

West Wrexham Ridges and Valleys

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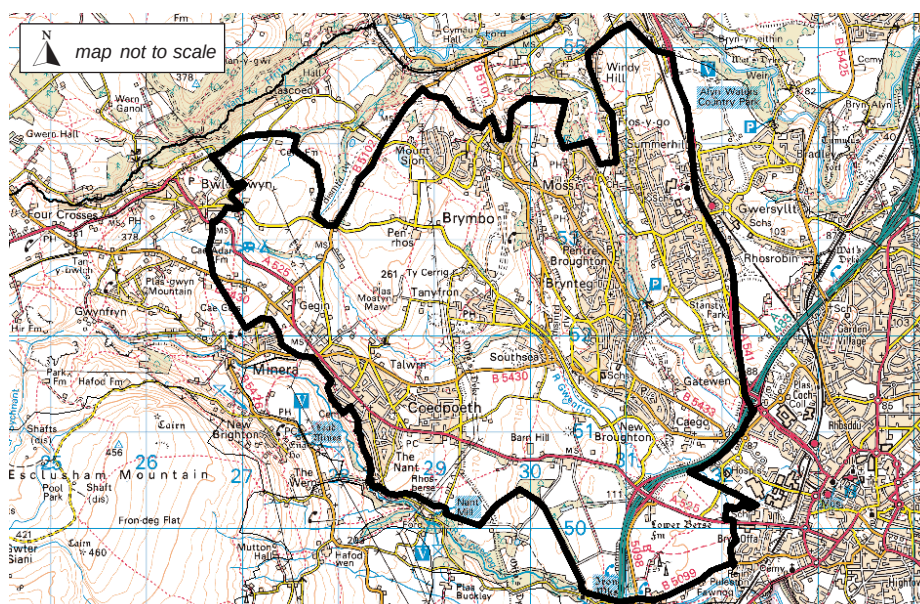
This is one of a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes based on Wrexham LANDMAP (adopted November 2004), setting out recommendations for each Landscape Character area.

A complex area of former mining villages, industry, farmland and woodland in a landscape of distinct ridges and valleys which are aligned towards Wrexham town

Landscape context

West Wrexham Ridges and Valleys is the largest and most varied of four character areas in Wrexham which have a mixed rural and urban landscape. The other areas are Chirk, Rhosllannerchrugog - Rhostyllen, and Cefn Mawr

Map of West Wrexham Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area



Character Area boundaries should be considered transitional rather than precise
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Geological character:

- The complex landform is related to geological faults, with alternating series of resistant sandstone ridges, and Coal Measure valleys of Carboniferous age
- Villages are built on outcrops of Cefn Rock (sandstone) which has been quarried for local building stone
- Glacial till covers much of the lower areas, with glacial sands and gravels towards Wrexham
- Many artificial landforms including the former Brymbo steelworks site

Ecological character:

- Much of the non-built area is improved grassland or arable of relatively low value

Key characteristics

Visual character:

- Visually varied and complex, including lowland, valleys and hill and scarp areas
- Characteristic undulating hill slopes with wooded valleys
- Views towards Wrexham and the lowlands
- Urban villages and Wrexham linked by roads crossing open lowland farmland area
- Scattered groups of buildings in local Cefn sandstone and stone-built village cores, individuality in later additions but much standardised modern housing development



West Wrexham Ridges and Valleys summary:

- Mixed rural and urban village character
- Strong NW-SE orientation, with alternating ridges and valleys
- Hilltop villages separated by woodland, former industrial land and farmland
- Widespread use of local Cefn sandstone in older buildings, and distinctive stone walls
- Changing landscape as post mining restoration and regeneration continue
- Variety of wildlife habitats including small but important wetlands
- Border area - Offa's Dyke and site of prehistoric hillfort



- Important wetlands include reed mace swamp at Gatewen Moss and rich swamp and marshy grassland at Higher Berse Marsh. Gwenfro valley has wet woodland and areas of valuable lowland pasture
- Plas Power tip and the former Brymbo Steelworks site are being restored mainly to broadleaved woodland

Historical character:

- Countryside has remnants of ridge and furrow, regular and irregular fields, but much land has been disturbed
- Most settlement is related to 19th and 20th century mining and industry
- Remnants of Bryn y Gaer prehistoric military hillfort at Pentre Broughton and the route of Offa's dyke can be identified
- Brymbo steelworks heritage area and Plas Power colliery buildings have been preserved
- Network of disused industrial railway lines crosses area

Cultural character:

- Urban villages retain their own cultural identity, but this is becoming weakened
- Area is affected by A483 corridor, which separates it from Wrexham, but increases accessibility to commuters
- Agriculture is still of some importance but horsiculture is an increasing land use

Landscape sensitivity

This area continues to accommodate profound changes, but is vulnerable to further loss of local distinctiveness, and coalescence of villages because of continuing development pressure. The small scale of the ridges and valleys means they are sensitive to large scale development, masts and power lines, and inappropriate engineered landforms

Overall management strategy:

Conservation

Management Guidance

Aims	Guidelines
Enhance character of hill villages and wooded valleys	● Promote urban forestry, strengthen, restore and enhance wooded valleys ● Keep settlements separate and maintain green barrier between villages and Wrexham town ● Encourage the restoration and repair of rural and urban stone walls using local stone ● Avoid standardised new developments using non-local materials and inappropriate highway design
Develop an accessible green network	● Maintain and develop green corridors for wildlife and people, linking rural and urban green spaces
Promote positive management of urban fringe countryside	● Encourage hedgerow retention and management and new hedgerow and tree planting along the urban fringe ● Promote agri-environment agreements to encourage management for public access and wildlife as well as sustainable agricultural production ● Areas for Horsiculture are to conserve traditional field boundaries. Avoid the proliferation of fences, structures and buildings within the countryside, where this would erode character
Conserve geological features	● Maintain continuity and integrity of rock and glacial exposures and landforms
Enhance and extend existing habitats for wildlife	● Maintain high water table in wetland habitats and extend wetland habitats ● Maintain secondary habitats in industrial redevelopments ● Protect potential bat and owl roosting sites in old buildings and walls ● Manage and extend woodlands to improve structure and wildlife value
Preserve archaeological features	● Maintain green areas to preserve surviving archaeology, carry out field and desk studies of fieldscape ● Preserve by record Bryn y Gaer hillfort, evaluate in advance of any development or groundworks ● Evaluate industrial sites in urban villages in advance of development ● Preserve disused railway lines, and assess in wider industrial context ● No development on or near Offa's Dyke - contact Cadw
Preserve local distinctiveness	● Support community cultural initiatives in urban villages, preserve historic appearance of buildings and settlements



For further information contact:

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All our information is available in accessible formats

