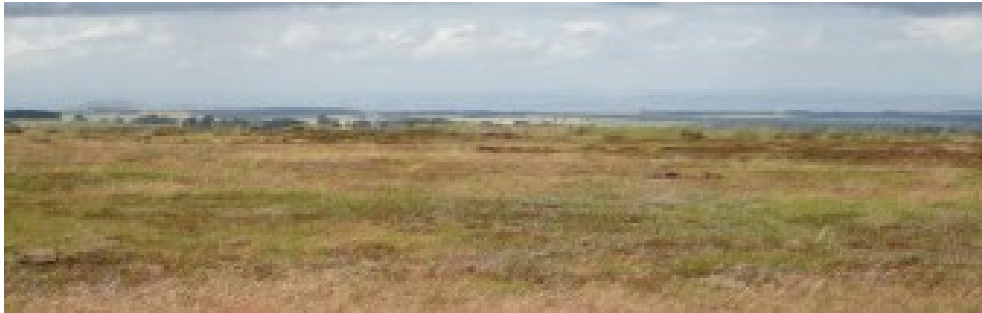


Statement of Importance

Fala Moor Special Landscape Area

Name and location

This Special Landscape Area (SLA) comprises the **Fala Moor** area. It is located in the south-eastern part of Midlothian, on the boundary with the Scottish Borders.



Overview

Key reasons why it is a SLA are:

- The rarity of this secluded and natural upland moorland in Midlothian.
- Extensive open views from the moor across the Lothians.

Fala Moor forms the main part of this SLA. Contained by foothills to the south, it is an open, seemingly remote landscape largely contained from views from the surrounding area yet offering dramatic and panoramic views over the Lothians to the north. The uninhabited plateau of blanket bog and moorland is a rare habitat within Midlothian that is of great ecological value, and contrasts with its surrounding farmed hill slopes and coniferous shelterbelts.

Landscape description

Key components of this landscape are:

- The simple composition, openness and expansiveness of the Fala Moor plateau which is covered with heather moorland and wetter areas of blanket bog.

Statement of Importance

Fala Moor Special Landscape Area

- Gently rolling hill slopes fringing the plateau and patterned by linear coniferous shelterbelts and some mixed streamside woodland associated with the grounds of Cakemuir Castle.
- Fields of improved or rough pasture on the slopes divided by post-and-wire fences or occasional stone walls and fragmented thorn hedges.

The landscape of the Fala Moor area is simple in its composition. The moor forms a transitional terrace between the larger scale Lammermuir uplands to the south in the Scottish Borders and the undulating smaller scale farmland of Midlothian to the north and north-west. The main central area of the moor is an expansive plateau, which gives way to gently rolling hill fringes to the south and west. The small open waterbody of Fala Flow Loch and a few other more minor pools are located within the moorland, with small burns running outwards from these to cut through the slopes surrounding the plateau.

The moor itself is open and unwooded, the exposed level ground being covered by a textured carpet of blanket bog and heather moorland. In contrast, the surrounding slopes are divided by blocky or linear, mainly coniferous shelterbelts, and some mixed streamside woodland near Cakemuir Castle. Fields of improved or rough pasture on the slopes are divided by post-and-wire fences or occasional stone walls and thorn hedges. The boundary to the north is predominantly edged by extensive plantations of conifers, which lie within the adjacent farmland and create a more enclosed character in views north-eastwards. Where the Fala Moor area abuts the Borders, it is enclosed by Cakemuir Hill and its plantations to the west and Brotherstone Hill to the south-east, further containing this SLA and adding to its sense of seclusion and remoteness. The high nature conservation value of Fala Moor has been recognised through RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI designations.

Little evidence of settlement is to be found within the moor itself, aside from the remaining wall of the now-ruinous 17thC Fala Luggie Tower which forms a focal point within the open expanse of the Moor. Nestled within the hill slopes to the north and sitting above a small stream valley, Cakemuir Castle with its stables and walled garden dates from the 16thC and is surrounded by ornamental planting and mature woodlands. The track that runs across the moorland is a way-marked right of way and a core path, offering open panoramic views northwards across the Lothians and the distant Firth of Forth. To the north and east, the secluded character of Fala Moor is intruded upon to some degree by a high-voltage power line and wind farm development.

Statement of Importance

Fala Moor Special Landscape Area

Choice of boundary

Where possible firm boundaries have been chosen for their longevity and robustness to define and identify the SLA. The boundaries of the Fala Moor SLA are formed by the adjacent administrative boundary with Scottish Borders in the west, south and south east; by the Cakemuir Burn in the north-west; and the woodlands, shelterbelts, power line and small burns in the north.

