



Connah's Quay Low Carbon Power

Environmental Statement Volume IV Appendix 15-B: Landscape Character

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1. Landscape Character

1.1 Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 This Technical Appendix sets out the relevant extracts from published landscape character assessments and associated studies across the study area, at national and local levels.
- 1.1.2 At a national scale, the study area contains two National Landscape Character Areas (NLCA) profiles (Wales):
- NLCA 12 - Bryniau Clwyd / Clwydian Range (Ref 1); and
 - NLCA 13 - Glannau Dyfrdwy a Wrecsam /Deeside and Wrexham (Ref 2).
- 1.1.3 At a national scale, the study area contains three National Character Area (NCA) profiles (England):
- NCA 59: Wirral (Ref 3);
 - NCA 60: Mersey Valley (Ref 4); and
 - NCA 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain (Ref 5).
- 1.1.4 At a national level, the study area is covered by the following Marine Characters Areas (MCA) profiles:
- MCA 01 – Dee Estuary (Ref 6 and Ref 7) and
 - MCA 36 – Dee and Mersey Estuaries and Coastal Waters (Ref 8).
- 1.1.5 At a local level, the study area is covered by the following Landscape Character Areas (LCA) within The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 9):
- LCA 1b Dee Estuarine Edge;
 - LCA 3b Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills;
 - LCA 3c Irby and Pensby Sandstone Hills;
 - LCA 3d Heswall Dales Sandstone Hills;
 - LCA 4b Thornton Hough Lowland Farmland Estates; and
 - LCA 6a Dee Estuary.
- 1.1.6 At a local level, the study area is covered by the following LCAs within A Landscape Strategy for Cheshire West and Cheshire Borough (Ref 10):
- LCA 4d: Burton and Shotwich;
 - LCA 6a: Willaston;
 - LCA 6b: Neston;
 - LCA 6c: Neston and Saughall;
 - LCA 6d: Ness, Burton, Puddington and Shotwick Slopes;

- LCA 6e: Capenhurst Plateau;
- LCA 9d: Saughall to Waverton Plain; and
- LCA 16b: Dee Estuary.

1.1.7 At a local level, the study area is covered by the following LCAs within the LANDMAP Wales (Ref 11):

- LCA Built Land;
- LCA Coastal Intertidal Marsh;
- LCA Lowland;
- LCA Mosaic Rolling Lowland; and
- LCA Upland.

1.1.8 The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape lies at the western boundary of the study area.

1.1.9 At local level, the study area includes also the following Area of Special County Value in Cheshire West and Chester (Ref 10):

- Area 2: Dee Coastal Area (ASCV).

1.2 Introduction

Overview

- 1.2.1 This Technical Appendix supports **Chapter 15: Landscape and Visual Amenity (EN010166/APP/6.2.15)** and describes the baseline landscape character of the Landscape and Visual Amenity (LVIA) study area.
- 1.2.2 This Technical Appendix is focused on the study area including the Construction and Operation Area as defined in **Chapter 3: Location of the Proposed Development (EN010166/APP/6.2.3)** and identified in **Figure 3-2: Areas Described in the ES (EN010166/APP/6.3)**. The Construction and Operation Area comprises the following areas:
- Main Development Area;
 - Repurposed Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Connection Corridor;
 - Proposed CO₂ Connection Corridor;
 - Water Connection Corridor;
 - Electrical Connection Corridor;
 - Surface Water Outfall Area;
 - Construction and Indicative Enhancement Area (C&IEA);
 - Main Development Area Access Works Area;
 - Access to C&IEA; and
 - Alternative Access to Main Development Area.

1.3 National

Existing Landscape Baseline

National Landscape Character Area (Wales)

- 1.3.1 National Landscape Character Areas (Wales) (NLCAs) in the context of the Order limits are shown on **Figure 15-4A: National Landscape Character Areas (EN010166/APP/6.3)**.
- 1.3.2 The Construction and Operation Area is located within NLCA 13 - Glannau Dyfrdwy a Wrecsam /Deeside and Wrexham (Ref 2).
- 1.3.3 The study area is located within two NLCAs under Welsh jurisdiction:
- NLCA 12 - Bryniau Clwyd / Clwydian Range (Ref 1); and
 - NLCA 13 - Glannau Dyfrdwy a Wrecsam /Deeside and Wrexham (Ref 2).
- 1.3.4 A summary of relevant characteristics, as described in the relevant NLCAs, is provided below in **Table 1**.

Table 1: National Landscape Character Areas

National Landscape Character Area (Wales)	Key Characteristics
NLCA 12 - Bryniau Clwyd / Clwydian Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Rounded, heather clad open hills in two main groups, a northern chain rising to Model Famau (554 m), a southern chain rising to Moel y Gamelin (577 m). Formed by sandstones and argillaceous rocks and shales.</i> • <i>Narrow, minor river valleys dissect the hills - draining into the Vales of Clwyd or Llangollen.</i> • <i>A gentle intervening vale - the River Alyn flows north, at times incised, then east.</i> • <i>Well defined western and southern edges – with adjacent deep valleys.</i> • <i>Carboniferous Limestone to the east - with classic scenery of clints, grykes, crags and scarp slopes, use of stone in field boundaries and buildings, large quarries, and in places an exposed appearance. Gentler slopes towards Deeside.</i> • <i>A series of minor rivers - have their sources in the hills, draining west into the Clwyd in the Vale of Clwyd.</i> • <i>Heaths - in the Halkyn Mountain area.</i> • <i>Hedgerows and numerous hedgerow trees - improved hill sheep grazing and lowland pasture.</i> • <i>Quarries and mining heritage – a number of large limestone quarries in the east and slate quarries in the south near Horseshoe Pass. Extensive evidence of old mineral workings on Halkyn Mountain.</i> • <i>Archaeology - a relatively high density of prehistoric ritual and funerary monuments, including round barrows, and later, Iron Age hill forts indicate the area’s past strategic importance.</i> • <i>Historic parks - A number of historic parks and gardens occur within the area, notably Bryngwyn and Penbedw.</i> • <i>Culturally a divide - the area reflects the historical divide between English influences to the east and Welsh influences to the west. Parts of the area are designated as an AONB.</i> • <i>Sparse level of settlement - confined to compact, nucleated hamlets and isolated farmsteads. Crossed by a number of arterial ‘A’ roads, the presence of the A55 Expressway across the northern part of the area is the most apparent”.</i>

