, the Yorkshire Dales and the North Pennines. The NCA lies within the Lake District National Park and the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The predominant land use is livestock rearing, with some dairy farms, so that along with the rough grazing there are extensive managed grasslands in pastures and meadows defined by drystone walls on lower-lying land. On the higher land there are occasional ash trees, as well as copses sheltering the dispersed farmsteads. Otherwise

woodland cover is low, with upland ash woodlands largely restricted to the steep sides of lower valleys, and small shelterbelts including conifers, especially in the north. There are few settlements, making it a very quiet rural area, with the exception of one main north–south transport corridor of M6 motorway, roads and rail in the west.

Key characteristics (selected):

- Wide, open and sweeping upland landscape with extensive limestone pavements, outcrops, heather moorland and limestone grasslands.
- A quiet rural area, with a strong sense of remoteness and long views out to the dramatic landforms of the surrounding upland landscapes.
- A pastoral landscape, with sheep and cattle grazing on the open moors, species-rich hay meadows and pastures and improved grasslands on lower-lying land within valleys and on the fringes.
- Fields bounded by drystone walls of local limestone which, along with field barns, form very strong patterns and reflect historical settlement and farming.
- Largely treeless on the higher land, with isolated windswept ash and rowan, with broadleaved woodlands in narrow gills and copses sheltering the isolated farmsteads and villages.
- Small mixed and coniferous woodlands and shelterbelts on lower land, especially to the north-west.
- Small historic villages, built with local limestone, often centred on long greens, with strong patterns of long tofts defined by walls, and isolated farmsteads.
- Several small rivers with high-quality water rising in the upland and flowing either to the north or south, many of which support internationally significant plant and animal communities.
- Long straight drove roads with wide verges, often very rich in flowering species.

Cultural connections include views drawn from Orton Scar of Orton and the Lune Valley by J.M.W. Turner, and writings on the Coast to Coast Walk by A. Wainwright.

### **Woodland features**

Woodland cover is sparse and generally found as copses of ash, with some sycamore, which shelter the isolated farmsteads, or clumps within the villages. Individual ash trees are found on the limestone pavements and along field boundaries. There are a few obtrusive conifer plantations on the higher land. Typical of the area are small upland ash woodlands, often found on the steep side slopes of the narrow valleys along the north side of the area, and often of ancient origin, as in Smardale and Crosby Gill. The lower-lying undulating land in the north-west forms a transition between the upland limestone and the improved pastures of the Eden Valley, with fields of more intensively managed grasslands, and drystone walls giving way to hedges and fences. Here there are several small coniferous and mixed woodlands, established for timber, shelter and shooting interests.

### **Recent changes and trends**

Great Ashby Scar is a National Nature Reserve (NNR), where grazing is being excluded or reduced to encourage growth of scrub above the grykes. Smardale NNR is a narrow wooded gill, with ash and wych elm woodlands alongside limestone grasslands.

In the period 1999 – 2003 Countryside Quality Counts indicated an increased uptake of woodland grants for restocking and management of established woodland. New woodlands of native broadleaved species have been established at Gaythorne, and community woodland at Hackthorpe and Orton.

## Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit

Crosby Ravensworth Common lies in Cumbria. Since 2016 the majority of the common lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Part of the M6 Corridor lies outside the national park. The common is not included in the Yorkshire Dales Landscape Character Assessment (2002). This is under review in 2019/20. The Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit is the relevant landscape character assessment for the area.

The Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit<sup>1</sup> describes 13 Landscape Character Types and 34 Landscape Character Sub Types. For each sub type it sets out changes to the landscape and a vision and guidelines are provided to help manage landscape change in the future. It provides an evidence base against which proposals for change can be judged in an objective and transparent manner.

The table below shows the landscape character types within and immediately adjacent to the common.

Landscape character type	Sub type
11: Upland Fringes	11a: Foothills
12: Higher Limestone	12a: Limestone Farmland 12d: Moorland and Commons

