

LCA 14: Solva Valley

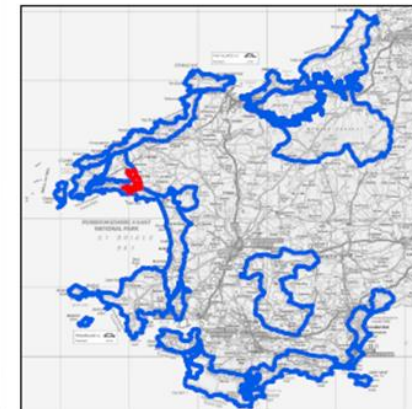
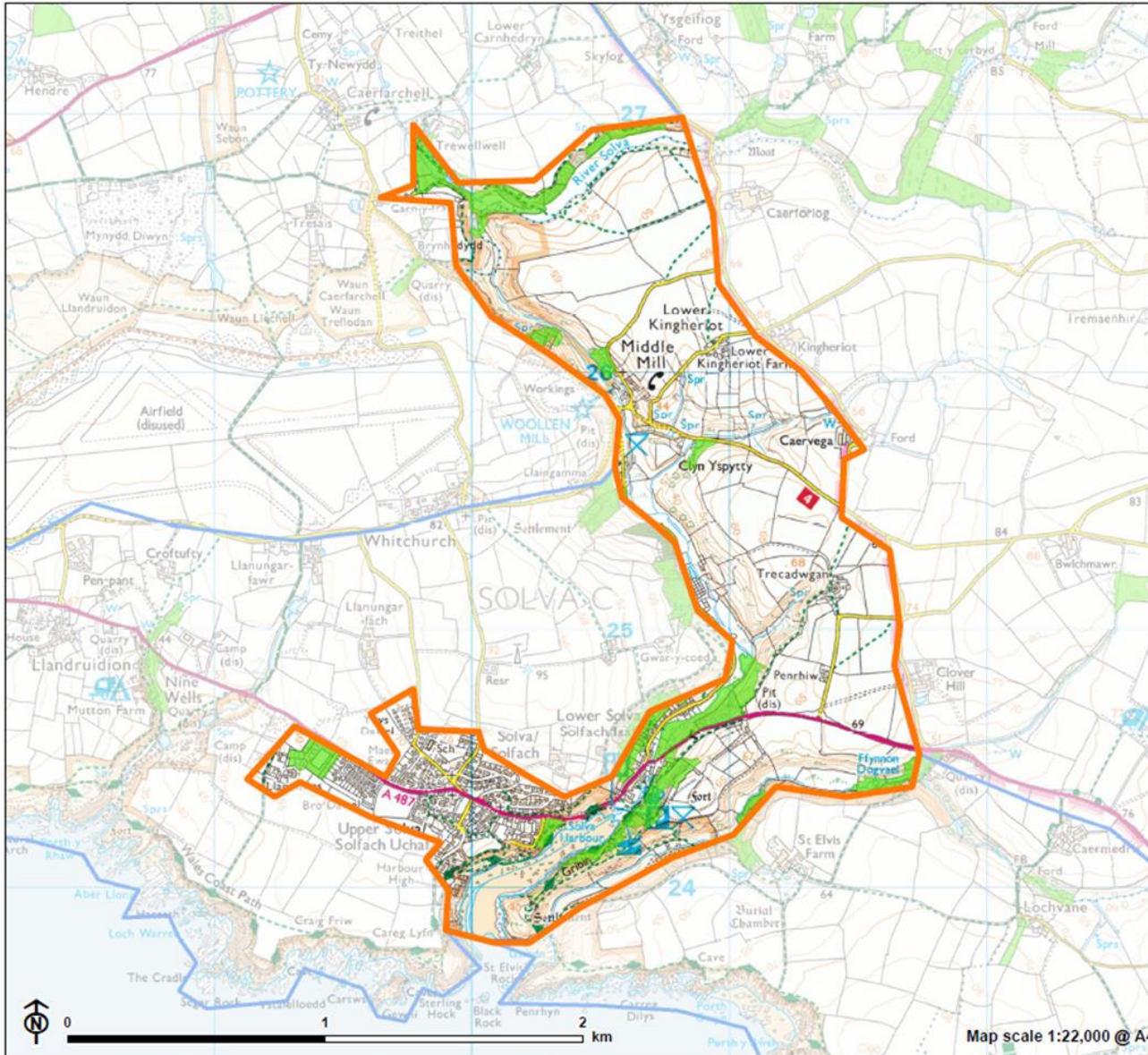
Trees and Woodland Siting and Design Guidance
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority



LCA 14 location and existing woodland coverage

- LCA 14: Solva Valley
- Neighbouring LCA
- Existing Woodland**
- Ancient woodland
- National Forest Inventory woodland*





*The NFI definition of woodland is a minimum area of 0.5 hectares

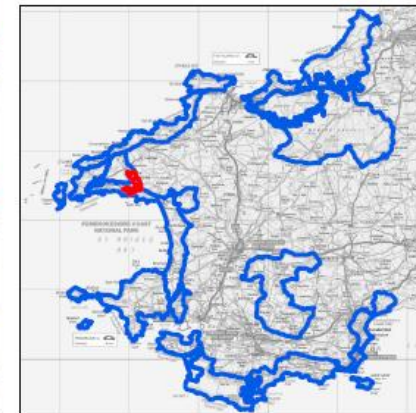
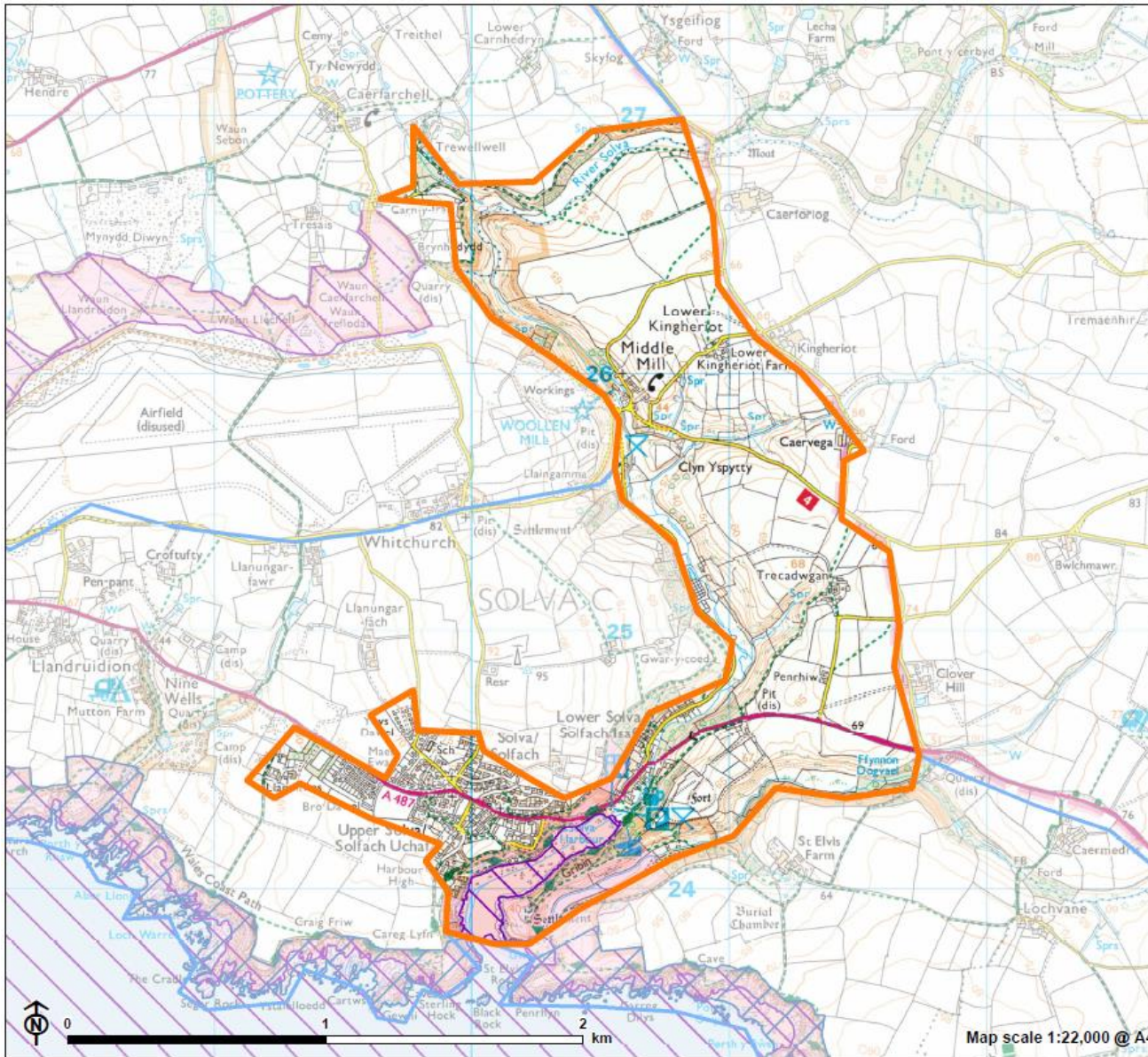


