

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
MODIFIED PROPOSED PLAN**

**STATEMENT OF LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE
FOR THE CLYDE VALLEY
SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA
BACKGROUND REPORT**

NOVEMBER 2018



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed Clyde Valley Special Landscape Area within North Lanarkshire is located in the southernmost part of the local authority area, west of the towns of Motherwell and Wishaw and the village of Overton and extending to the boundaries to the west and south of the neighbouring local authority area of South Lanarkshire which is defined by the River Clyde.
- 1.2 This Statement of Importance explains why the Clyde Valley have been proposed for designation as a Special Landscape Area (SLA). The Statement provides a framework linked to policies in the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan Modified Proposed Plan Policy Document for protecting and enhancing the distinctive landscape character qualities and for managing change by development within proposed SLA designated areas.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The importance of landscape is acknowledged internationally by the European Landscape Convention, which promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes.
- 2.2 The Convention provides a framework for Scotland's approach to landscape. It defines:
- "landscape" as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.
 - "landscape protection" is action to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity.
 - "landscape planning" as strong forward-looking action to restore, enhance or create landscapes.
- 2.3 Scotland's landscapes are recognised as contributing to national, regional and local identities, adding to people's quality of life and providing attractive settings for social and economic development.
- 2.4 Landscape designations play an important role in Scottish Planning Policy in protecting and enhancing areas of particular value. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) encourages local, non-statutory designations such as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) to protect enhance and encourage the enjoyment and understanding of locally important landscapes.
- 2.5 This Statement of Importance has been prepared within the context of other statutory and non-statutory Planning Guidance including references to protecting landscape quality in various sections of the National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) and specific guidance within Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) regarding protection of the historic environment (s.137) and the natural environment and landscapes (s. 194 and s.197).
- 2.6 SPP (s.197) advises planning authorities that the purpose of areas of local landscape value should be to:
- safeguard and enhance the character and quality of a landscape which is important or particularly valued locally or regionally; or
 - to promote understanding and awareness of the distinctive character and special qualities of local landscapes; or
 - to safeguard and promote important local settings for outdoor recreation and tourism

3. Background and Study Approach

- 3.1 The value of the Clyde Valley as an important and distinctive landscape has been recognised within planning guidance for many years. eg. The 1986 Wishaw Local Plan provided designation for the area as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Subsequent local plans including the current North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (LDP) continue in maintaining a protective landscape designation for the area.
- 3.2 The Area of Great Landscape Value designated area within the North Lanarkshire Local Plan covered the eastern side of valley area between Motherwell in the north and Garrion Bridge in the south and included the Garrion Gill tributary valley which is the local authority's southern boundary with South Lanarkshire.
- 3.3 In 2014 as part of preparation of the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan Proposed Plan a review of local landscape designations was undertaken as part of wider action for landscape protection and management, to provide an awareness of the special character and qualities of the designated landscape and to contribute in guiding appropriate future development to the most appropriate locations.
- 3.4 Designation of the Clyde Valley as an SLA is considered particularly important given the prominent presence and perceived value of the landscape both locally and in a regional context and the landscape's limited capacity to change without adverse impact. Additionally the landscape is valued both locally and regionally as

part of a route incorporating the section of the valley between Motherwell/Hamilton and southwards into South Lanarkshire to Lanark. The valley is an important visitor destination with a series of long-established garden centres as well as outdoor recreation in the form of the long distance Clyde Valley Walkway a route of regional importance and the various local paths which link to the Walkway through the surrounding woodlands and countryside.