### Landscape character overview

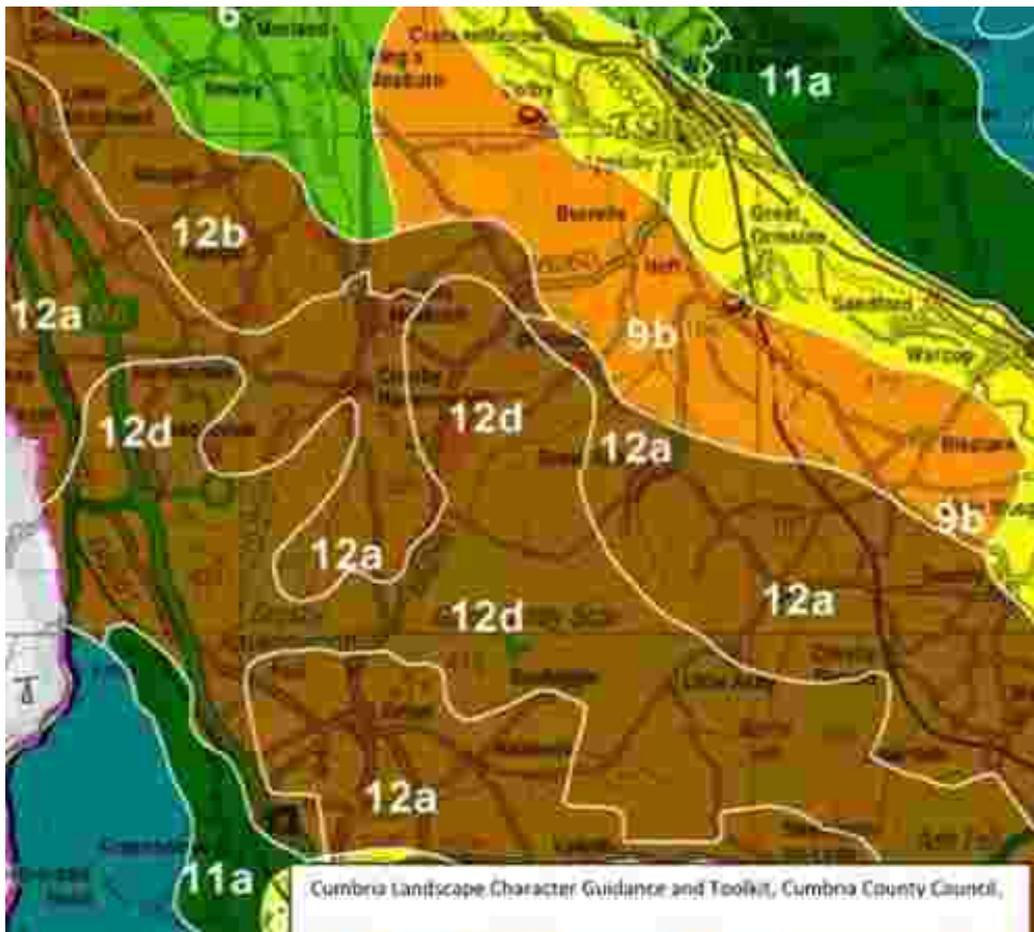
The common lies wholly within Type 12: Higher Limestone, and sub types 12a: Limestone Farmland and 12d: Moorland and Commons. The landscape characteristics, sensitivity and guidelines for managing change are summarised below.

### Type 12: Higher Limestone

This open and sometimes exposed, varied scale landscape is diverse in character, historic features, textures and has distinctive limestone characteristics. Improved pasture and heather moorland are abundant. Other land cover includes ancient woodland and parkland. On the higher ground limestone pavement, scars and grasslands are present; these have high ecological and conservation value. Carboniferous Limestone forms the dominant geology in this area with a small intrusion of Shap Granite near Shap

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<sup>1</sup> Cumbria County Council, 2011



### Sub type 12a: Limestone Farmland – site 1

#### Key characteristics

- Rolling upland farmed landscape
- Distinctive limestone characteristics in the form of strong field patterns with high stone walls
- Land cover is dominated by improved or semi improved pasture
- Small broad leaved, coniferous or mixed plantations provide variety and interest
- Historic features are often obvious and evoke a strong sensory response

This is a rolling upland farmed landscape found between 250-300m AOD. The area is intersected by small streams and rivers and has distinctive limestone characteristics. The area forms a transitional area with the higher Lakeland and Howgill Fells.

Land cover is dominated by improved or semi-improved pasture. Tree clumps and small broadleaved, coniferous or mixed plantations often near farmhouses are typical features. Stands of upland ash woodland are present along gills and river valleys. In the western parts the M6 motorway, rail line, pylons and large quarries contrast with the pastoral characteristics and introduce discordant man-made features in the landscape.

Sensitive features include the limestone walls, lime kilns and traditional buildings, hay meadows, roadside verges, and the matrix of limestone walls that reinforce the

landscape grain. Small traditional villages, archaeological remains and historic farm buildings and features are all sensitive to changes and discrete rural roads are sensitive to highway improvements. Long open views to the Fells, Pennines and Howgills are sensitive to large scale and prominent development that could significantly interrupt views.

Guidelines for managing landscape change include:

- reinforcing existing woods by appropriate management, natural regeneration, restocking and exclusion of stock.
- Establish new small to medium scale native broadleaved, mixed plantations woods on improved farmland and along beck sides.
- Avoid new planting on species rich grassland, wetland and higher open landscapes or where it might obscure distinctive field patterns.

