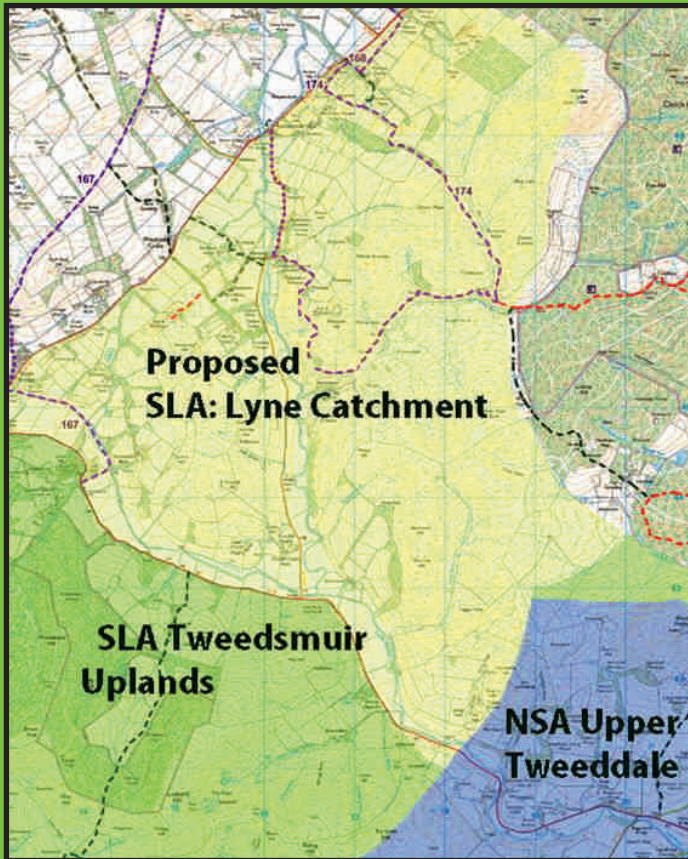


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**Scottish Borders Council.  
Local Development Plan 2013  
Final draft: Modification**



.....  
**Proposal for an amendment  
to the Landscape  
Designations Feb 2014.**

**Made by a group of  
residents local to Newlands**



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*It is a memorable experience to travel along a Borders valley on a bright day in late winter. Traces of vanished ramparts and ditches, hut circles, roads, field rigs and cultivation terraces thrown up by the oblique sunshine as lines of shadow on the green fields of the slope. ...an ancient landscape is projected as an endless and varying show...*

**Christopher Smout,  
Historiographer Royal,  
Edinburgh. 1997.**





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# Executive Summary

This paper has been produced by residents living within the River Lyne catchment. It is in response to Scottish Borders Council's consultation on its proposed Local Development Plan (LDP). More specifically, it focusses on the Tweedsmuir Uplands SLA. We support this designation but feel strongly that the SLA is unduly and unjustifiably restricted in scope. Instead we strongly advocate the inclusion into that SLA of an additional area which we define as the Lyne Catchment, namely part of UPO6, all of RV52 and a small area of UF32. Our reasons for advocating this extension to the SLA are set out in detail in the following submission. In essence, we believe that there is an overwhelming case for the area we define as the Lyne Catchment to be included in the Tweedsmuir SLA because:

- the current designation of the area that makes up the Lyne Catchment undervalues a landscape of great natural beauty and interest.
- the Lyne Catchment is an integral part of the Tweedsmuir SLA geologically, culturally, and scenically.
- the Lyne Catchment is functionally important as a natural boundary to the Tweedsmuir SLA.
- the Lyne Catchment is a diverse natural habitat well worthy of protection for its own sake and even more so for its potential appeal to tourists.

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We have come to this conclusion after reviewing the LLDR produced for SBC by LUC, and identifying weaknesses in it particularly in relation to its assessment of geology, cultural heritage, habitat provision and tourist potential which we address in detail.

We wrote this proposal because we care passionately about the place where we live: a passion that we hope you, the reader, can sympathise with or even share.

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# 1. Policy

**National Planning Framework (NPF2, 2009) states, as its main issue:**

“In their rich diversity, Scotland’s landscapes are a national asset of the highest value. They provide the context for our daily lives, and are a major attraction for our tourist visitors...”

We strongly support that statement, and since landscapes are recognised as among the most valuable of Scotland’s resources, we hope our contribution to Scottish Borders’ LDP is taken seriously.

NPF2 is implemented within Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 2010 which lay out the duties of local authorities. These include:

- Clearly identify and protect locally important landscapes
- Ensure that the distinctive character and special qualities of the landscape are designated in such a way that greater understanding is achieved.
- Ensure that locally designated areas of landscape that are particularly sensitive are not developed.

We do not need to remind Scottish Borders Council of their responsibilities under these policies.

Finally, in relation to landscape designation, we refer to Policy EP2, Areas of Great Landscape Value Scottish Borders Consolidated Local Plan 2011:

“In assessing proposals for development in AGLV’s, the Council will seek to safeguard landscape quality and will have particular regard to the landscape impact of the proposed development.”

We always assumed that would be the case, but it pre-supposes that the test for effect on the landscape will have a lower threshold of acceptable damage in non-designated areas. It is for that reason we are proposing designating two areas in N Tweeddale.

## Existing Designations

- The draft LDP assessed the landscape in the Scottish Borders in a number of clearly-defined land-use types. These included UP (upland pasture) UF (upland farming) and RV (river valley). The system used is described in greater detail below.
- The area we are concerned with, shown on the adjacent map, lies in the NW corner of the Scottish Borders, astride the A72 and east of the A701. It contains two Landscape Character Units (LCU's) each of Upland Pasture (UP05, Broughton Heights and UP06, Eddleston/Lyne Interfluve); two River Valleys (RV 52, Lyne; and RV 59, Middle Tweed) and two Upland Farmland (UF23, West Linton Synclinal Belt and UF32, Skirling).
- The A72 boundary of UP05 is also the northern boundary of the SLA Tweedsmuir Uplands, and the western boundary of RV59 almost corresponds with that of the Tweed National Scenic Area. (see next map).
- Neither UP06 nor RV52 are designated.