National Landscape Character Area (Wales)	Key Characteristics
	<p>Landscape value: As a result of high levels of scenic beauty within parts of the NCA, medium levels of conservation interests and medium levels of cultural heritage interests, landscape value is considered to be medium.</p>
<p>The Construction and Operation Area is located within NLCA 13 - Glannau Dyfrdwy a Wrecsam /Deeside and Wrexham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Lowland, foothills, and levels - sloping down to the lower Dee and Dee Estuary. Carboniferous Coal Measures interspersed with outcrops of Millstone Grit, Holywell shales and Cefn-y-Fedw sandstones. Glacial till, fluvio-glacial and river terrace drift overlay in parts of the valley floor, giving rise to localised gentle land form variation.</i> • <i>A single large river, the Dee, traverses the area. The Dee opens out into a broad estuary with tidal sand and mud flats. A number of minor rivers dissect the landscape, for example, the Alyn and Eitha, and associated streams.</i> • <i>A broad flat flood plain adjacent to the Dee Estuary – with wide open views to Wirral.</i> • <i>Narrow, incised, wooded tributary valleys – many running down from the west.</i> • <i>Mixed pasture and some arable - and farm woodland cover.</i> • <i>Archaeology - variety of historic sites indicate the former strategic importance of the coastal route and the turbulent history of the Marchlands, including Offa’s Dyke and Wat’s Dyke. Late Medieval parklands and ecclesiastical / funerary sites.</i> • <i>Urban settlements - a strongly settled character is apparent in the central and southern parts of the area, with the relatively large, almost linked settlements of Holywell-Connah’s Quay-Mold-Wrexham-Ruabon.</i> • <i>An industrial character - evident in the line of coalesced settlements at Connah’s Quay and Holywell, associated both with the Chester to Holyhead railway line, mining and large-scale power generation and industrial plants. Include landmark scale structures such as Broughton aircraft factory, Shotton Steel works and Connah’s Quay power station. Industry tends to dwarf historic settlement and features e.g., Flint and its castle.</i> • <i>Small settlements – outside urban areas, compact villages associated with landed estates and isolated</i>

National Landscape Character Area (Wales)	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>farmsteads, or coalesced ribbon developments and encroachment upon commons, which are the legacy of the former coal and lead mining industries. Culturally many connections to Chester and Merseyside”.</i></p> <p>Landscape value: The value of NCLA 13 is considered to be medium due to the moderate scenic quality which is influenced by the presence of large-scale industry.</p>

National Character Areas

- 1.3.5 National Character Areas (NCAs) in the context of the Order limits are shown on **Figure 15-4A: National Landscape Character Areas (EN010166/APP/6.3)**.
- 1.3.6 The study area is located within three National Character Areas within England as set out below:
- NCA 59: Wirral (Ref 3);
 - NCA 60: Mersey Valley (Ref 4); and
 - NCA 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain (Ref 5).
- 1.3.7 A summary of relevant characteristics, as described in the relevant NCAs, is provided in **Table 2**.

Table 2: National Character Areas

National Character Area	Key Characteristics
NCA 59: Wirral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A low-lying but gently rolling platform punctuated by low sandstone outcrops, this western portion of the Wirral peninsula stretches from the mid-Wirral sandstone ridge to the Dee Estuary.</i> • <i>Geology is dominated by glacial till overlying Triassic red mudstones and sandstones, with sandstone ridges and outcrops.</i> • <i>The north Wirral coast is characterised by extensive beaches along the foreshore, while the large, funnel-shaped Dee Estuary lies between the Wirral peninsula and north-east Wales.</i> • <i>Drainage is into the Dee Estuary in the west and the Mersey Estuary in the east, with a network of small streams and drainage ditches.</i>