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CB/AHB EB:Collins_N LUC FIGX_11064_r0_LocationAndWoodland_A4L 09/11/2021
Source: OS, FC, NRW

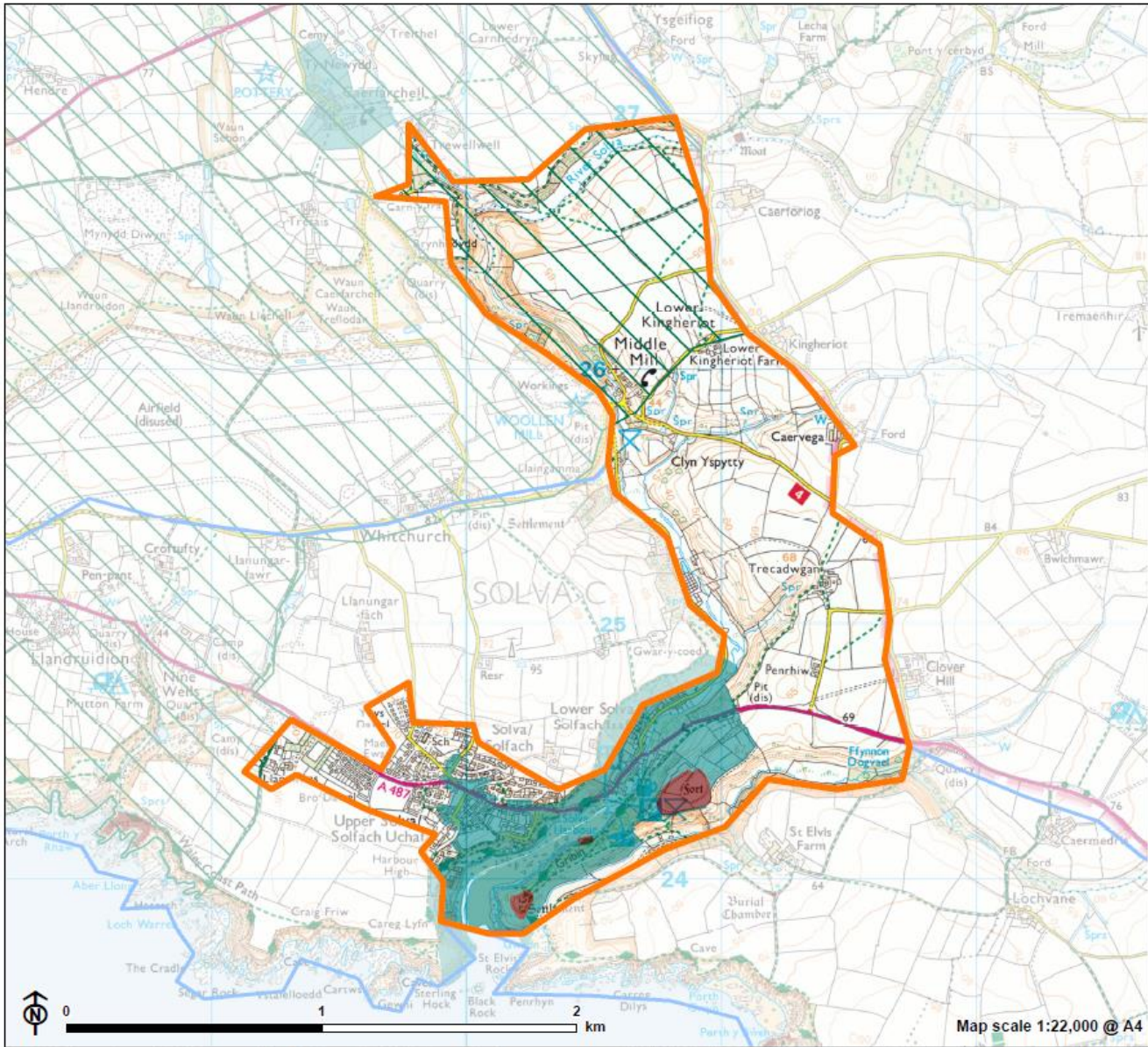
LCA 14 nature conservation designations

-  LCA 14: Solva Valley
-  Neighbouring LCA
-  Special Protection Area
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest



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 Source: OS, NRW



LCA 14 Historic Environment Designations

- LCA 14: Solva Valley
- Neighbouring LCA
- Outstanding Historic Landscape
- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area



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CB:AHB EB:Hardie-Brown_A LUC FIGX_11664_r0_CulturalHeritageDesignations_A4L 30/06/2022
 Source: OS, Cadw

Existing woodland coverage within the LCA



Woodland is concentrated on valley slopes of the River Solva, with smaller scrubby trees on higher land.

This Landscape Character Area (LCA) is characterised by an estuarine river valley surrounded by rolling lowland as it meets the coast in the south of the LCA. Woodland comprises 7.6% of the total land cover, which is primarily broadleaved species (95.7%). The majority of woodland occurs in linear tracts along the course of the River Solva and is interspersed with areas of scrub and bracken. These tracts of woodland tend to be small-scale and are generally less than 10 hectares. Within the farmed landscape, fields are divided by overgrown hedgerows with occasional deciduous trees. Lines of trees are located around some parts of Solva, providing shelter to properties from the exposed coastal conditions.

Natural and cultural heritage designations and records

The focus of this Guide is on the sensitivity and opportunities for woodland creation in relation to landscape character. It can only play an advisory role in the weighing of potential benefits of woodland creation against likely impacts on non-woodland habitats and cultural heritage assets, which should be considered in more detail at site level. Please refer to the main report for more detail.

Natural heritage	SAC, SPA, SSSI NNR, LNR (including Wildlife Trust/ RSPB reserves) Ancient woodland	There are two SAC in the LCA which cover 9.1 ha (3% of the LCA). St David's Peninsula Coast SSSI covers 25.9ha (8.6% of the LCA). Ancient woodland within the LCA amounts to 0.19 ha (0.06% of the LCA).
	Section 7 priority habitats	Semi-natural broadleaved woodland and dense scrub Acid grassland (unimproved, and semi-improved) Intertidal habitats
Cultural heritage	National Park Register of Historic Landscapes	The St David's Peninsula and Ramsey Head Landscape of Special Historic Interest in Wales covers 29% of the LCA. LCA 14 Solva Valley includes 117 HER assets which cover a range of archaeological and historical features, including scheduled and

	Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and HER data	undesigned monuments, listed and non-listed historical buildings and locations of finds. These features date from prehistory up to recent times.
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Landscape sensitivity to new woodland planting

Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The small scale of the intimate estuarine valley landform which contrasts with the more open landform of the gently undulating land in the north-east of the LCA. ■ Semi-natural habitats including important heathland habitats along the valley floor and small marshy grassland and mire habitats associated with watercourses. The southern part of the valley is internationally/nationally designated as SAC/SSSI for both geological and biological features. ■ Bracken and scrub habitats at the southern coastal end of the LCA which support a variety of plant and animal species, including small pearl bordered fritillaries. ■ The extensive woodland cover which clothes the valley sides. ■ The pattern of irregular small to medium sized fields enclosed by hedgerows, with the exception of large fields in the north of the LCA. ■ Solva's historic sense of place and Conservation Area status (which covers much of the south of this LCA). ■ Outstanding historic and archaeological features, particularly lime kilns by Solva harbour and a prehistoric fort and enclosure (all Scheduled Monuments). ■ The northern part of the valley forms part of the wider St David's Peninsula and Ramsey Head Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. ■ Views within the incised valley are limited by the landform and vegetation. Views of the coast from Solva which create a distinct sense of place. ■ The enclosed and intimate qualities of the sheltered wooded valley. On higher ground, the landscape has an open and exposed character and is influenced by the nearby coast.
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Overview	<p>The intimate scale of the valley, wealth of heritage features and semi-natural habitats are sensitive to change from woodland creation. The valley is characterised by extensive woodland cover and there are some opportunities to extend this woodland into the surrounding agricultural land to increase tree cover within this LCA (with up to medium-scale woodlands).</p> <p>Due to the small-scale of the landscape, large-scale woodlands would alter the character of the Solva Valley and its agricultural surroundings, although the large fields in the north of the LCA could potentially accommodate a large-scale woodland.</p> <p>The elevated and coastal areas of the LCA, which are defined by an open and exposed character with extensive views and the setting of Solva Conservation Area, have a high sensitivity to woodland creation of any scale.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to all scales of mixed woodland for this LCA is high.</p>
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Landscape Sensitivity Scores