### Sub type 12 d: Moorland and Commons – Sites 2, 3 and 4.

Key characteristics

- Broad, open grazing common with heather moorland
- Limestone pavement, scars and screes
- Western intrusion of granite
- Some large coniferous plantations
- Wide views of the Lake District and Howgill Fells

This moorland landscape has been shaped by glacial erosion and weathering has exposed limestone pavements, scars and screes. Limestone pavements and scars are dominant in many areas particularly on Orton and Ashby Scars. Open common grassland or remnant heather moorland dominate with some coniferous woodland and occasional tree clumps. Although streams and rivers are limited, sink holes and springs can be found throughout.

The edges of the open commons and lower fields are bounded by strong limestone walls. These, along with the exposed rocks, pavements and scars form distinctive features in the area. The walls and outcrops often form rectilinear and linear patterns across the landscape.

The stone walls which form the boundary of the commons are of historic interest. The area is an important limestone habitat and several of the scars, pavements and grasslands have international and national nature conservation designations.

There is little settlement and much unenclosed common land. The extreme western and eastern parts of the area are affected by industrial and urban influences, including the M6 motorway and highway depot, A685, and mineral extraction and processing. Despite this most of the rest of the landscape retains an open and undeveloped character.

The landscape is largely open and exposed with expansive panoramic views to the Lakeland and Howgill Fells and the North Pennines. There is tangible sense of remoteness because of the lack of settlements and development and the sense of remoteness is intact despite the busier developed edge around Shap.

Forces for change include increased pressure from residential and tourist related development, affecting the character and quality of the landscape.

Sensitive features include extensive areas of unenclosed commons bounded by limestone walls, the linear grain of walls and rock exposures and prehistoric remains and distinctive historic land use patterns. Open uncluttered skylines and rough untamed commons provide a sense of remoteness and wildness and are sensitive to large scale energy and infrastructure development.

Guidelines for managing landscape change include:

- Avoid planting of coniferous blocks on the open moorland and consider restoration of moorland on clearance and felling of existing blocks.
- Help retain the open and unspoiled qualities of this landscape by reducing existing blocks of coniferous plantations and discouraging additional plantation blocks.
- Reinforce existing tree clumps on the fringes of the commons in field corners and next to farmsteads and tarns by appropriate management, natural regeneration, restocking with indigenous species and exclusion of stock.
- Support steps to move SSSIs into favourable condition, including the use of temporary fencing in open areas, as this will enhance the landscape character and ecological interest in the long term.

### Landscape condition

The landscape condition is not identified in the Cumbria Landscape Character Toolkit and Guidelines. In general the condition is considered to be moderate to good.

### Landscape value

The landscape value is high for all sites that lie within the Yorkshire Dales National Park, as this is a nationally protected landscape with internationally important areas limestone, grassland and heather moorland. The Park was designated as a landscape of national significance due to a variety of factors: high exposed moorland plateaux incised by long, deep dales carved by ice and water, upon which successive generations of hunters, herdsman, farmers, monks and miners have left their mark, creating distinct local variations in landscape character.

### Landscape use

The landscape is used for farming and for its scenic beauty, as a backdrop to historic villages and buildings, and as a resource for recreational activities, including walking, cycling and horse and mountain bike riding. The M6 area is predominantly used for farming and as a transport corridor.

## Landscape Assessment

This section sets out the landscape effects on the landscape receptors, including direct, indirect, secondary, temporary and permanent effects.

In reaching conclusions consideration is given to the positive, negative or neutral effects of the proposal. A judgement is made based on the sensitivity of the landscape to change and the extent and duration of the change.

### Landscape character

#### Area 1: Gaythorne Plain

This area and sites lie within landscape character type 12a: Limestone Farmland.

The key characteristics of the landscape sub type are set out in full earlier in the report. Those of most relevance are described below.

#### Site 1: Dina Gill and surrounds

The wider area comprises open undulating moorland, with a mixture of rough grazing, small areas of heather and rocky outcrops that add interest. Dina Gill runs through the main part of the site, with a fenced area (3.67ha) containing around 250 young trees which are slowly establishing as low density tree clusters. Orton Scar forms a prominent and distinctive limestone feature to the east of the site. The large coniferous plantation block forms an obtrusive feature to the west of the site. The area is intersected by a small road.

The site is well contained in the landscape, especially in views from the north, by the rising land to the east and west and the prominent feature of Orton Scar.

There are open views north and north east across the common, with long views north west over undulating wooded farmland towards the North Pennines.

The Coast to Coast route runs through the north east part of the site. The scheme would include access gates at the point where the route crosses the fending. 'Open access' badges would also be attached at regular intervals.