National Character Area	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Woodland is predominantly broadleaved, with woodland cover on sandstone ridges, country parks and country estates.</i> • <i>The formal landscape has been created by former large country estates and the core of the area is mixed agricultural land, with areas of improved pasture, arable farming and market gardens and extensive areas given over to grazing horses.</i> • <i>Fields are defined by intermittent clipped hedgerows, with copses, some red sandstone walls, and field ponds ('marl pits'); coastal areas often feature a geometric field pattern bounded by ditches draining former marshlands".</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of NCA 59 is considered to be high due to the high conservation interest and high levels of tranquility.</p>
<p>NCA 60: Mersey Valley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"The landscape is low-lying, focusing on the broad linear valley of the River Mersey; it is estuarine in the west and has extensive areas of reclaimed mossland in the east.</i> • <i>Underlain by Triassic sandstone, the surface geology is principally drift material: marine and river alluvium in the valley bottom, extensive areas of till, pockets of glacial sands and gravels, with peat in some drainage hollows.</i> • <i>The Mersey Estuary is a defining element in the landscape, with expansive intertidal mudflats/sand flats and low exposed cliffs.</i> • <i>The River Mersey flows from east to west, joined by associated tributaries, although the Mersey itself is often obscured from view.</i> • <i>Trees and woodland are mainly associated with settlements, occasional parkland and isolated woodland blocks; and in recent years new community woodlands have been planted.</i> • <i>Large-scale, open, predominantly flat, high-quality farmland occurs between developments, with primarily arable farming to the north of the valley and a mixture of arable and dairying to the south.</i> • <i>The field pattern is regular and large scale, often defined by hedgerows with isolated hedgerow trees; many hedgerows are intermittent and have been replaced by post-and-wire fencing, while field boundaries on the mosses are marked by ditches.</i> • <i>A range of important wetland habitats remain, including estuarine mudflats/sand flats and fringing</i>

National Character Area	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>salt marshes in the west, remnants of semi-natural mosslands and pockets of basin peats in the east, with the broad river valley in between.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The predominant building material is red brick though some sandstone construction remains, and some survival of earlier timber frame.</i> • <i>There are densely populated urban and suburban areas, with major towns particularly at the river crossings, including Runcorn, Widnes, and Warrington.</i> • <i>There is large-scale, highly visible industrial development, with docks, chemical works, and oil refineries.</i> • <i>The river valley has a dense communication network with motorways, roads, railways, and canals running east–west, and power lines are also prominent”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of NCA 60 is considered to be medium due to the moderate landscape condition with a high level of conservation interest for biodiversity and influenced by large-scale industry.</p>
<p>NCA 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Extensive, gently undulating plain, dominated by thick glacial till from the late Pleistocene Period, producing productive, clay soils and exemplifying characteristic glacial landforms including eskers, glacial fans, kettle holes, moraines and a landscape of meres and mosses.</i> • <i>Prominent discontinuous sandstone ridges of Triassic age, characterised by steep sides and freely draining, generally infertile soil that supports broadleaved and mixed woodland.</i> • <i>Few woodlands, confined to the area around Northwich and to estates, cloughs, and deciduous and mixed woods on the steeper slopes of the wind-swept sandstone ridges. Locally extensive tracts of coniferous woodland and locally distinctive orchards scattered throughout.</i> • <i>Strong field patterns with generally well-maintained boundaries, predominantly hedgerows, with dense, mature hedgerow trees. Sandstone walls occur on the ridges and estate walls and Cheshire-style (curved topped) metal railing fences occur locally on estates in Cheshire.</i> • <i>Dairy farming dominates on the plain, with patches of mixed farming and arable in the north and large areas in the south-east.</i>

National Character Area	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Diversity of wetland habitats includes internationally important meres and mosses comprising lowland raised bog, fen, wet woodland, reedbed and standing water, supporting populations of a host of rare wildlife, including some species of national and international importance”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of NCA 61 is considered to be medium due to the moderate landscape condition with a high level of conservation interest for biodiversity.</p>

Marine Character Areas

- 1.3.8 Marine Character Areas (MCAs) in the context of the Order limits are shown on **Figure 15-4A: National Landscape Character Areas (EN010166/APP/6.3)**.
- 1.3.9 The study area contains two MCAs as set out below:
- MCA 01 – Dee Estuary (Wales) (Ref 6 and Ref 7); and
 - MCA 36 – Dee and Mersey Estuaries and Coastal Waters (England) (Ref 8).
- 1.3.10 The MCA 01 covers the MCA within Wales and borders the area covered by MCA 36 within England. The border between both MCAs is a political boundary and therefore both MCA share some characteristics rather than being distinct from one another. A summary of relevant characteristics, as described in the relevant MCAs, is provided in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Marine Character Areas

Marine Character Areas	Key Characteristics
MCA 01 – Dee Estuary (Ref 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The Dee Estuary forms a natural border between Wales and England, backed by the rising foothills of the Clwydian Range National Landscape.</i> <i>Estuary internationally and nationally designated for biodiversity, the expansive intertidal sand, mudflats, and saltmarsh supports thousands of wetland birds including shelducks, teals, godwits, waders, and tern.</i> <i>Constantly shifting sandbanks with changing depths; hazards marked by numerous buoys, lights, and fog horns, including the former Point of Ayre lighthouse. Main entry channel to the Dee maintained by dredging.</i> <i>Flat, open topography and low water stand means the area can be quickly inundated during high tide. A small bore can develop on a particularly high spring tide.</i>