3.5 This Statement of Importance has been prepared following a number of key stages:

1. July 2014 - Landscape consultants (URS) were appointed by North Lanarkshire Council to evaluate the landscape character of the local authority area and assess any requirements for policy protection measures for highly valued landscapes within the emerging Local Development Plan, (LDP).
2. September 2014 – Meetings were held between planning staff from North Lanarkshire Council and East Dunbartonshire Council and landscape staff from Scottish Natural Heritage to discuss key characteristics and qualities of shared landscapes which crossed local authority boundaries such as the Kelvin Valley and Kilsyth Hills. East Dunbartonshire Council's input was considered particularly valuable due to similar landscape qualities within the adjacent Campsie Fells in East Dunbartonshire which were subject to similar proposals for designation of protective landscape status.
3. August to November 2014 – The consultants (URS) undertook a review of previous designations within previous development plans and previous landscape character assessments at a regional level, including those of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)¹ and a wind farm capacity study undertaken at both a local planning authority and strategic city-region planning authority level by Land Use Consultants (LUC)². Desktop assessments of landform and a series of landscape surveys, comprising visual assessments were implemented to identify and confirm boundaries of distinctive Landscape Character Areas.
4. November 2014 – A draft report “*Review of North Lanarkshire Local Landscape Character*” was published which advised of a number of local landscape areas (Local Landscape Units) of notable quality where future development would require careful design and landscape consideration. Two exemplar landscape areas were recommended for specific protection as Special Landscape Areas (SLA) supported by specific protective policies within the emerging Local Development Plan. These areas broadly correspond to areas formerly protected within previous local plans as the Kilsyth Hills Regional Scenic Area (RSA) and the Clyde Valley Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), although some amendments to existing boundaries were recommended
5. April 2015 – Following further review, consultants completed a finalised version of the “*Review of North Lanarkshire Local Landscape Character*” recommending special landscape protection for the Kilsyth Hills and Clyde Valley areas.
6. October 2015 – North Lanarkshire Council Planning and Transportation Committee approved recommendations that the status of the Local Landscape Unit areas recommended for protection due to their high landscape quality within the *Review of North Lanarkshire Local Landscape Character* (i.e. The Kilsyth Hills and Clyde Valley), be assessed as material considerations when determining future planning applications until the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan was approved.
7. June 2016 – Statements of Importance prepared for public consultation as part of the supporting non-statutory supplementary planning guidance proposed for the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan Proposed Plan.

4. North Lanarkshire Landscape Character Area Appraisal and Assessment

4.1 The field survey and assessment of the local landscape character of North Lanarkshire was undertaken by landscape consultants (URS). This involved using an agreed standard pro-forma which made possible the identification of key features and characteristics, based upon assessment of the following criteria:

- Topographical characteristics;
- Openness and inter-visibility;
- Settlement patterns and man-made influences;
- Land use;
- Landscape pattern and field boundaries; and
- Landscape quality and condition.

¹ SNH Review 116: Glasgow and Clyde Valley Landscape Character Assessment (1999). Scottish Natural Heritage.

² Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Turbine Development in Glasgow and The Clyde Valley – North Lanarkshire (Land Use Consultants (LUC) June 2014).

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.2 An important part of the field assessment was to establish the landscape value and sensitivity of each area. The evaluation of landscape sensitivity involved consideration of the nature of the landscape and its ability to accommodate change without compromising its key elements or characteristics. Landscape sensitivity was defined through an appraisal of value and landscape susceptibility - the ability or otherwise of a landscape to accommodate change considering factors such as the nature, scale and complexity of the landscape.
- 4.3 Sensitivity criteria within the study were categorised as follows:
- High Landscape Sensitivity - Particularly highly valued landscape character and scenic quality, considered susceptible to relatively small changes e.g. within a designated landscape or recognised as an iconic or important feature of the North Lanarkshire landscape
 - Medium Landscape Sensitivity - Landscapes of local value, quality or rarity, exhibiting some distinct features, considered tolerant of some degree of change e.g. within a landscape typical of much of North Lanarkshire or with landscape elements of local importance.
 - Low Landscape Sensitivity - Landscapes of lower scenic quality, with few distinctive elements or valued characteristics and considered tolerant of a large degree of change e.g. within a degraded or heavily developed landscape.
- 4.4 The appraisal of landscape sensitivity identified an overall rating for each Local Landscape Unit.

Sensitivity to Future Development

- 4.5 The value of the Clyde Valley local landscape character area (and proposed Special Landscape Area) is a result of its relatively undeveloped nature particularly in its southern section and the relative uniqueness of this type of landscape within a North Lanarkshire context. The character of the proposed Special Landscape Area is therefore considered to be highly sensitive to most forms of development as the introduction of unsympathetic development or features could adversely affect the key characteristics and value of the landscape.

5. Statement of Importance

- 5.1 Preparation of this Statement of Importance and supplementary guidance for the Clyde Valley follows SNH's *Guidance on Local Landscape Designations* which suggests (at section .5.2) that a description of approaches to selecting local landscape designations should be included in development plans or their supporting documents. Guidance suggests that a Statement of Importance for each designated area should provide information regarding the designation's location, landscape description, historic land-use character and qualities, including comments on existing developments, settlements, economic activity and features of natural or cultural heritage interest.
- 5.2 Additionally a description and justification for the boundary selected and identification of any significant opportunities for social and economic development and the scope for landscape enhancement through planning gain or support for agriculture or forestry should be provided.
- 5.3 Consultation should be implemented amongst the local community or communities and other stakeholders to gauge levels of support, if any, for the area to be designated. In this case this is done through consultation on the Modified Proposed Plan.