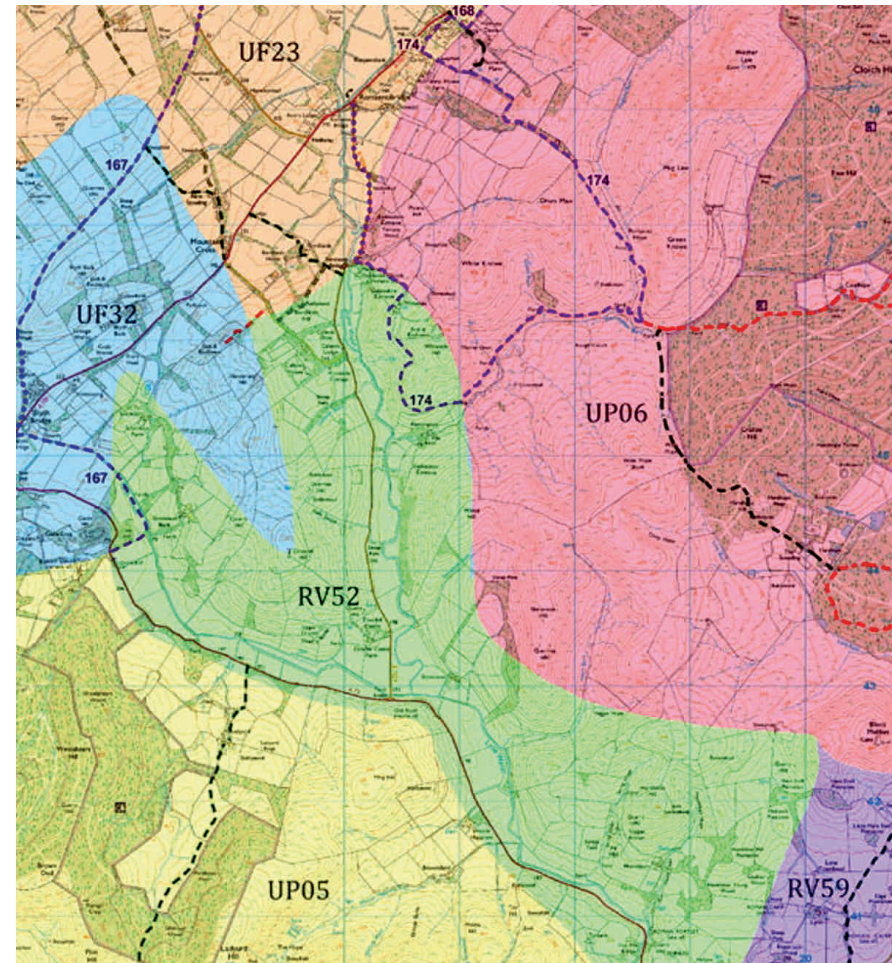


Fig 1. Landscape character units used by SBC. The A701 runs diagonally across the top left sector of the map.



## Proposed Designations

- We propose that part of UP06, all of RV52 and a small inclusion of UF32 (east of the A701) be included in with the Tweedsmuir SLA.
- The area can be defined as the Lyne Catchment. It lies east of the A701 and north of the A72,, and it includes land as far north as Kelly Heads. It roughly follows the old Newlands Parish Boundary along the west edge of Cloich Forest.
- In the rest of this proposal, we refer to it as Lyne Catchment .
- The justification for our proposal is based on:
  - Reassessment of the landscape as reviewed in the LLDC, for UP06 and RV52
  - Review of the geomorphology and geology of Lyne Catchment
  - Review of the cultural value of Lyne Catchment
  - Review of the natural habitats inLyne Catchment.
  - Review of the tourist potential of the area