The area has two areas of existing tree planting. An area of young openly spaced broadleaved trees clustered along the lower reaches of Dina Gill, and an established dense coniferous plantation with a hard, rectilinear shape to the west of Dina Gill and the site. An extensive area of wood pasture is proposed around Dina Gill as part of s38 application s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102.

#### Mitigation

The proposal seeks to fell the rectilinear, hard edged plantation block, restock with lower density broadleaved species and plant scrub species close by to better integrate the wooded area within the local landscape. The scheme has been designed to integrate and complement the area of wood pasture proposed as part of the original s38 application (Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102).

A single temporary fence will be erected, with a larger footprint than the existing plantation block, to provide protection to the woodland and scrub species. It has been

designed to integrate with the fencing around Dina Gill. The lower density planting of broadleaf and scrub species will have more space and softer, more naturalistic edges. The species selection, lower density, and open spaces will significantly mitigate the harsh effects that arise from the blocky, uniform plantation at present. The planting will reflect the scale and siting of the re-cent broadleaved planting that is establishing to the west around Dina Gill.

Along the Coast to Coast route, scrub plants will be planted to leave an open area of at least 5m on either side of the Coast to Coast path. The planting will follow a naturalistic plan, with random areas left unplanted along the route, to prevent the scrub forming a hard corridor over time. Gates will be sited along the route of the path to enable easy access for walkers. Open access badges will be installed along the fence at frequent intervals.

### **Significance on landscape effects**

The proposal will result in a localised change in character but will respect the characteristic landscape features including the open, unenclosed rough pasture and existing woodland planting around Dina Gill and in the wider farmed and wooded landscape to the north.

The fencing will replicate and tie into the existing, temporary, agricultural fencing that is protecting planting around Dina Gill. It will be erected for a period of up to 20 years. This infrastructure is necessary to protect the trees and scrub species from browsing, is agricultural in character and has an open lattice design that will not be dominant in the local landscape.

The proposal seeks to retain the open common characteristic by limiting the extent of broadleaved planting to the footprint of the plantation block. It will be integrated with the area through very low-density planting of low growing scrub species with areas of space between each plants or small clusters. It will be contained by the local topography and will reinforce and connect with existing tree planting in Dina Gill and nearby woodland.

The proposal, in line with landscape character guidelines, will bring about a significant enhancement to the landscape character by felling the conifer plantation and replacing it with broadleaves and integrating it into the wider landscape with low scrub planting. This will remove an incongruous feature from the landscape and replace it with more appropriate low-density broadleaves and low growing scrub. It will relate well to planting in Dina Gill, proposed wood pasture and the wider farmed landscape to the north.

***Overall, the landscape impact is likely to be minor/moderate beneficial and acceptable in landscape terms. The removal of the conifer block and replacement with broadleaved trees and associated scrub will bring about a significant enhancement to the landscape character.***

## Area 2: Crosby Ravensworth Fell

This area and sites lie within landscape character type 12d: Moorland and Common. The key characteristics of this sub type is set out in full earlier in the report. Those of most relevance are described below.

### **Site 2 and 3: Land at Seal Howe**

Crosby Ravensworth Fell forms a large central part of the common. It is accessible by a series of bridleways and public rights of ways.

The common is open and very gently undulating. There are significant areas of heathland, with large areas to the north east and east forming a patchwork of textures from past heather management. The heather is interspersed with rough grassland and limestone outcrops. A small watercourse flowing into Blea Beck forms a feature running from the centre of the site north east to the adjacent farmland. The land rises to the north and there are several walled enclosures with scrub and broadleaved shelterbelts. Around the enclosures are two rectilinear, hard edged fenced plantation blocks. They do not relate well to the common characteristics.

Scrub planting and wood pasture is proposed to the south east of the southern plantation (site 3) as part of the s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102.

In the above s38 application, the conifer plantations were referred to in **Site 2e: Land around Seal Howe**. The application proposed to fell the two areas of coniferous plantations, replacing with scrub planting.

### **Mitigation**

The proposal seeks to fell the incongruous plantation blocks, restock with lower density broadleaved tree species and better integrate the woodland area within the local landscape with scrub planting. This will tie in with the scrub and wood pasture proposed in s38 application (Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102). Together these proposals will significantly mitigate the incongruous effects that arise from the blocky, uniform plantation at present.

The broadleaved trees and lower growing scrub will relate well with the existing enclosed pasture and woodland that sits between the two sites. The fence will reflect the linear characteristics of the stone walls around the enclosures at Potrigg and Seal Howe. The scheme has been designed to ensure that unplanted areas are retained close to the fence to create softer, more naturalistic edges to the planted areas.

Open areas will be retained between the sites and the enclosures to prevent a coalescence of the features and to retain important open views west towards the Lakeland Fells.