Small-scale broadleaved woodlands (≤5ha)	Low				
Small-medium scale broadleaved woodlands (>5- 15ha)		Low-moderate			
Medium-scale broadleaved woodlands (>15-30ha)			Moderate		
Large-scale broadleaved woodlands (>30ha)				Moderate-high	

Opportunities for future tree and woodland coverage within the LCA

- There are opportunities for woodland creation, up to medium scale, adjacent to the existing valley woodland to increase woodland coverage in the agricultural land.
- Small or small-medium scale woodland planting along the river valley could provide increased connectivity with existing areas of woodland in adjacent landscapes (both within and outside of the National Park boundary).
- Small-scale woodland creation could provide opportunities to increase the connectivity of existing broadleaved woodlands and linear riparian woodland belts and reinforce their enclosed wooded character.
- There are opportunities to utilise small-scale woodland creation to soften the settlement edge of Upper Solva and improve integration with the landscape.
- Consider the potential for natural regeneration of semi-natural woodland and scrub extending along the watercourses to enhance flood management, water quality, biodiversity and to help prevent soil erosion.
- Site new small-scale woodland to screen farm-based development and integrate within the existing pattern of woodland distribution and land-use.
- Consider the opportunities for the regeneration and extension of traditional wood pasture.
- Any new planting should follow principles of good design as set out in the UK Forestry Standard.
- Choose appropriate native species suited to local conditions (e.g. climate, soil, hydrology, existing vegetation) to achieve a diverse woodland mosaic character.

Strategic guidance for new woodland / tree planting

Landform and scale

- Design woodland to align along existing contours and undulations of the river valley slopes and narrow tributary valleys.
- Avoid the loss or damage of significant geological or geomorphological features, including those within St David's Peninsula Coast SSSI.

Landcover (including semi-natural habitats)

- Avoid adversely affecting existing areas of non-woodland semi-natural habitats, directly or indirectly, and encourage a diversity of habitat networks. This includes internationally important heathland and estuarine habitats designated as SAC/SSSI, as well as bracken and regenerating scrub habitats.

Field pattern

- Restore and reinforce the pattern of pastoral fields by conserving and regenerating hedgerow boundaries and hedgebanks.
- Restore lengths of hedgerow which have been lost as a result of agricultural intensification, particularly in the north of the LCA.
- Consider allowing hedgerows to grow out (where not obscuring public highways/rights of way) through reduced coppicing/flailing cycles, to enhance biodiversity.
- Conserve existing hedgerow trees and plant new ones where absent or to avoid senescence. Choose species which are resilient to pests and diseases.

Existing tree and woodland character

- Conserve and restore existing semi-natural broadleaved woodlands and trees in the landscape, including field boundaries, to improve connectivity and strengthen the landscape framework.
- Encourage a diverse range of native species to build resilience to the impact of pathogens, pests and diseases, e.g. *Phytophthora*, *Chalara* (ash dieback).

Historic character

- Avoid adversely affecting, directly or indirectly, the rich cultural heritage of the area. This includes the historic lime kilns at Solva Harbour and prehistoric forts and enclosures.
- Protect the setting of the Conservation Area at Solva which also includes parts of the landscape surrounding the village.
- The north of the LCA forms a small part of St. David's Headland and Ramsey Head Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historical Interest, and provides part of the wider setting to historic features of the landscape such as the

Conservation Area at Caerfarchell (in LCA 15). The impact of woodland planting on the setting of features which contribute to this historic landscape should be carefully considered.

Visual character

- Conserve the extensive views to the coast and surrounding landscapes from higher ground in the LCA, including the land surrounding the village of Solva and the elevated farmland to the east of the Solva valley.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- Conserve the open character of the coastal part of the LCA. Locate new woodland so that it does not detract from the enjoyment of the exposed and remote quality in these parts of the LCA.
- Enhance the experience for recreational users, ensuring public access is maintained across the network of public rights of way along the coast (including the Pembrokeshire/Wales Coast Path), through the valley and across the adjacent farmland.
- Have regard to the cumulative impact of woodland creation and tree planting, ensuring it does not lead to a change of landscape character, particularly in the more open coastal landscape.



Strongly wooded slopes in the upper Solva Valley, south of Middle Mill



Open farmland north of Middle Mill. Tree cover is limited to hedgerows and small wind-blown shrubs.