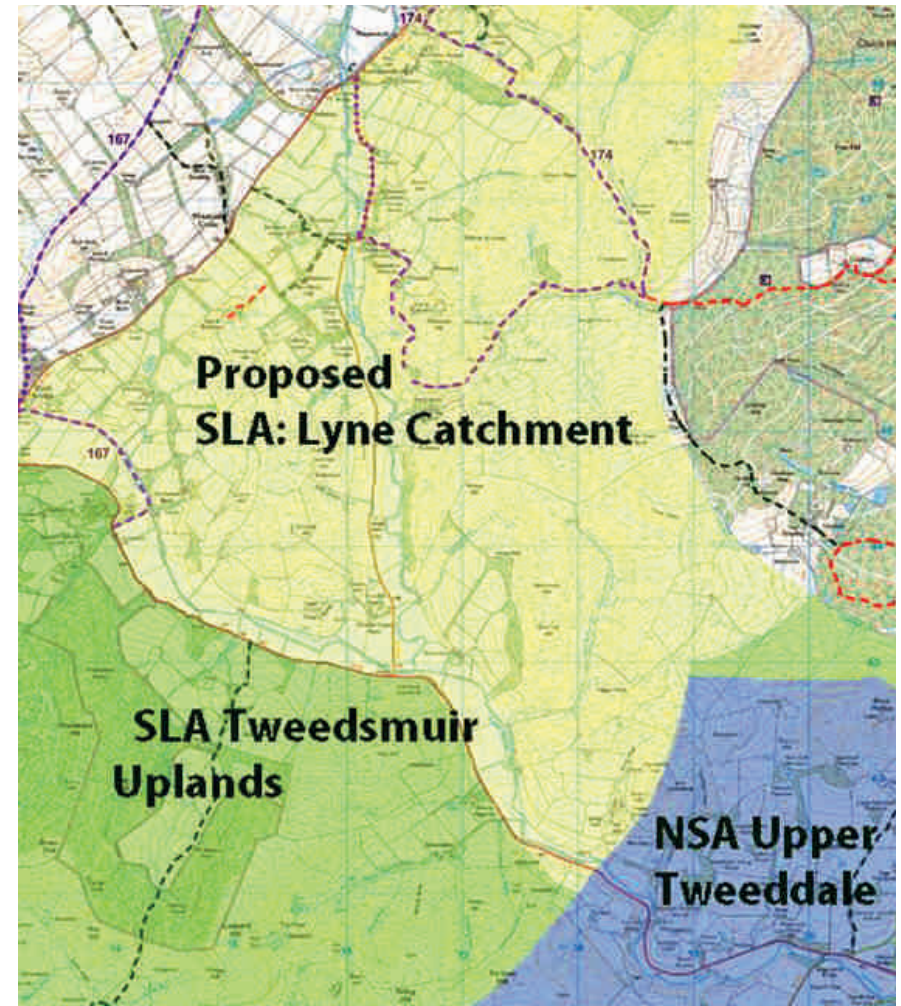


Fig 2. Proposed addition (yellow) to SLA Tweedsmuir Uplands (green).

## 2. Review of SBC Landscape Assessment

Before coming to a conclusion about the inherent qualities of the LCU's that make up the Lyne Catchment, we reviewed the landscape assessment as undertaken for SBC by Land Use Consultants (LUC). We felt that they consistently underscored the attributes of both UPO6 and RV 52, and failed to take account of some issues which we think are in the best interests of SBC to consider.

Bear in mind when reading these data that (1) we are not trained in the art of assessing landscape numerically, but (2) we have the benefit of living locally, and were able to assess landscape qualities throughout the year and from more viewpoints than would have been available to LUC.

We came to the conclusion that the landscape assessment method chosen by both LUC and SBC is a fairly blunt instrument, albeit it may be the only practical one around. This lack of sensitivity is because it is based on a ranked, hierarchical score with a notional cut-off point that may well fail to identify those areas of the Borders where inappropriate development can have a disproportional effect on the economy of the Borders.

- The current Landscape Assessment as applied to the Scottish Borders ranks the scores applied to 14 different Evaluation Criteria which are used to judge the quality of the landscape in each of the 76 identified Landscape Units (see below).

- These criteria are:

1. representativeness
2. rarity
3. condition
4. intactness
5. wildness
6. scenic quality
7. enjoyment
8. cultural qualities
9. habitat value
10. settlement setting
11. views
12. tourist economy
13. consistency } these two not scored.
14. relationships }

- Among these, the scores of four (rarity, scenic quality, settlement setting and views) are given arbitrary weighting to take

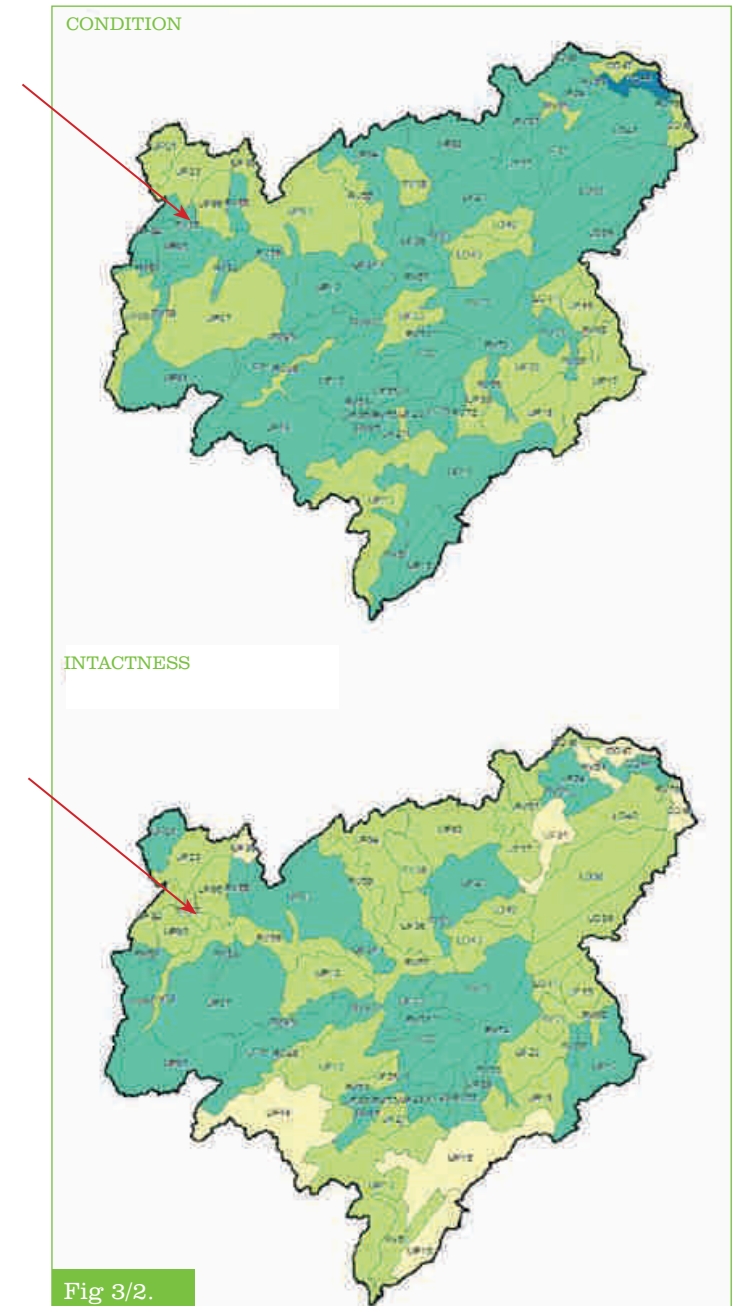
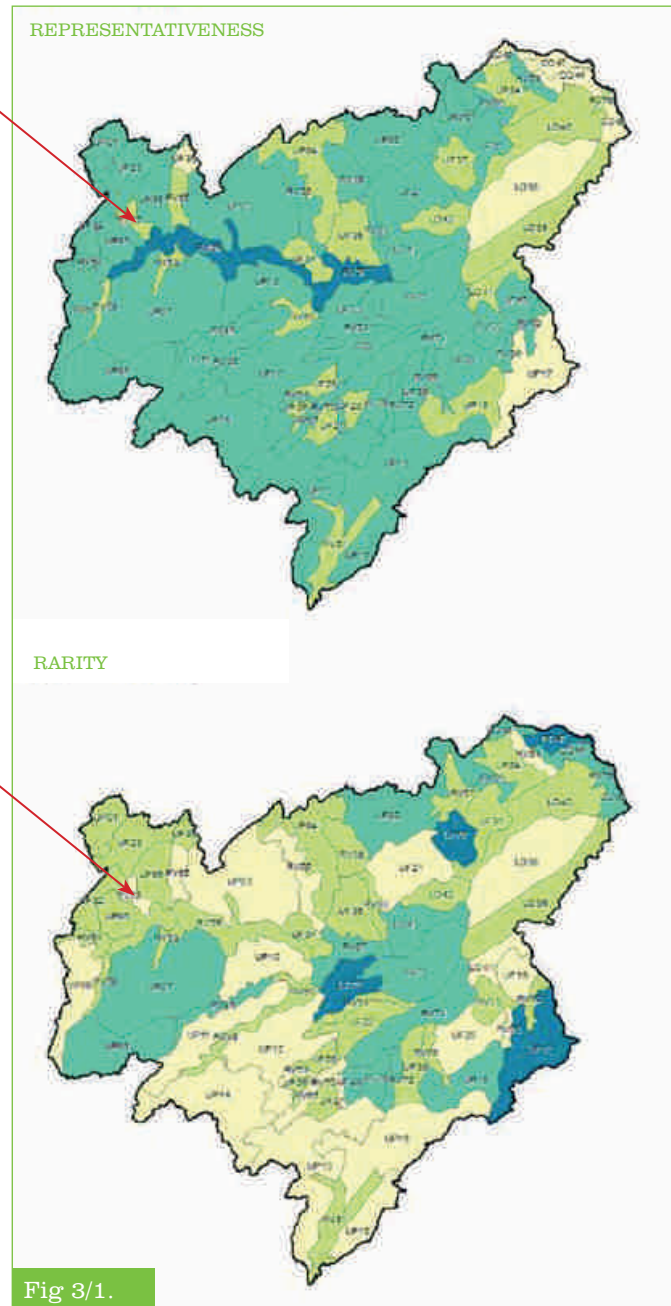
account of their relative contribution to the landscape experience.