6. Clyde Valley Special Landscape Area

Location and Landscape Overview

- 6.1 The Clyde Valley is located in the southern part of North Lanarkshire. The River Clyde flows into North Lanarkshire at its southernmost point near Garrion Bridge and leaves the authority area approximately 10 kilometres later, just west of the town of Motherwell - although the river and its associated valley, flows northwards just west of a shared boundary with South Lanarkshire for several more kilometres.
- 6.2 Whilst the Clyde Valley can refer to a wider valley which rises to elevations of over 200 metres and extends a number of kilometres distant from the river, the boundaries of the North Lanarkshire Proposed Special Landscape Area is focussed on a section of the Clyde Valley which can be characterised by both sections due to both similar features and a change in topography.
- 6.3 In the southern area from Garrion Bridge to Lower Carbars Farm/Carbars waste water treatment works, it is an incised river valley with a relatively narrow valley floor is no more than approximately 600 metres in width

contained within clearly defined valley sides which slope relatively steeply upwards from the valley floor to a distinctive valley edge and more level plateau behind.

- 6.4 From Lower Carbars Farm northwards to where the Clyde meets the River Avon at Motherwell, the valley opens up having a broader valley floor which acts as a flood plain with more gently sloping sides which again terminate in a distinctive levelling out at the valley edge where it meets the urban edge of Motherwell.

Landscape Description and Character

- 6.5 The River Clyde enters North Lanarkshire near Garrion Bridge and flows in a generally north-westerly direction until it leaves the local authority area at Motherwell. The river is the administrative boundary between North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire at this location. The area proposed for designation as a Special Landscape Area has two distinctive sections, one characterised by a clearly rural character, narrower valley floor and steep enclosing valley sides. The second, more northerly section has a far broader valley floor containing both permanent and semi-permanent water bodies of various sizes. The proposed designation area shares similar characteristics to the Mid Clyde Special Landscape Area on the opposite (western) bank of the Clyde which was designated a Special Landscape Area in 2011 by South Lanarkshire Council.
- 6.6 At the south of the proposed SLA, along the eastern upper edge of the valley is the village of Overton. Further north are the Gowkthrapple and Netherton areas of Wishaw and the Muirhouse area of Motherwell. Gowkthrapple sits further back from the valley edge being separated by a buffer of relatively flat fields whilst Nethertown and Muirhouse are closer.
- 6.7 From the valley floor at the southern section of the proposed SLA these urban settlements cannot generally be seen with the exception of parts of Overtown. In the northern section of the proposed SLA, (i.e. north of Lower Carbars Farm), urban areas can be seen from the valley floor, in particular the high rise housing of Motherwell which sits above the valley and can be viewed by the main communication route through the valley at that point, - the M74 motorway located in South Lanarkshire. However the stark change of contrast between the countryside and urban edge at this section emphasises the scenic value of the valley below.
- 6.8 Built development has until recently been limited to several large country houses, farms and associated cottages which generally compliment the landscape type, with a small number of newer, large detached individual dwellings being built on the slopes below Overton from the early 1960's onwards.



Fig. 1. Southern area of proposed Clyde Valley SLA illustrating steep valley sides, and mixture of policy and native woodland interspersed with field enclosures. (Photo NLC)

Special Landscape Qualities

- 6.9 The Clyde Valley has historically been recognised as an important landscape in terms of its scenic and historic qualities. In contrast to more exposed landscapes and rough grazing of more elevated areas nearby, the valley was known for its prime pastures, its policy woodlands planted for wealthy aristocratic families and its

distinctive horticulture and orchards which reached peak production in the years immediately before and after World War Two.