Marine Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Long-standing importance for trade, defence, and occupation, including the nationally important remains of Flint Castle and Basignwerk Abbey – the latter exploiting the rich natural resources of the coast and surrounding farmland.</i> • <i>The Dee provided the maritime approaches to the Roman port of Chester. Signs of past industry are visible along the length, including abandoned industrial waste heaps.</i> • <i>The remains of historic ships foundering on the sand banks include an emigrant vessel en-route from Liverpool to America in 1801 with 300 passengers (all rescued).</i> • <i>Nationally important industries continue to dominate, including processing plants for Irish Sea gas and servicing plants for the nearby offshore wind farms from the Port of Mostyn.</i> • <i>Waters commercially and recreationally fished, including shrimp trawling and the traditional hand gathering of cockles and mussels.</i> • <i>MCA valued as an important recreational space providing access to the coast for nearby urban populations, including via the Wales Coast Path. RSPB reserves provide opportunities for bird watching.</i> • <i>The sand dunes at the bar of the estuary contain inland views and urban/industrial influence, creating a contrasting maritime character with expansive views along the coast and out to the Irish Sea (with its offshore wind farms).</i> • <i>The sounds and sights of thousands of birds and the expansive intertidal habitats with ever-changing tidal character provide a contrast to nearby human activities and noise”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of MCA 01 is considered to be high due to the high conservation interest and recreational value and moderate scenic quality which is influenced by industry.</p>
<p>Marine Management Organisation (MMO), MCA 36 – Dee and Mersey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Coastal area consisting of the Dee Estuary, the Mersey Estuary, the smaller Alt Estuary, and their associated coastal waters.</i> • <i>Low-lying coastline underlain by Triassic shales and sandstones, which form distinctive, isolated, coastal</i>

Marine Character Areas	Key Characteristics
Estuaries and Coastal Waters	<p><i>outcrops such as Hilbre Island (at the mouth of the Dee) and Perch Rock (Mersey).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A high tidal range and shallow, very gently shelving coastal waters with numerous sand banks and mudflats.</i> • <i>Sandstone bedrock constrains the width of the Mersey near its mouth, channeling water to create strong currents which cause localised tidal scour in places.</i> • <i>The funnel shape of the Dee Estuary encourages sedimentation, largely from longshore drift, which over time has caused ports in the upper reaches of the estuary to silt up. The Dee itself has been channelized in the inner estuary.</i> • <i>The inner Mersey Estuary is composed of extensive intertidal mud and sandflats, distinct areas of rocky shore, and areas of saltmarsh.</i> • <i>Sand dunes are a notable feature, visually and ecologically, in particular the extensive system that starts at Seaforth and continues north for many miles. At up to 25 m high and 5 km wide, it is the largest dune system in England.</i> • <i>Important nursery grounds for herring, plaice, Dover sole and bass. The Dee is also noted for a number of protected fish species, including sturgeon and allis shad, and for shellfish beds.</i> • <i>Commercial fisheries include cockles, mussels, shrimps, bass, plaice, Dover sole, flounder, dab, turbot, brill, codling, whiting, cod, mackerel, and mullet.</i> • <i>Mudflats, sand flats, man-made lagoons and salt marshes are internationally important for a range of wildfowl and wading bird populations, reflected in overlapping international designations across the majority of this MCA.</i> • <i>The Dee Estuary supports a population of grey seals.</i> • <i>At the end of the last glaciation the coast was c.15 km further west. Rising sea levels covered ancient landscapes but prehistoric sites and artefacts have been discovered in the intertidal zone.</i> • <i>The Merseyside Conurbation, centered on Liverpool, developed largely as a result of the physical characteristics of the coastline, with natural tidal pools providing the basis for early docks.</i>

Marine Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A major international port for several hundred years, Liverpool suffered a decline in the 1970s, but remains an important trade hub, with ongoing investment into the 'superport' and a range of associated industries and services. Shipping routes from the Irish Sea converge on the Queens Channel/Crosby Channel to access the Mersey, with onward links inland to the Manchester Ship Canal".</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of MCA 36 is considered to be medium due to the moderate scenic quality which is influenced by the presence of large-scale industry.</p>

Local Character Areas

- 1.3.11 Local Character Areas (LCAs) in the context of the Order limits are shown on **Figure 15-4B: Local Character Areas (EN010166/APP/6.3)**.
- 1.3.12 The study area contains four Landscape Character Types (LCT) identified within The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 9). The LCT are sub-divided into LCA. The relevant characteristics of these LCA are provided in **Table 4**.
- 1.3.13 The following LCT and LCA are located within the study area:
- LCT 1 Coastal/ Estuarine Edge;
 - LCA 1b Dee Estuarine Edge;
 - LCT 3 Sandstone Hills;
 - LCA 3b Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills;
 - LCA 3c Irby and Pensby Sandstone Hills; and
 - LCA 3d Heswall Dales Sandstone Hills;
 - LCT 4 Lowland Farmland and Estates;
 - LCA 4b Thornton Hough Lowland Farmland Estates;
 - LCT 6 Estuaries;
 - LCA 6a Dee Estuary.
- 1.3.14 The study area contains four LCT identified within the Cheshire West and Chester Landscape Strategy (2016) (Ref 10). The LCT are sub-divided into LCA. The relevant characteristics of these LCA are provided in **Table 4**.
- 1.3.15 The LCT located within the study area are as follows:
- LCT4: Drained Marsh;

- LCA 4d Burton and Shotwich;
- LCT6: Enclosed Farmland;
 - LCA 6a: Willaston;
 - LCA 6b: Neston;
 - LCA 6c: Neston to Saughall;
 - LCA 6d: Ness, Burton, Puddington and Shotwick Slopes; and
 - LCA 6e: Capenhurst Plateau.
- LCT9: Cheshire Plain West;
 - LCA 9d Saughall to Waverton Plain;
- LCT 16: Mudflats and Saltmarsh;
 - LCA 16b: Stanlow and Ince Banks.