Opportunities for change

Management

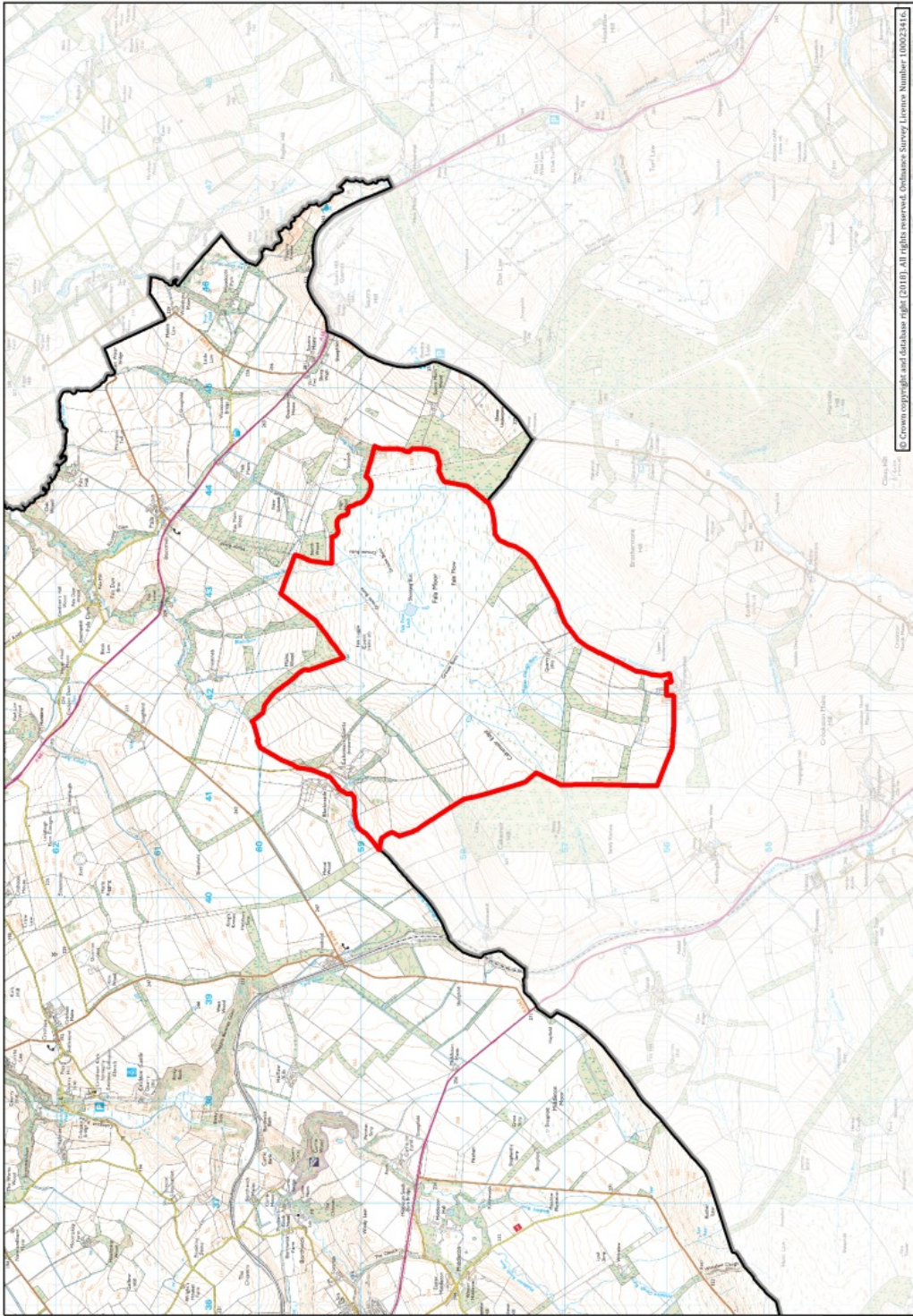
The high nature conservation value of Fala Moor is recognised by its designation as an SSSI and a Natura site. This status, particularly the internationally important Natura designation, aims to protect the natural heritage value of the site through appropriate site management. Good management of the existing tree plantations and woodlands is important to the value and appearance of this landscape.

Development

Important considerations for landscape impact in the preparation and assessment of development proposals include:

- The impact of development and change on the relatively simple open landscape character of the area and how it might draw attention to individual parts of the SLA.
- The impact of development upon distant views in and out of the SLA.

Any development proposals should seek to maintain the essential open and remote character of this landscape.



Fala Moor SLA