- 6.10 The stretch of valley between Motherwell and Garrion Bridge at the boundary with South Lanarkshire has a slightly different character to the western, (South Lanarkshire) side of the valley. Whilst the west bank is more given over to pasture land and wooded tributary valleys, the eastern bank is wider and more open in its lower section but has more in terms of former policy woodlands intermixed with wooded gills (steep narrow valleys) such as the Adder's Gill and the Garrion Gill from Lower Carbarns southwards. Remnant policy woodland can be found at Cambusnethan Woods in the south and at Dalziel House Estate, in the northernmost section of the proposed SLA.
- 6.11 Large country houses and castles were constructed in conjunction with the policy woodlands. In the case of the proposed SLA, Cambusnethan Priory and Garrion Tower are both in varying stages of disrepair or dereliction. Dalzell House, however was converted in the 1980's into a number of private dwelling houses and is located within Dalzell House Estate which in the 18th century had over 150 acres of created forest and avenues, walks, vistas and ornamental features and whose basic layout remains similar today to the woodlands, paths and avenues shown on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1864. The Estate grounds are designated in Historic Environment Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes and have a local designation status as a Community Country Park.
- 6.12 The haughs (low wet meadows and large permanent and semi-permanent ponds) which make up the flood plain of the northern section on both sides of the river between Carbarns and Motherwell provide a contrasting changing landscape as water overtops the banks of the river creating larger waterbodies at times of flood and a landscape scattered with smaller ponds and marshland in drier weather. One of the few permanent water bodies is Baron's Haugh which is part of a RSPB nature reserve managed for wetland birds.
- 6.13 The very limited scale of development particularly in the southern section of the proposed SLA has resulted in the west facing slopes retaining a largely rural character of steep valley sides with wooded valleys containing small watercourses feeding in at right angles to the River Clyde particularly in the more southern part of the proposed SLA. Due to the relative inaccessibility and steep incised nature of these side tributaries, the woodland have high nature conservation value having either ancient or semi ancient woodland status. A number of Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) have been designated within the policy and semi-natural woodlands and the wetlands including at Dalziel Estate, Baron's Haugh, and Cambusnethan Woodlands and at Garrion Gill. In addition, Cambusnethan Woodlands also has the status as a Local Nature Reserve with a network of woodland paths.
- 6.14 Whilst there are no large settlements within the area, there are a number of farmsteads, farm buildings and other related structures within the valley area. The only settlement of any size is at Garrion Bridge and consists, in North Lanarkshire, mainly of traditional estate houses and cottages.
- 6.15 A key feature of the proposed SLA is its visibility from the A72 road on the western, South Lanarkshire, side of the valley. This forms part of the Clyde Valley Tourist Route which runs between Hamilton and Lanark and then onwards to the hills of the Upper Clyde area.
- 6.16 Some development over the previous thirty to forty years has adversely impacted on the lower section of the valley. This has been in the form of urban encroachment of both low and high rise housing along the valley edge in its northern section. Additionally a large electricity pylon line crosses the valley in its northern section. Designation of the proposed SLA is intended to prevent further encroachment whilst protecting the valued landscape elements within the valley.
- 6.17 Although development has occurred it has not substantially altered the key characteristics of the area. These characteristics along with that of the complimentary landscape on the South Lanarkshire side of the valley provides a contrasting background to the adjacent urban areas and plateau farmland landscape types and as such is viewed as a highly valued landscape.



Figure 2: North of Upper Carbarns Farm (at right) the valley begins to widen and more urban influences can be seen on the skyline such as high rise development at Motherwell on left. (Photo NLC)

Special Landscape Area Boundary

- 6.18 The boundary of the proposed Clyde Valley SLA is largely defined by existing landscape and settlement features. The area lies along an axis from south-east to north-west following the course of the River Clyde. Its western edges are defined by the boundary with South Lanarkshire and the complimentary Mid Clyde Special Landscape Area within that local authority area.
- 6.19 To the north the proposed area terminates at the point where the Clyde meets the River Avon and Strathclyde Country Park with its associated loch. At this location the valley widens significantly and the area is more clearly urban in nature.
- 6.20 The southern boundary is defined by the administrative boundary where the valley becomes part of South Lanarkshire. To the east the boundary is defined in the northern section by the urban edges of Motherwell and Wishaw, more specifically where Baron's Haugh estate meets with Flemington and Muirhouse, and at the urban edges of Muirhouse and Netherton. Along this boundary the rising slopes of the valley meet with more generally flatter ground.
- 6.21 Between Netherton and Gowkthrapple and from Gowkthrapple to Overton, the proposed boundary is further away from existing urban edge as substantial levels of development have not encroached on the valley edge but again the boundary is largely defined by a point where more level ground start to descend into the valley. The reason for this specific boundary is clear being that should future urban development or encroachment occur, the development will not overtop the valley and spill visually and physically down into the valley. If housing is proposed in these areas consideration will be required of both the shorter range views from within the valley and longer range views of the valley and valley edge from higher points above the valley on the South Lanarkshire side. Extensive buffer planting would be expected to be required to break up the impact of any development when viewed from these shorter and longer range visual receptors.
- 6.22 All except a small portion of the Garrion Gill, a side valley containing the Garrion Burn, which was included in the original Area of Great Landscape Value is excluded in the recommendations of the landscape consultants (URS) report for Special Landscape Area status. However this area is protected from potential future adverse development both by its inaccessible nature within a steep sided, heavily wooded valley, and by designation of various parts of the Gill as a European Special Area of Conservation, a Site of Special Scientific Interest or a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- 6.23 Appendix 1 shows a map of the Clyde Valley Special Landscape Area Boundary