- These criteria are used to 'measure' the quality of the landscape in each of 76 landscape units within the Borders, set in three main landscape types (upland pasture UP, upland farming UF and river valley RV).
- The bare and weighted scores for each unit were then ranked, the highest score denoting the landscape of highest value.
- In simple terms, these ranked data were then assessed for the application of landscape designation (such as Special Landscape Area, SLA) to them.
- These assessments were then displayed in 12 maps of the Scottish Borders, which we reproduce below.
- We then review these assessments using our local knowledge and personal experience of this area where we live



These four maps, downloaded from the LUC report, suggest that the assessment graded the landscape of UP 06 and RV 52 (corresponding to the Lyne Catchment) as being moderately representative, but not rare in the Borders, in relatively poor condition, and not subject to major changes.

	Very High
	High
	Medium
	Low



## 1. Representativeness (map Fig 3/1.)

Representativeness seeks to measure the extent to which the landscape is typical of the Borders area. In addition to reviewing the landscape within the Borders, we believe that in an area on the edge of the Borders (especially one as sensitive as is this) as much weight should be given to the landscape as viewed outwith the Borders as within. As seen by a traveling tourist on the A701, the distinction between the Scottish Borders to the south and Midlothian Basin to the north could not be clearer. We believe that the score for UP 06 should reflect this, and perhaps be raised to “High”.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.

The upper photograph (Fig 4.) shows the view, from UF32, of the hills that make up the western part of UP 06, their line corresponding with that of the A701. Cloich forest is just visible above the skyline on the left, whilst the hills that line the Lyne Valley are on the right. This view shows the escarpment formed by the Southern Upland Fault, itself a unique feature of Scotland which is described in more detail elsewhere.

The view to the left, (Fig 5.) taken from that escarpment looking NE, shows how the landscape changes suddenly into the low-lying Midlothian Basin, itself bounded by the Pentland Hills.



## 2. Rarity (map Fig 3/1.)

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The rounded hills and the alluvial valleys which make up the Lyne Catchment are broadly typical of the Scottish Borders, and while they are not rare within the Borders, they represent a landscape unreplicated within Scotland when viewed from beyond the Borders boundary. This sharp edge was created by vast geological forces in the form of the Southern Upland Fault, a feature unique to this area. And since the two gaps in this escarpment provide gateways into the Borders from the North, we are of the view that this iconic landscape deserves some protection.

---

View NE from the A701, near Mountain Cross. The dominant hill in the centre is Drum Maw (1454ft). Whiteside Hillfort is on the extreme right.

Fig 6.





### 3. Condition (map Fig 3/2.)

LUC presumed that the landscape in UP 06 is in poorer condition than that in RV52. This seems hard to substantiate, as these two pictures from different ends of the two areas suggest. On the right, a view from above the A701 looking south towards Deans Hill shows a tidy, well-ordered rural landscape in UP 06; conditions mirrored by Stevenson Farm, Drochil, set within RV52, below.