The sites have been designed to ensure they don't affect existing footpaths and popular routes across the common.

### **Significance on landscape effects**

Felling the plantation will remove a significant landscape detractor from this part of the common. The replacement of the incongruous, hard edged plantation with softer, less dense broadleaves and introduction of lower, complementary, scrub species will better integrate these features in the local landscape. The modest scale of the

proposal will respect and retain the characteristic landscape features including the open heather moorland and limestone features.

The proposal will change the character of the existing trees and introduce scrub alongside the moorland. The proposal will be in scale with the rest of the common and will connect with the scrub planting and wood pasture proposed as part of the s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102. It will complement the wider landscape character and connect ecologically and visually with recently established scrub planting south of White Hag, the nearby woodland (SSSI) on the in-bye land adjacent to the common, and wider gill planting at Crosby Gill and the farmland beyond.

Importantly the proposal, in line with landscape character guidelines, will bring about a significant enhancement to the landscape character by felling two conifer plantations around Seal Howe, and replacing them with low density broadleaved species and associated scrub.

***Overall, the landscape impact is likely to be minor/moderate beneficial and acceptable in landscape terms. The removal of two conifer plantations and replacement with broadleaved trees and scrub will bring about a significant enhancement to the landscape character.***

### Area 3: M6 Corridor

This area and sites lie within landscape character type 12d: Moorland and Common. The key characteristics of the landscape sub type is set out in full earlier in the report. Those of most relevance are described below.

#### Site 4: West of Howe Nook

Howe Nook lies at the south eastern edge of the common, north east of Orton. To the west of Howe Nook the common is characterised by open moorland with rough grazing and patches of heather. The common rises north towards the centre of Crosby Ravensworth Fell and drops south towards the M6 motorway.

To the east of the site a stone wall rises northwards, forming the boundary between the rough common grazing and the improved enclosed farmland to the east. The wall is punctuated with clusters and individual broadleaved trees. Further east wooded belts and copses form part of the wider farmland landscape.

There are two incongruous features in the area; a small gated quarry and a rectilinear plantation block sited close to the B6261 road that runs from Orton to Junction 39.

The views north are short and contained by rising topography. Views south are screened by the plantation in part, with some more open, but distant, views west towards the Lake District.

Broadleaved trees and scrub planting are proposed.

#### Mitigation

The proposal seeks to fell the incongruous plantation block, restock with lower density broadleaved tree species, and better integrate the woodland area within the local landscape with scrub planting. This will significantly mitigate the incongruous effects that arise from the blocky, uniform plantation at present.

The broadleaved trees and lower growing scrub will relate well with the trees and shelterbelts in the farmland to the east. The scheme has been designed to ensure that unplanted areas are retained close to the fence to create softer, more naturalistic edges to the planted areas.

The fence line along the eastern side of the planting will follow a linear depression in the rough grassland, helping to visually contain the planting. The fence line on the western side will follow the line of the existing fencing to the plantation. The scrub and trees will be planted with open spaces between plants and the fence to provide a more organic and softer feature in the landscape. The fencing and trees will relate well to the linear wall and existing trees to the east of the site.

The planting has been designed to ensure it doesn't affect existing footpaths and bridleways across the common.

### **Significance on landscape effects**

Felling the plantation will remove a significant landscape detractor from this part of the common. The replacement of the incongruous hard edged plantation with softer, less dense broadleaves and lower, complementary, scrub species will integrate better with the local landscape. The modest scale of the proposal will respect the open, rough grazing characteristic of the area.

Importantly the proposal, in line with landscape character guidelines, will bring about a significant enhancement to the landscape character by felling the conifer plantation west of Howe Nook, and replacing it with low density broadleaved species and associated scrub.

***Overall, the landscape impact is likely to be minor/moderate beneficial and acceptable in landscape terms. The removal of the conifer block and replacement with scrub will bring about a significant enhancement to the landscape character.***

## Visual Effects

### Visual Baseline

#### Receptors

Visual receptors are the people and groups of people that are likely to experience the effects of the development of the sites for housing. The people or groups of people that are likely to be affected by the change in views and visual amenity are likely to be:

- Farm and estate workers on the common land.
- Visitors to the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
- Cyclists using local and nearby long-distance cycle routes.
- Walkers and runners on long distance route - the Coast to Coast Route, local footpaths, self-guided routes and walks published by East Cumbria Countryside Partnership, and open access land.
- Horse riders and mountain bikers on local bridleways and byways.
- Nature watchers at national and local nature reserves and sites.
- Scenic drivers in the National Park.

The area has an extensive network of public footpaths and quiet lanes providing access across the area. The common is open access land. The Coast to Coast Route runs across the common.