Table 4: Local Character Areas

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
LCT 1: Coastal / Estuarine Edge	
1b: Dee Estuarine Edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A gently undulating landscape rising from the Dee Estuary. The coastline varies with staggered cliffs in the north and a low-lying plain alongside extensive vegetated saltmarshes in the south.</i> • <i>Small, wooded streams in steep narrow valleys flow west into the Dee. There are a few field ponds scattered across the area.</i> • <i>Extensive estuarine habitats associated with the wider Dee Estuary including intertidal mudflats, coastal saltmarsh, and maritime cliffs and slopes.</i> • <i>Coastal habitats and the rural hinterland beyond are internationally important in supporting bird populations.</i> • <i>Woodland is limited, with small windblown clumps or linear woodland along the coast and more extensive woodland inland around the settlements of Caldy and Heswall, much of which is locally designated.</i> • <i>Mixed pastoral and arable farmland with a regular pattern of small to medium sized fields, many of historic origin, with dense hedgerows.</i> • <i>A popular recreational area centered on Thurstaston Beach and Wirral Country Park with more formal recreation at Heswall and Caldy Golf Courses.</i> • <i>A sparse settlement pattern with scattered farms except for ribbon development between Lower Heswall and the coast, and large caravan sites on the cliff top at Thurstaston. The surrounding urban areas are often</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>screened by woodland. Roads are narrow and rural, and lined with hedgerows.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expansive views from the beach and higher ground over the open water, mudflats, and saltmarsh of the Dee Estuary, to the Welsh coastline.</i> • <i>Wooded ridgelines in the east form a backdrop to the area, and restrict views further inland, except for the spire of St Bartholomew's Church in Thurstaston which forms a landmark feature above the woodland.</i> • <i>The area retains a sense of remoteness and tranquility especially along the coastline. The changing character of the Dee Estuary has a strong influence on the coastal landscape, with contrasting colour and texture between the open water to the north and the broad green expanse of the coastal marsh to the south.</i> <p>Valued Landscape Attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A varied coastal landscape where character changes gradually from north to south with the increasing coastal saltmarsh accretion of the Dee Estuary, which provides natural interest.</i> • <i>Internationally important estuarine habitats including sand dunes, saltmarsh, and mudflats, supporting important populations of breeding, passage, and overwintering birds.</i> • <i>Small regular field pattern reflecting the time depth of the area.</i> • <i>Rural character of the lanes, especially due to hedgerows, provides a sense of tranquility and enclosure.</i> • <i>Recreational opportunities on the coastline and Wirral Country Park and in more formal settings at golf courses allow for enjoyment of the landscape.</i> • <i>Open expansive views over the Dee Estuary to the Welsh hills beyond.</i> • <i>Tranquil rural area, which provides space for quiet enjoyment of the countryside and coastline.</i> • <i>Majority of the area is recognised locally as an Area of Special Landscape Value, considered to be amongst the most outstanding landscapes within Wirral, and provide an important and positive contribution to the distinctive attractiveness of the peninsula”.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 1b is considered to be high due to the high scenic quality and high levels of tranquility and opportunities for recreation.</p>
<p>LCT 3: Sandstone Hills</p>	
<p>3b: Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Wooded hills which form part of a prominent sandstone ridge running north-west to south-east, interspersed with rolling farmland. The highest point at Thurstaston Hill (91 m above ordnance datum (AOD)) has distinctive sandstone pavement outcrops.</i> • <i>Small, wooded brooks flow through the area. Field ponds are common, often surrounded by reedbeds and woodland. There are man-made pools and meres within Royden Park.</i> • <i>A densely wooded landscape, with mature deciduous woodland on higher slopes and along the fringes of brooks, emphasising the landform.</i> • <i>Thurstaston Common, designated as a SSSI, is the largest and best example of lowland heathland in Merseyside, supporting dry acid grassland, lowland heathland, and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.</i> • <i>Mixed farmland with a higher proportion of pasture to arable. A varying field pattern bordered by mature hedgerows and trees and narrow woodland belts.</i> • <i>Much of the area is managed for informal recreation, with a good network of footpaths linking Royden Country Park and open access land at Thurstaston Common and Caldy Hill.</i> • <i>Historic landscapes include Medieval Townfields around Newton and Frankby and parkland at Royden Park.</i> • <i>Sparsely settled except for scattered farms and the compact historic village of Frankby, nestled within woodland with a strong vernacular of sandstone or red brick. Small scale ribbon development extends from the urban areas.</i> • <i>Roads are rural, except for the A540, bound by intact hedgerows or low sandstone walls around settlements.</i> • <i>Expansive views from the ridgeline across Wirral towards Liverpool and Frodsham and over the Dee Estuary to the Welsh hills. The wooded slopes of Thurstaston Hill and Caldy Hill are prominent features within the wider landscape.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strong naturalistic qualities and tranquility despite the proximity of urban settlement, which is mostly screened by woodland.</i> • <i>The landform and vegetation create variety between the enclosed woodland and exposed and windswept ridgeline”.</i> <p>Valued Landscape Attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The distinctive form of the sandstone ridge with rocky outcrops, particularly at Thurstaston and Caldy, which provide a sense of place.</i> • <i>The wooded hillsides which provide a backdrop to the wider landscape and surrounding urban areas.</i> • <i>Valued semi-natural habitats including woodland, heathland, and wetland, reflected through local and national designation.</i> • <i>The wooded parkland and historic field patterns giving the landscape a strong sense of time-depth.</i> • <i>The recreational value of the country park, open access common land and the network of public rights of way.</i> • <i>Strong vernacular of the historic buildings at Frankby which provides a rural and coherent character to the settlement.</i> • <i>The contrast of enclosed views within the wooded landscape and expansive views from the ridgeline east towards Liverpool, and west to Wales and channeled views to the north Wirral coast.</i> <p><i>An area retaining a strong rural character, with a sense of remoteness particularly along the ridgeline”.</i></p> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 3b is considered to be high due to the strong sense of place and rural character in good condition, medium wildlife conservation value, and high levels of tranquility and opportunities for recreation.</p>
<p>3c: Irby and Pensby Sandstone Hills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Elevated undulating landform along a sandstone ridgeline, rising to 85 m AOD east of Telegraph Road before falling steeply towards the Dee Estuary in the west.</i> • <i>Small brooks including the Arrowe Brook flow through the area, lined by wetland and mature woodland.</i> • <i>Prominent mature deciduous woodland, particularly along watercourses, including Harrock Wood and The</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>Dungeon, with smaller woodland blocks around Thurstaston.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mixed farmland with a higher proportion of pasture to arable. Fields are bordered by hedgerows which are fragmented in places with infrequent hedgerow trees.</i> • <i>Varied historic field pattern across the area, including pre-1600s field patterns, Medieval Townfields and pre-Parliamentary enclosure.</i> • <i>The historic village of Thurstaston has a strong vernacular of local red sandstone evident in the many listed buildings and the Church of St Bartholomew and Thurstaston Hall (both Grade II*). The timber framed Irby Hall is Grade II listed and a Scheduled Monument.</i> • <i>The two roads connecting the surrounding settlements have wide verges and low hedgerows. Roads around Thurstaston are narrow and rural, with sandstone boundary walls or grass banks.</i> • <i>Public rights of way run to Harrock Wood, owned by the National Trust, and to The Dungeon. There is minimal public access between Telegraph Road and Irby Road.