Fig 7. Deans Hill



Fig 8. Stevenson Farm



## 4. Intactness (map Fig 3/2.)

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This attribute seeks to define the extent to which a landscape has been subject to change in the past which may have reduced its quality. Both UP 06 and RV 52 (together the Lyne Catchment) are landscapes which have been gently and superficially modified for hundreds of years, but these are changes that tend to enhance rather than detract from its true form. Thus, the outline of the hills has not been obscured and the patterns in the fields which lead up to them are not intrusive. Evidence of early mineral working or stone quarrying adds local interest. We very much doubt that there are any landscapes in Scotland which have avoided all change, and we therefore think that this criterion has been under-scored.

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This photograph, looking over the River Lyne towards Whiteside Hill, shows quarrying along the far riverbank, various patterns of land use on the lower, partially cultivated slopes and some evidence of quarrying or mineral mining on the skyline in the form of adits. These changes, which are all superficial, have taken place gradually over an unknown period: probably centuries.

Fig 9.





SCENIC QUALITY

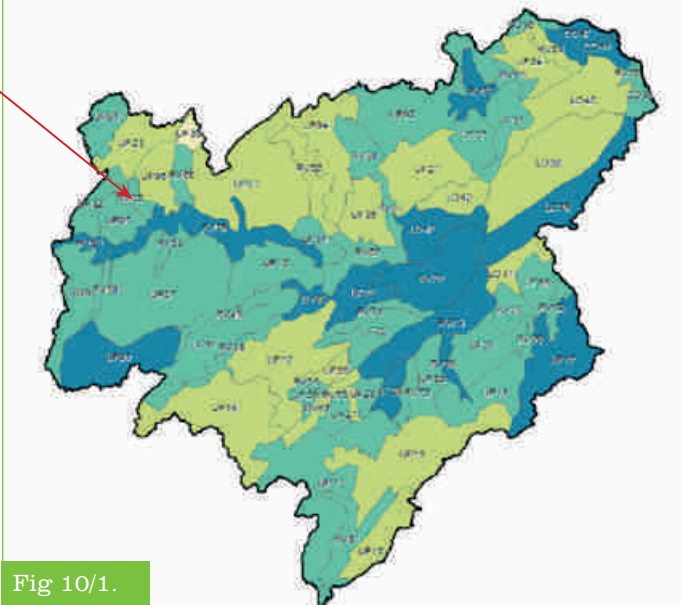
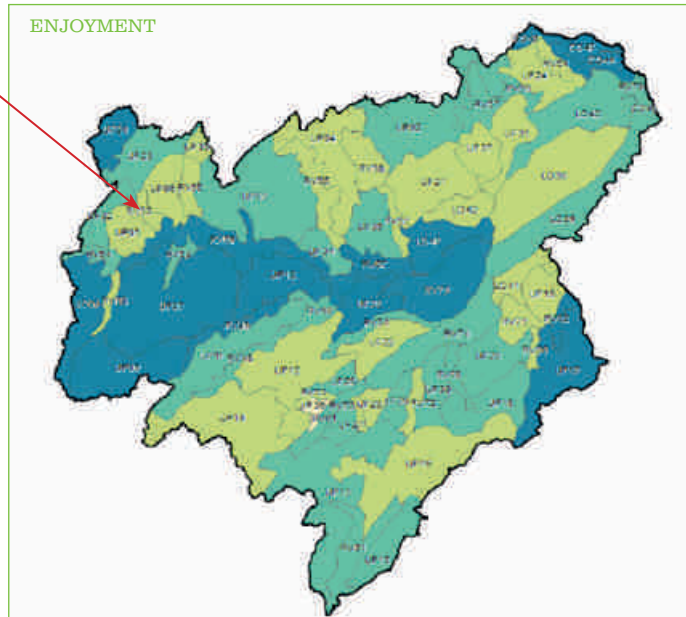


Fig 10/1.



CULTURAL QUALITY

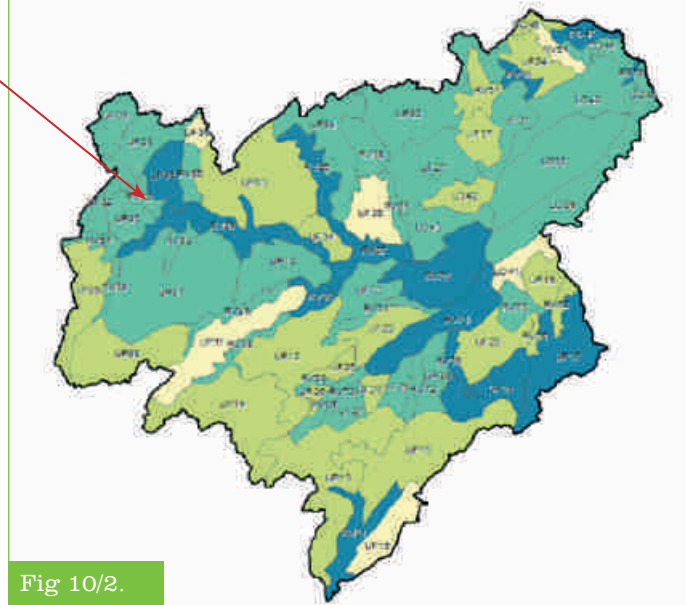


Fig 10/2.

Whilst LUC assessed the hills that make up UP 06 as moderately wild, the Lyne valley is not and the scenic qualities are classed as below average. The area apparently offers little enjoyment, albeit it is recognised as having high cultural value.