#### Viewpoints

Seven representative viewpoints were identified in discussion with officers from Bowfell Consulting Ltd in the original LVIA to support s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102. Of these, one viewpoint is being used in this assessment. Two others have been identified.

These include a variety of public viewpoints, along roads, footpaths, cycle routes, long distance footpaths, amenity areas and scenic spots. Viewpoints have been chosen that are likely to be important to the local community and visitors and those that are representative of views along footpaths, routes and roads. They consider static and sequential views along key roads and routes and the potential for cumulative views of the developments in conjunction with each other and other planned developments.

All viewpoints are listed below and mapped in Annex B. Photographs of each viewpoint are set out in Annex C.

Original s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102:

1. Site 1a: Car park north of Orton Scar (NY 63187 10703).

New viewpoints are:

2. Site 2 and 3: Bridleway west of Seal Howe, Crosby Ravensworth Fell (NY 59533 12414).
3. Site 4: Bridleway west of Thunder Stone (NY 60024 09272).

## Visual Assessment

The effects of the plantings are set out below.

This section identifies the visual impacts from each viewpoint for each site. It considers the nature of the view, and the amount of the site(s) that will be planted, the distance from the viewpoint, the type of view – static, transient or sequential from a route/footpath, the nature of the change. A professional judgement is made to determine if the visual effects are positive, negative, or neutral, based on whether changes will affect the quality of the visual experience for people/groups of people. In making the judgement consideration is given to the sensitivity of the viewer, the value attached to the views and the size of the change that is likely.

The most sensitive viewers are likely to be people engaged in outdoor recreation that is based around the appreciation of views in the landscape, visitors to heritage assets, communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area and travellers on scenic routes.

The visual assessment was carried out in spring when broadleaved trees and hedgerows had no leaf cover.

### By viewpoint

#### 1. Site 1: Car park north of Orton Scar

This viewpoint is representative of views from walkers on the open access land, Coast to Coast Route and public rights of way, cyclists, horse riders and mountain bikers using the bridleway network and cyclists and scenic drivers on the local road network. The Coast to Coast route runs through the north east corner of the site.

The site lies to the west of the viewpoint. From this viewpoint there is an open view north to the edge of the common and farmland beyond. Views are contained by rising land to the south, Orton Scar to the east and the conifer plantation and rising land to the west.

Users of the land will be travelling through the landscape, experiencing medium distance views south and east to Orton Scar with longer distance, open views across wooded farmland towards the North Pennines.

The site will appear well related to existing planting in Dina Gill and be seen in context with the farmed landscape to the immediate north. The proposal is designed to leave open, unplanted areas, with a minimum distance of 5m, alongside the Coast to Coast path.

The planting will cause a limited and contained change to the view, and the negative effects will be minor due to the broadleaved and low density nature of the planting, open spaces between the scrub and the fencing and its siting close to Dina Gill and other wood pasture proposed in the area. It will be experienced as a small part of the overall common. The sense of openness will be retained along with long distance views to the North Pennines.

The planting will remove a significant detractor from the area, replacing the rectilinear, hard edged coniferous block with softer, lower density and more organically sited native species. The positive visual effects will be minor/moderate.

***The planting will have a minor/moderate beneficial effect on views or visual amenity of users of the area.***

## 2. Site 2 and 3: Bridleway west of Seal Howe

This viewpoint is representative of views of land managers, walkers on the Coast to Coast route, open access land and network of rights of way, walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers using the bridleways.

The sites lie to the east and west of the viewpoint. Users of the land will be travelling through the landscape, experiencing open views to the conifer blocks. The gaps between the conifer blocks and walled enclosures provide long distance, panoramic views west to the Lakeland Fells. To the north, east and south there are shorter distance views across the common. Rising land to the south provides some visual containment.

The area is textured by open moorland with a mixture of rough grazing and heather, walled pasture enclosures, woodland shelter belts and conifer blocks. It is criss crossed by bridleways and tracks. The proposal is designed to leave open unplanted areas alongside the public rights of ways, to a minimum distance of 5m.

The sites will appear well related to the existing walled enclosures and will be seen in context with the wood pasture and scrub proposals of s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102.

The planting will cause a limited and contained change to the view, and the effects will be minor and beneficial due to the broadleaved and low density nature of the planting, open spaces between the scrub and the fencing and its close proximity to existing walled enclosures. There will be a strong relationship with the existing broadleaved shelterbelt in the enclosure at Potrigg, and it will be well related to other wood pasture and scrub planting proposals planned for the area. It will be experienced as a small part of the overall common. The wider sense of openness will be retained as the planting will respect existing gaps that give long distance views to the Lakeland Fells and other shorter open views across the common.

The planting will remove two significant detractors from the area, replacing the rectilinear, hard edged coniferous blocks with softer, lower density and more organically sited native species. The positive visual effects will be minor/moderate.