</i> • <i>Varied views, with more enclosed views to urban areas and wooded ridgelines and open views west to the Dee Estuary and Welsh hills.</i> • <i>The urban edges of Irby, Pensby and Heswall are often visible, and Pensby High School is a dominant feature within the landscape. Pockets of rural tranquility in Thurstaston and along enclosed pathways and through the wooded watercourses”.</i> <p>Valued Landscape Attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“An elevated ridgeline, which is wooded in parts, and provides a backdrop to the surrounding landscape, and a sense of separation between the urban settlements and the coastal landscape along the Dee Estuary.</i> • <i>The meandering course of local brooks which provide visual interest to the area.</i> • <i>Semi-natural wetland habitats, including priority habitat reedbeds, which are characteristic of the area and valued through designation at Backford Road Pond Site of Biological Importance and Local Wildlife Site.</i> • <i>Prominent woodlands including Harrock Wood and The Dungeon, which contain priority habitat lowland</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>deciduous woodland and are valued as Sites of Biological Importance and Local Wildlife Sites.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The historic field patterns which provide time, depth, and interest to the landscape.</i> • <i>The cohesive vernacular of brick and red sandstone in the historic village of Thurstaston, which is designated as a Conservation Area and provides a rural and coherent character to the settlement.</i> • <i>Recreational opportunities along public rights of way, particularly along the wooded watercourses, which provide opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the landscape.</i> • <i>Open character which provides separation between Irby and Pensby.</i> • <i>Long distance views to the west of the Dee Estuary and the Welsh hills and glimpsed views to the east of the Liverpool cathedrals which provide a sense of place.</i> • <i>Majority of the area is recognised locally as an Area of Special Landscape Value, considered to be amongst the most outstanding landscapes within Wirral, and provide an important and positive contribution to the distinctive attractiveness of the peninsula”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 3c is considered to be high due to the strong sense of place and high scenic value, medium levels of wildlife conservation interests, and high levels of tranquility and opportunities for recreation.</p>
<p>3d: Heswall Dales Sandstone Hills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A small sandstone outcrop, forming a distinct landform rising between 60 m and 70 m AOD above the coastal plain along the Dee Estuary.</i> • <i>Watercourses are limited to a small stream in the east, with wet heath on lower lying ground and damp areas in sandstone depressions.</i> • <i>A mosaic of lowland heathland, deciduous woodland and establishing birch scrub and gorse, notified as the nationally important Heswall Dales SSSI.</i> • <i>Dale Farm, a horticultural training centre, is the only development within the area. The town of Heswall surrounds the area.</i> • <i>Open access area with a number of public rights of way.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expansive views across the Dee Estuary towards the Welsh coastline from higher ground, contrast with enclosed wooded views on lower slopes.</i> • <i>A tranquil area, with a sense of isolation and separation from urban areas despite their proximity”.</i> <p>Valued Landscape Attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Windblown vegetation on the ridgeline contrasting with dense woodland on lower slopes create a variety of colours and textures which change with the seasons and provides a sense of place.</i> • <i>Nationally important mosaic of open heathland and enclosed woodland, with high biodiversity value reflected in designation as SSSI, LNR, LWS and SBI.</i> • <i>Recreational value, providing quiet enjoyment of the</i> • <i>wooded countryside in close proximity to the urban area, through a network of footpaths.</i> • <i>Expansive and panoramic views across the Dee Estuary towards the Welsh coast.</i> • <i>A naturalistic ridgeline with a sense of remoteness despite the proximity of the surrounding conurbation.</i> • <i>The area is recognised locally as an Area of Special Landscape Value, considered to be amongst the most outstanding landscapes within Wirral, and provide an important and positive contribution to the distinctive attractiveness of the peninsula”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 3d is considered to be high due to the strong sense of place and high scenic value, medium levels of wildlife conservation interests, and high levels of tranquility and opportunities for recreation.</p>
4b: Thornton Hough Lowland Farmland and Estates	<p>LCT 4: Lowland Farmland and Estates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A largely flat landform between 40 m and 50 m AOD, rising to wooded ridgelines outside the area which create a bowl-like landscape.</i> • <i>Small watercourses run north to join the Prenton Brook and east to join the Clatter Brook.</i> • <i>Numerous field ponds are found throughout the area, typically set within priority habitat mixed deciduous woodland, with some reedbed.</i> • <i>Substantial geometric blocks of priority habitat mixed deciduous woodland are prominent within large arable fields. There are some areas of conifer planting.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An agricultural landscape, with regular large fields in arable and pastoral use. Fields are bordered by well-maintained mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees or Cheshire rail fencing which provides an estate character.</i> • <i>Pockets of parkland around halls and former estates including Grade II* Registered Park and Garden at Thornton Manor. Formal avenues extending from Thornton Manor are bordered by ornamental trees such as sweet chestnut and sycamore.</i> • <i>Little settlement except for the villages of Thornton Hough and Brimstage and scattered historic farmsteads built of red sandstone. Thornton Hough has a distinct historic vernacular of black and white panelling on red brick or sandstone.</i> • <i>The road pattern is sparse and largely rural, with the exception of the M53 which cuts through the north-east of the area.</i> • <i>Few public rights of way, particularly in the north.</i> • <i>There has been some diversification of farms for recreational use e.g., maize maze at Brimstage Hall.</i> • <i>Open views across farmland, framed by woodland blocks and the wooded ridgeline of Store ton Woods on the horizon.</i> • <i>A rural and tranquil landscape despite its proximity to the M53 and large urban areas to the east”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 4b is considered to be medium due to the moderate scenic quality with some detracting elements, medium levels of tranquility and limited opportunities for recreation.</p>
6a: Dee Estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Low-lying estuary edges underlain by sandstone with sections of eroding clay cliffs near Thurstaston which form a vertical drop to the beach below and are notified as the Dee Cliffs SSSI. Extensive deposits of sand, silt and clay left by the River Dee give rise to the distinctive characteristics of the Dee Estuary.</i> • <i>A high tidal range and shallow, very gently shelving sea floor, with comparatively little water occupying so large a basin. Winding channels form intricate patterns in the saltmarsh to the south, with a wider estuarine channel to the north opening out in coastal waters at the mouth of the estuary.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Internationally important estuary habitats with expansive inter-tidal mudflats, sandflats and saltmarsh which supports thousands of wetland birds, reflected in the overlapping SAC, SPA, Marine Protection Area and Ramsar designations. Particularly important habitat for populations of shelducks, teals, godwit, tern, and waders.</i> • <i>Dee Estuary SSSI is notified for benthic fauna, saltmarsh, and transitional habitats. There is a visible succession of pioneer vegetation colonising intertidal mudflats through lower, middle, and upper saltmarsh and on to brackish and freshwater transitions with reed beds to the top of the shore.</i> • <i>The estuary supports a population of grey seals and is an important breeding and nursery ground for coastal fish species and sand eels and route for migratory fish species such as lamprey”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 6a is considered to be high due to the high conservation interests for biodiversity, medium levels of tranquility and limited opportunities for recreation.</p>