	Very High
	High
	Medium
	Low



#### 4. Wildness (map Fig 10/1.)

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The tops of the hills which form the watershed are very bleak and exposed, and are not ventured into for pleasure during stormy weather. But wildness is really a matter of perception, and for the traveller in the comfort of a car on the A701 or the B7059, the exposed tops of the hills appear to be wild throughout most of the year. It is this mix of wildness and management that gives the Lyne Catchment

its attractiveness, as here at Whiteside and Drum Maw. Clearly, the valleys of both the Tarth and Lyne could not be classed as wild. But include them with a landscape that is their catchment (UP 06), and some of the wildness of the hills rubs off on them. The recent SNH exercise mapping Scotland's wildness found that the Lyne catchment had some characteristics of wild land.

Fig 11. Whiteside and Drum Maw  
from Callands





## 6. Scenic quality (map Fig 10/1)

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Scenic quality cannot be objectively measured without understanding the psychological processes which influence human preferences. Some of these processes may be consciously controlled: others that may have been inherited during the course of *Homo sapiens*' evolution are not. So, this is a dangerous criterion on which to base future planning processes. The question is to what extent does the scenic quality contribute to the wider landscape?

Map 7.7 would suggest that the assessors were not particularly impressed by either UP06 or RV52. However, the wider landscape includes views from outwith the Borders which are clearly worth preserving, as this view of Drum Maw from near the A701 would suggest. If quality is a measure of rhythm, detail and shape all leading to different points of interest and thus a heightened perception of what that land IS, then UP 06 has been sorely undervalued.



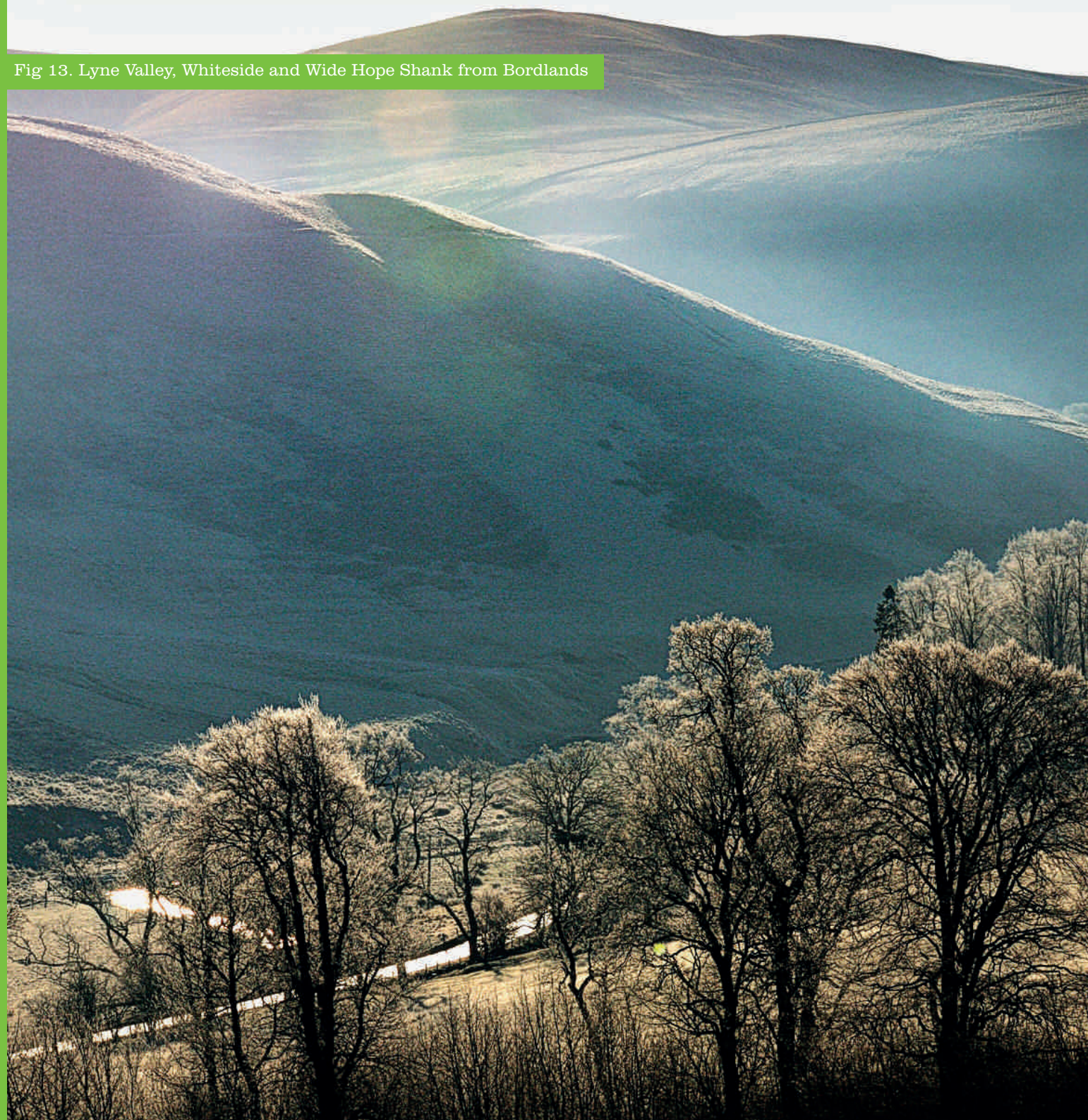
Fig 12. Drum Maw from A701 at Mountain Cross



Fig 13. Lyne Valley, Whiteside and Wide Hope Shank from Bordlands

The assessment also requires the assessor to consider the impact of the landscape on itself. Landscape is not just a series of shapes, lumps and bumps.

Under Scottish light, it is constantly changing and morphing. It is these subtle organic changes that teach us about the place we live, and in that growing perception lies enlightenment and pleasure. Often, it is largely a matter of the effect of light on the shapes and textures of the underlying anatomy and the overlying skin that makes up the experience. A landscape of hills and valleys intercept sunlight better than flat land, and is more fulfilling to observe.