***The planting will have a minor/moderate beneficial effect on views or visual amenity of users of the area.***

## 3. Site 4: Bridleway west of Thunder Stone

This viewpoint is representative of views from walkers on the open access land and rights of ways, horse riders and mountain bikers on the bridleway.

The site is open in views from the rights of way (and from the road). Views are contained to the north by gently rising land, with more open views east across the enclosed farmland and woodland. In places there are open, long distance views across the common to the Lakeland fells.

Users of the land will be travelling through the landscape, experiencing short distance views across the common, with longer distance views east and south over adjacent farmland and common. Views to the west are contained by the conifer block.

The planting will cause a limited and contained change to the view, and the effects will be minor and beneficial due to the broadleaved and low density nature of the planting, open spaces between the scrub and the fencing and the close proximity to the edge of the common, it's boundary wall and trees. It will be experienced as a small part of the overall common. The wider sense of openness will be retained as the planting will retain existing long-distance views to the Lakeland Fells and farmland, as well as the shorter distance views across the common.

The planting will remove a significant detractor from the area, replacing the rectilinear, hard edged coniferous block with softer, lower density and more organically sited native species. The positive visual effects will be minor/moderate.

***The planting will have a minor/moderate beneficial effect on views or visual amenity of users of the area.***

## Conclusion

***The landscape effects are likely to be minor/moderate, beneficial and acceptable for all sites. The felling of the four conifer plantation blocks and replacement with broadleaved trees and native scrub species will significantly enhance the landscape character.***

These proposals, in line with landscape character guidelines, will bring about a significant enhancement to the landscape character. The proposals will remove harmful detractors from the landscape, replacing hard conifer blocks with softer, lower density, more naturalistic broadleaf woodland and scrub planting.

The planting proposals are low density in nature and contained in small pockets across the common. They respect and retain the character of the wide, open and sweeping upland landscape, including its limestone pavements, outcrops, heather moorland and limestone grasslands. The pastoral landscape will be retained with wood and scrub planting complementing the rough grazing and continue to support livestock rearing.

The proposals reflect and connect with wider scrub and wood pasture proposed in the area through s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102. Together these connect with the existing network of native woodland, both in and around the common, and in particular to the small gills that naturally and organically connects with the more densely planted gills, and then eventually to the much denser farmland woodland beyond. Together they will significantly improve the overall landscape character and provide better landscape and ecological connectivity.

***The visual effects are likely to be minor/moderate and beneficial for all sites.*** Many of the sites are partially contained by topography with limited and localised views. Where there are exposed and expansive panoramic views to the dramatic landforms of the Lakeland Fells, the proposals have been designed to retain these. Existing open spaces are respected, and the low density and low height character of the planting will ensure important views are retained. There is a strong visual connection with planting proposed as part of the s38 Application: Proposed works at Crosby Ravensworth, Hardendale and Bank Moor, Cumbria 3253102 and existing gill and farmland woodland planting beyond.

The proposals will improve visual amenity, especially in relation to replacing the rectilinear, hard edged conifer blocks with softer, lower density broadleaved woodlands and low-lying scrub. The woodland features and scrub will be better integrated into the wider landscape.

Examples of fringe edge landscape character and views from around Crosby Ravensworth Fell.



## Annex A: Approach and methodology

The approach for carrying out the landscape and visual assessment is based on the latest published national guidance<sup>2</sup>. The assessment identifies and assesses the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on:

- Landscape effects: the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and
- Visual effects: on specific views and on the general visual amenity experience by people.

### Study area

The assessment focussed on the sites and their immediate setting.

### Landscape baseline

The aim of the landscape baseline is to provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be affected, its constituent elements, its character and way it varies spatially, its geographic extent, its history, condition and the way it is experienced and the value attached to it.

The assessment included a desk top review of relevant landscape character and planning studies, field survey of the common and all planting sites and the wider landscape, to identify and record the character of the landscape and the elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors that contribute to it. Sources of information for the desktop study included ordnance survey maps, aerial maps and landscape character assessments.

### Visual baseline

The aim of the visual baseline is to establish the area where the planting might be visible, and to identify the different groups of people that that might experience views of the planting, the places where they will be affected and the nature of the views and visual amenity at the different places.

The assessment included a desk top review of relevant maps and recreational guides, and identification of viewpoints, the nature of the views, and the different groups of people that might experience views. Consideration was given to the cultural heritage influences on the receptors and views. This was followed by a field survey of all the planting sites from seven viewpoints.

### Landscape assessment criteria

The overall significance of effects is established by considering both the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of effects arising from the planting.

When considering the sensitivity of the landscape consideration is given to the landscape receptors susceptibility to change and value attached to the receptor.