Cheshire West and Chester Landscape Strategy 2016

LCT 4: Drained Marsh

LCA 4d: Burton and Shotwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A very flat, low lying landscape (up to 5 m AOD) of former tidal marsh alongside the Dee Estuary, contrasting with farmland sloping down from the east.</i> • <i>An area originally part of the tidal estuary of the River Dee before silting up after the Roman period, reclaimed during the 18th & 19th centuries to produce productive farmland, with further improvement at the northern end as part of the development of the Wrexham to Bidston railway.</i> • <i>Mixed agricultural pasture and arable land use.</i> • <i>Ditches and areas of species rich grassland are of nature conservation interest.</i> • <i>The flat landscape is etched with a distinctive pattern of straight drainage ditches and channels which delineate the regular, rectangular field pattern.</i> • <i>Incomplete hedgerow boundaries provide partial enclosure along some field boundaries.</i> • <i>Lack of trees provides an open, exposed, windswept landscape.</i> • <i>Absence of settlement and roads.</i>
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Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A number of rights of way cross the area and National Cycle Route (NCR)5 follows a disused railway (now the Chester Millennium Greenway) near the southern end</i> • <i>The A550 cuts through the centre of the character area, and the Wrexham to Bidston railway passes along the eastern edge.</i> • <i>The transport corridors add movement and noise to an otherwise remote, empty landscape.</i> • <i>The flat, open landscape provides clear views across the Dee Estuary to the hills of north Wales to the west and to the Shotton industrial area where Connah's Quay power station and the Dee Bridge are visually prominent.</i> • <i>Recreational fishing ponds and RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands reserve with a mosaic of wetland habitats important for birds including internationally designated Ramsar site.</i> • <i>Iron Age promontory fort at Burton Point”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 4d is considered to be low due to the low scenic quality with detracting elements, limited opportunities for recreation, and medium levels of conservation interests for biodiversity.</p>