## 7. Enjoyment (map Fig 10/2.)

Contrary to the scoring of LUC, it is our view that the lack of tourist centres, (such as those at Glentress) in this area allows a better appreciation of the Lyne Catchment landscape by locals and visitors alike (see photographs). As it stands the current scoring system could downgrade the potential for this area to be developed to provide a place for rest, relaxation and exercise. Bearing in mind our proximity to the nation's capital, Edinburgh, this would be a lost opportunity.

The Lyne Catchment is sufficiently gentle for young people to enjoy the challenge of taking their first steps in unspoiled nature. This is a significant asset for the Scottish Borders, so easily spoiled and yet so potentially valuable in the long term.



Fig 14. Kite flying, Whiteside Hillfort



Fig 15. ...and jumping the rapids in Lyne.



Fig 16. Boating, Lyne River, Drochil



Fig 17. Facing the ramparts of Whiteside hillfort.





## 8. Cultural qualities (map Fig 10/2.)

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We suspect that the assessors are not aware of all the sites of importance and interest embodied within the area we define as Lyne Catchment, albeit that their score for this criterion is relatively high. To reinforce that view, we will review the most up-to-date information on this aspect later in this document. Suffice it to say that remains from all periods starting in the Mesolithic indicate that the Lyne Valley and its hinterland was an important north/south communications corridor for thousands of years.

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The land below Whiteside Hillfort by Flemington Burn, now somewhat desolate, was once a well-managed, densely-populated landscape in the prehistoric. It indicates what else could be revealed by further aerial survey, including LIDAR.

Note the circular bases of at least two prehistoric dwellings on this photograph, and the interlaced and superimposed boundaries of many field systems.



Fig 18.



The habitat of UP06 and RV52 was judged by LUC to be no better than average, whilst the settlement setting is classed as poor. The views to and from the hills are highly rated, but the valley apparently lacks views. Tourism is not considered to be economically significant.

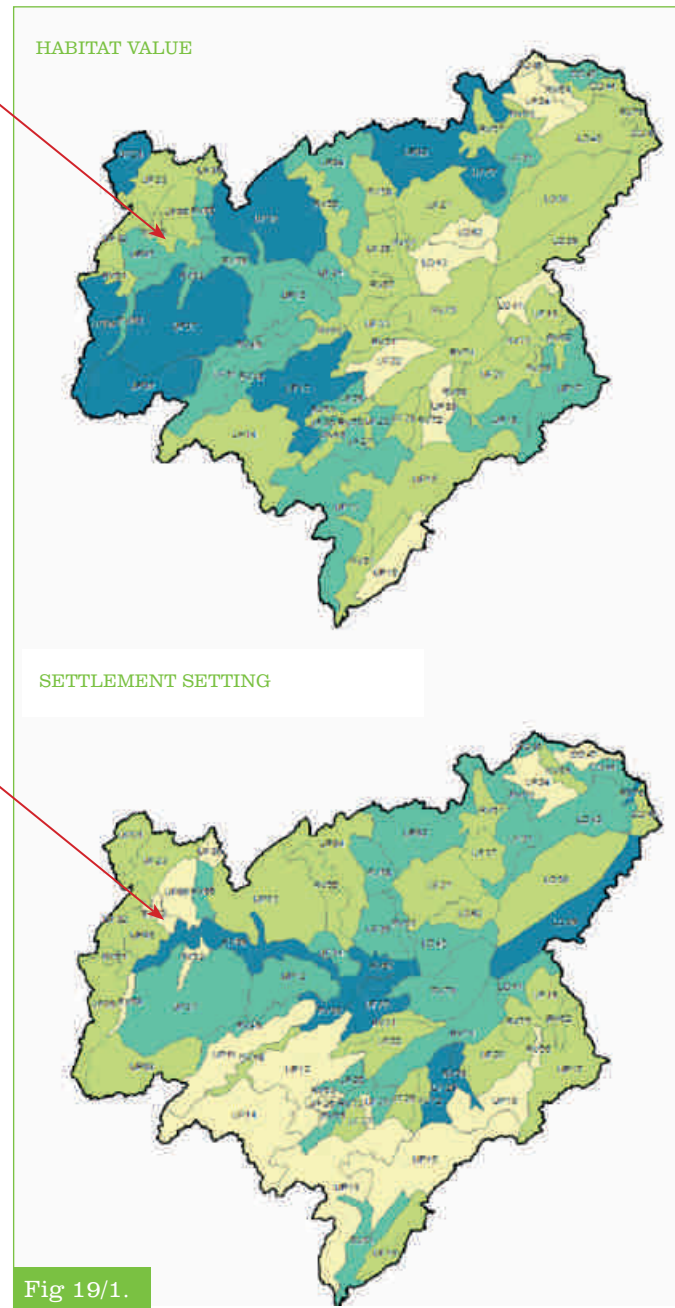


Fig 19/1.