Relationship to Neighbouring Local Authority Designations

- 6.24 As stated the adjoining local planning authority in South Lanarkshire has designated a Mid Clyde Special Landscape Area designation (2011) with similar status to that proposed in this Statement of Importance.

Strategically, the complimentary Mid Clyde SLA in South Lanarkshire continues the designation of the eastern side of the Clyde Valley southwards from North Lanarkshire's southern boundary to an area south of Lanark, from where the Upper Clyde Valley and Tinto Special Landscape Area provides similar status for a more elevated hill farmland and moorland landscape.

Conservation and Opportunities for Landscape Change

- 6.25 During the past thirty years some limited residential development has been allowed within the proposed designated area but this has mainly been in the form of a limited number of single residential dwellings associated with existing building clusters or the former horticulture industry. In the same time period on the opposite side of the valley in South Lanarkshire newer built development has been confined to the settlement of Garrion Bridge.
- 6.26 Whilst the landscape cover and agricultural uses in the North Lanarkshire valley side has remained largely the same, in South Lanarkshire there have been several woodland planting schemes. These vary from an intensively planted conifer plantation below Highlees Farm to more sensitive argi-environment planting schemes nearer the river. Whilst these have added diversity to the landscape, in a few locations they have screened longer range views across the river therefore any future planting schemes in North Lanarkshire should be sensitively designed to ensure that whilst planting may mitigate the impact of new development it should also protect key views and vistas from both sides of the valley.



Fig. 3 View illustrating gradual widening of the proposed SLA from middle to northern sections. (Photo NLC)

