

D4 Scout Moor and Shore Moor Fringe

This character area occurs largely within Rossendale and Rochdale, edging the smaller, fragmented moorland blocks of Scout Moor and Knowl Moor, Shore Moor and Inchfield Moor and flanking the valleys containing the Irwell and the Rochdale Canal. Much of the land is at a high altitude (350m) and appears to represent a late stage of enclosure with large regular fields and robust farmhouses high up on the moor edge. In comparison, the gentler slopes down from the moors in the southern part of the area contain a number of secluded valleys such as at Cheesenden Brook and Greenbooth Reservoir. The land remains in agricultural use with both sheep and cattle grazing, although it is clear that many of these are part time holdings and the existence of the dual economy remains essential to the viability of the farms. There are strong links with the urban/industrial economy and diversification into activities such as haulage and scrap metal recycling can be found on farms in some of the highest and inaccessible parts of the area. Much of the grassland is improved and intensively managed; only fragments of the semi-natural habitats of acid grassland/damp grassland and moorland cover remain. Some small scale areas of conifer planting are also evident. The traditional stone walls are often in a poor state of repair and are supplemented by post and barbed wire fencing. Settlement comprises scattered isolated farmhouses often built at the end of long narrow lanes terminating at the moorland edge. These farm complexes frequently include large sheds/barns and makeshift structures associated with diversification activities. High quality stone underlies much of the area and quarrying has long been an important land use with a large number of both active and disused quarries at the junction with the moor. The area is characterised by a very dense network of footpaths which cross the belt of high land between the valleys and the moorland summits.