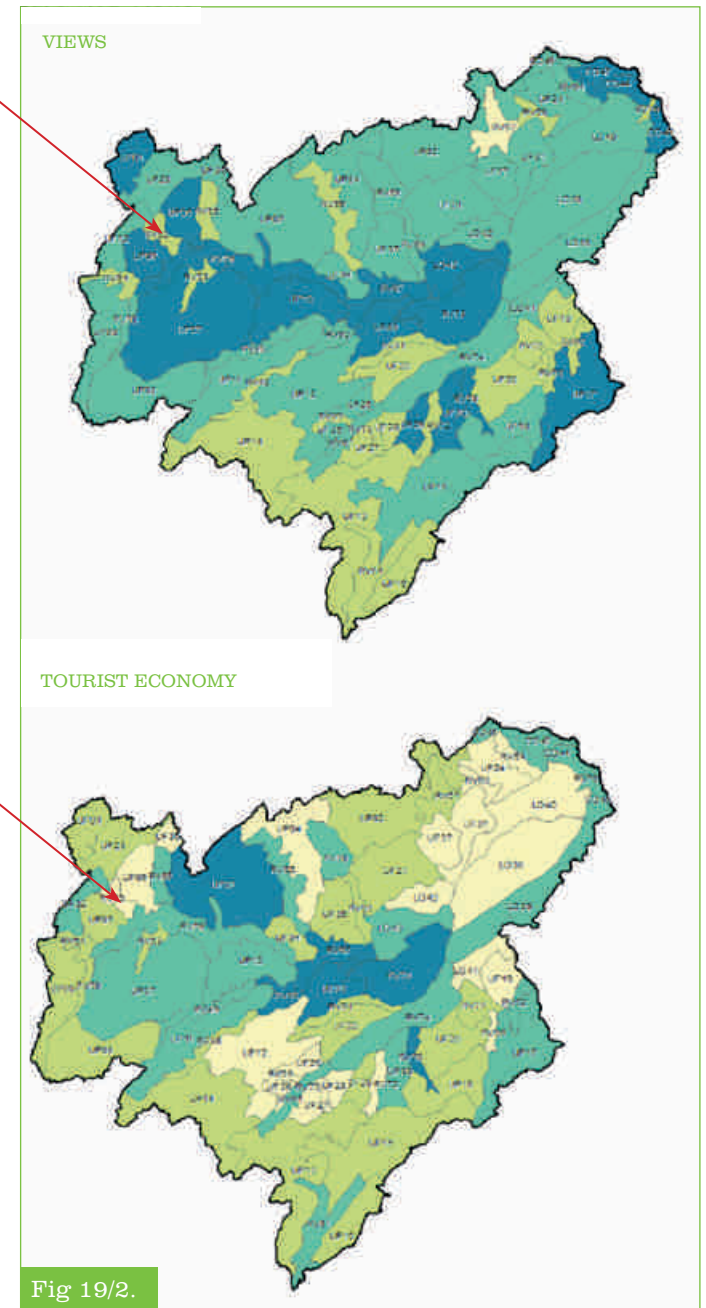


Fig 19/2.

	Very High
	High
	Medium
	Low

## 9. Habitat value (map Fig 19/1.)

A true assessment of the habitat potential of a piece of landscape should take into account the entire ecological envelope of the landscape as it is, and not be split into artificial pocket-handkerchief sized elements. In the Lyne Catchment the hills (UP06) are as integral as the river valleys (RV52) in determining the diversity and the potential value of a site, which in this case has been undervalued. Like the cultural value, we will review this aspect in more detail later in this document.



Fig 20. Wood Hill and Hog Hill from Bordlands.

A wide range of habitat is visible on these two photographs looking south down the Lyne valley, towards the Broughton Heights (UP 05). Add to these the thousands of hectares of open moor and the forest edges on the tops, along with the gardens and policies of the local houses and the potential of the area becomes apparent.



Fig 21. Lyne valley and Broughton heights from Whiteside



## 10. Settlement setting (map Fig 19/1)

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Whilst it is true that relatively few settlements exist within the Lyne Catchment itself, views from it (especially towards the Midlothian Basin) provide excellent opportunity to appreciate settlements from above and in their full context, as in this view from Whiteside north-west over Newlands Church towards Lanarkshire

Fig 22.





Fig 23. Newlands Old Kirk and Manse  
below Drum Maw, from Bordlands Hillfort



## 10. Settlement setting (contd.)

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Nowhere in the Borders is a very long-standing settlement better fitted into its landscape that at Newlands, at a site probably chosen for that reason by early Christian settlers. In this case, the landscape provides the settlement with shelter, water, food for stock, land to cultivate and game to harvest, along with abundant fuel and regular, passing visitors. In turn, the settlement provides peace and security for the local people, in this life and the next.



## 11. Views (map Fig 19/2)

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LUC considered the views around the hills in UP 06 as higher in quality than those of the Lyne Valley, RV52. Whilst we agree (and have illustrated) the quality of views into and from the hills, we dispute the score applied to the Lyne Valley, especially as seen from the A72, the B 7059, and from the public rights of way on the area.

We who travel these roads regularly throughout the year are more than just aware of the dynamic, subtle changes in the landscape as the sun sinks or swirls in squadrons of clouds under a hefty breeze. It is a landscape with its own rhythm, a landscape that flows and grows and dies in the mist.



Fig 24. View from B7059 at Flemington across the Lyne River into the heart of UP 06, winter.



## 11. Views (contd.)

An area can be in full sun one moment; a stage lit by low and slanting light which casts shadows of stories of past endeavors, and stops you in your tracks.



Two views within the Lyne valley: above (Fig 25) in mid-winter looking north to Newlands, below (Fig 26) looking east towards Stevenson Hill with Wood Hill on the left, in late spring. Both photographs taken from the B7059





## 12. Tourist economy (map Fig 19/2)

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Bearing in mind the visibility of the hills that make up UP06 from the major tourist route from England into Scotland along the A701, the low score applied to both UP06 and RV52 is frankly incredible. This is one of the first views of the Southern Uplands escarpment seen by many tourists. Its dominating hill Drum Maw (1454 ft). is as iconic of the Borders as are the Eildons. It marks gateways into the Borders from Edinburgh and Glasgow along river valleys

(Lyne and Tarth) that are jewels in their own right. This view, from the A701 at Mountain Cross, is also a popular place for tourists to stop and photograph. It reminds us that the Lyne Catchment has the resources to encourage rather than to discourage tourism: Scottish Borders Council should use these valuable resources wisely.



Fig 27.

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View towards Bordlands Farm and Drum Maw from the main tourist route into Scotland, the A701, at Mountain Cross