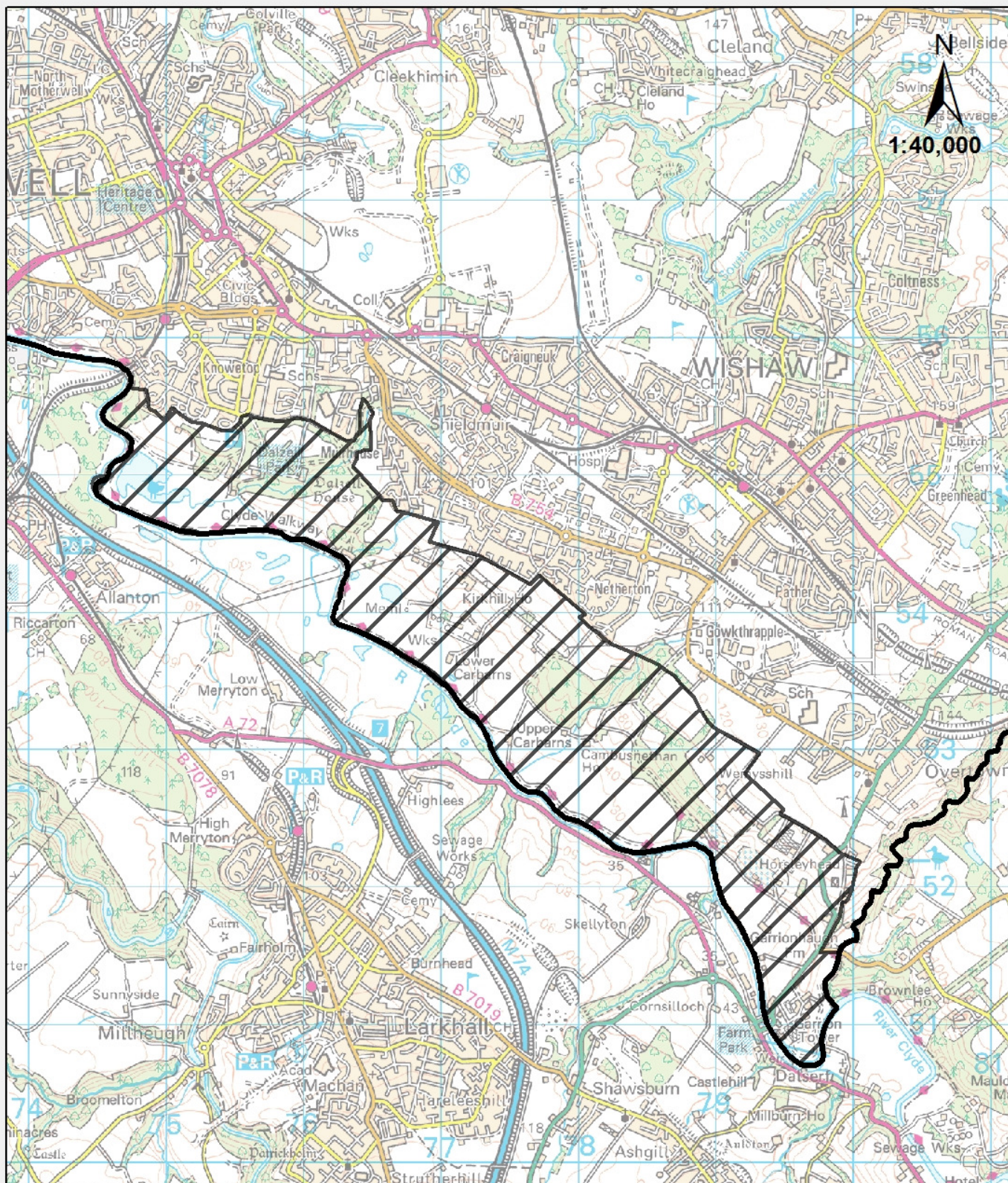
- 6.27 The following landscape conservation issues and opportunities have been identified:
- Continued support for promotion and maintenance of the Clyde Walkway and associated spur paths.
 - Protection and maintenance for conservation purposes of both policy and natural/semi-natural woodlands.
 - In the northern section of the proposed SLA, restoration of historic field boundaries with hedgerows and shelterbelts of native species.
 - Resist the planting of new areas of woodland within the southern section of the SLA within the valley floor and sides but support new planting with native species where this is necessary to mitigate the visual impact of new development whilst also taking into consideration mitigation by appropriate construction materials and colours and the use of green infrastructure planting.
- 6.28 The *Review of North Lanarkshire Local Landscape Character* (URS, 2015) identified that the Clyde Valley Local Landscape Unit warranted specific recognition and protection, as its high landscape quality would be threatened and adversely affected by unsympathetic development within their boundaries.
- 6.29 The *Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Turbine Development in Glasgow and the Clyde Valley – North Lanarkshire* (LUC) (2014) advised that the high sensitivity of the landscape, suggested a lower capacity for wind turbine development at small to medium scales, and no capacity for large or very large turbines.
- 6.30 Enclosed valleys and small-scale wooded landscapes were not generally considered to form suitable sites for turbines, and would be highly sensitive to development.

- 6.31 Beyond the valley edge the report advised that whilst valley fringes may offer more opportunity for siting turbines, consideration required to be given to adverse views from within the valleys of turbines which would be seen on the skyline and additionally the apparent scale of turbines in views from within the valleys should not be excessive in relation to the scale of the valley itself. The report further concluded that the presence of multiple turbines along valley skylines could lead to cumulative impacts on views from within the Valley.
- 6.32 There are no wind turbines within the proposed Special Landscape Area
- 6.33 The following landscape constraints for the purpose of landscape protection have been identified:
- Wind turbines and solar energy developments, are unlikely to be acceptable within the proposed Special Landscape Area due to the sensitivity and capacity assessment.
 - Telecommunications masts and associated telecommunications apparatus may be acceptable within the area to the north of Lower Carbarns however this will be based on the scale of the proposal and an assessment of the landscape and visual impact of the development proposal.
- 6.34 The value of the character of the Clyde Valley proposed Special Landscape Area is considered to be **highly sensitive to development** as the introduction of further artificial structures could adversely affect the key characteristics and value of the landscape. It was therefore recommended by the URS Landscape Character Review that the Clyde Valley be identified as a Special Landscape Area within the Local Development Plan and supported by specific policy protection.



Fig. 4. Even small scale development proposals can have adverse visual impacts. Supplementary guidance will aim to control such impacts on the largely undeveloped rural landscape of the Clyde Valley. (Photo NLC)

Appendix 1 - Map of the Clyde Valley Special Landscape Area Boundary



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Special Landscape Areas:

Clyde Valley

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