When considering the magnitude of change to the landscape character, the size/scale, duration and its ability of the landscape effect to be reversed is assessed.

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<sup>2</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment 2013).

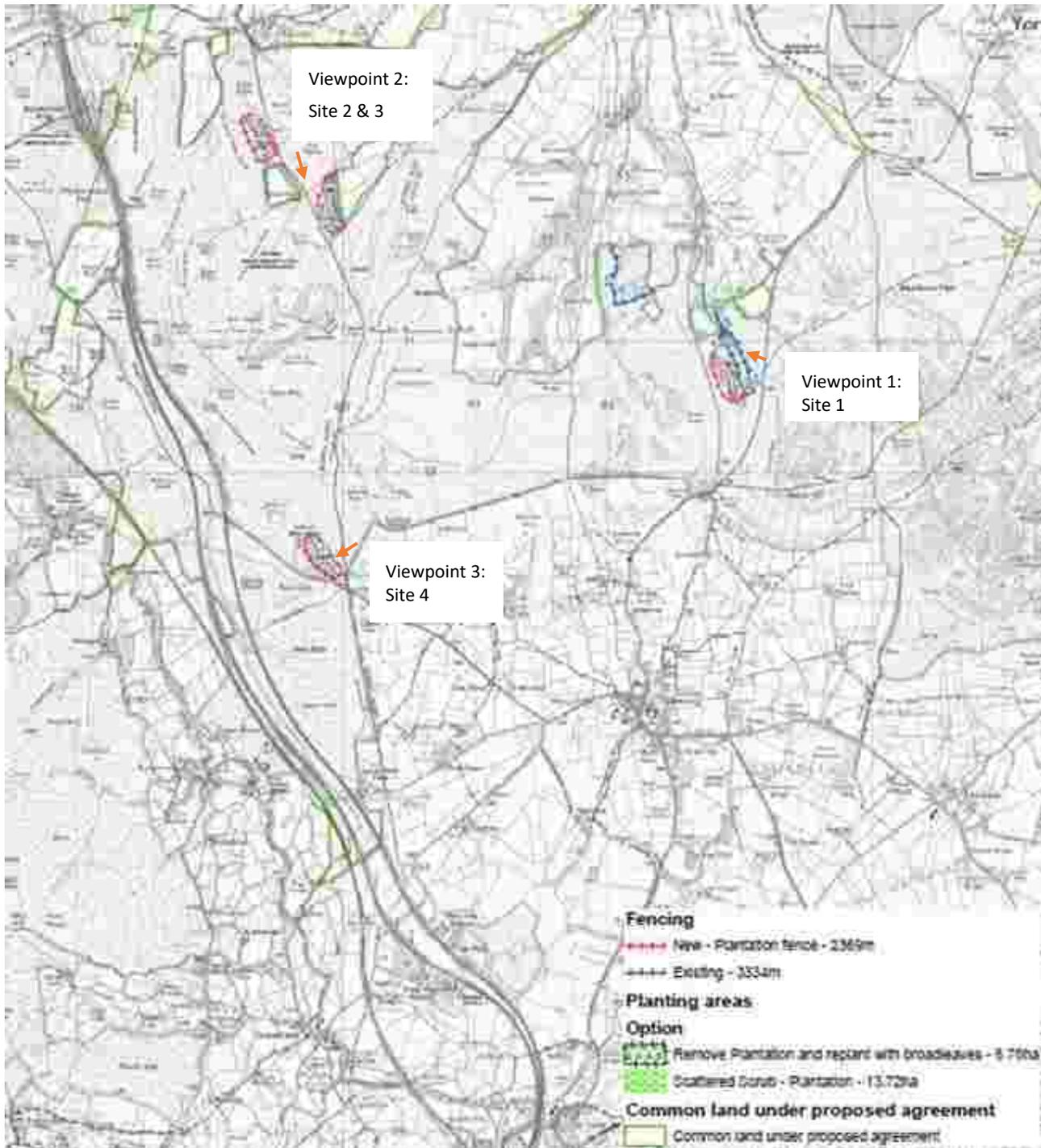
**Visual assessment criteria**

The overall significance of effects is established by considering both the sensitivity of visual receptors and the magnitude of visual effects arising from the planting.

When considering the sensitivity of the visual receptors' consideration is given to the landscape receptors susceptibility to change and value attached to specific views.

When considering the magnitude of change to the visual effect, the size/scale, duration, and ability of the effect to be reversed is assessed.

## Annex B: Viewpoints - map



# Annex C: Viewpoints - images

Viewpoint 1 : Car park north of Orton Scar



**Viewpoint 2 : Bridleway west of Seal Howe looking south**



**Viewpoint 3 : Bridleway west of Thunder Stone looking west**