LCT 6: Enclosed Farmland

LCA 6a: Willaston	<p>The study area covers small sections of this LCA in the area of Neston and an area east of the A540 north-east Burton. There is a strong urban and suburban as well as busy transport infrastructure (A540) influence on the landscape character in the section around Neston. An extract of key landscape characteristics is listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The gently undulating topography, between 5 m and 70 m AOD, generally falling from a high point along the A540 Chester High Road near Windle Hill eastwards to the River Mersey and westwards to the River Dee, flattening out to the south.</i> • <i>A small area to the north of Neston/Parkgate is designated at the county level as part of the Dee Coastal Area of Special County Value (ASCV) by the former Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council for its high landscape quality – this area to the north of Boathouse Lane comprises mixed arable and pasture fields, including equestrian facilities associated with Barkwood Hall and Farm, gently falling from 6 to 5 m</i>
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Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>AOD with extensive, panoramic views across the Dee Estuary to the Welsh hills.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Close proximity to a number of settlements and other urban influences including main roads and industrial areas, has a significant effect on the character of some areas.</i> • <i>Fields are mostly bounded by a strong, intact, hedgerow system, with hedgerow trees prominent in some areas but less so in others. Where these are accompanied by blocks of woodland, copses and wooded linear screening belts there is a strongly verdant character, such as on the edge of settlement and around manor houses and industrial areas.</i> • <i>Sandstone walls and metal 'Cheshire Railings' are also boundary features in some areas.</i> • <i>A small area to the north of Neston is designated at the county level as part of the Dee Coastal Area of Special County Value (ASCV) by the former Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council for its high landscape quality.</i> • <i>Settlement is centred along roads; the main settlement of Willaston has expanded along the B5151 and B5133, with smaller nucleated villages at Hooton and Childer Thornton along the main A550 and A41, whilst linear development has occurred along the 'B' roads radiating out from Neston and along the main A540; farmsteads, cottages and large detached properties are scattered throughout the area.</i> • <i>Landscape scale, enclosure and views are dependent on location; from small scale enclosure where views are limited by hedgerows, trees and woodland, to larger scale open views from elevated vantage points such as north of Neston with expansive views westward across the Dee estuary towards North Wales and the Clwydian Hills.</i> • <i>Electricity pylons, the Birkenhead-Chester railway and M53 to the north are visually intrusive".</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 6a within the study area is considered to be medium. The majority of the area is located within urban or suburban characteristics and along transport corridors. However, there is a small area of the Dee Coastal Area of Special County Value (ASCV) north of Neston due to the high scenic quality despite some detracting</p>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p>elements, opportunity for recreation, and medium levels of conservation interests for biodiversity.</p>
<p>LCA 6b: Neston</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A low lying area (0-20 m AOD) which slopes gently westwards down towards the coast.</i> • <i>The strong field pattern of post medieval regular, rectangular small to medium sized fields bounded by hedgerows and trees.</i> • <i>Fields are used as horse paddocks, with shelters evident in a number of fields.</i> • <i>Small woodland blocks in field corners.</i> • <i>Linear wooded green corridors along two dismantled railways provide enclosure to the eastern part of the character area, whilst tall relatively dense vegetation along the northern and southern boundaries allows only glimpsed views of Neston.</i> • <i>An area of small ponds and unimproved neutral grassland in the north-eastern corner, known as ‘The Intake’, is recognised as a local wildlife site.</i> • <i>A series of springs and ponds located across the character area</i> • <i>A predominantly open, unsettled area with only one small farmstead and a couple of cottages towards the centre of the area - a sewage works occupies a similar location.</i> • <i>Designated at the county level as part of the Dee Coastal Area of Special County Value (ASCV) by the former Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council for its high landscape quality.</i> • <i>Dismantled railways and other evidence of past coal mining activity close to the shoreline in the southern corner at Little Neston – now reclaimed with trees and shrubs.</i> • <i>‘Old Quay’ was located on a tidal creek at the junction of Great and Little Neston providing evidence of the past importance of the areas location on the coast. Sandstone walls and steps are retained along the old shoreline.</i> • <i>Panoramic views westwards across the Dee Estuary towards north Wales and the Clwydian Hills from most parts of the character area, including from a popular footpath that follows the shore line.</i> • <i>Other rights of way along field boundaries and Old Quay Lane provide access between the estuary inland</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>to Neston, including links to the Sustrans NCR 56 Wirral Way Recreational Route / Wirral Country Park (disused railway).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extensive views to the south towards the Shotton industrial area where both the Connah's Quay power station and the dramatic new Dee Bridge are conspicuous.</i> • <i>Tall structures at the sewage works and Neston Church provide visual landmarks inland”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 6b is considered to be high as the area is located within the Dee Coastal ASCV and due to the high scenic quality despite some detracting elements, opportunity for recreation, and medium levels of conservation interests for biodiversity.</p>
LCA 6c: Neston to Saughall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A bedrock geology of Mercia Mudstones covered by a mantle of glacial drift deposits that gives rise to a gently undulating topography between 5 m and 72 m AOD.</i> • <i>Glacio-fluvial deposits mask the underlying mudstones giving rise to coarse loamy soils and lighter soils on higher ground less influenced by glacial deposits. These soils generally support arable crops within the larger exposed fields, with grazing on the smaller pastures.</i> • <i>Small to medium scale fields in a rectilinear pattern of small, semi-regular ancient medieval enclosure such as around Puddington, regular post-medieval enclosures, and larger, mostly regular fields resulting from reorganisation of earlier field systems e.g., fields between Puddington and Shotwick.</i> • <i>Fields are mostly bounded by a strong, intact, hedgerow system, with hedgerow trees - where these are accompanied by blocks of woodland, copses, and plantations there is a strongly verdant character.</i> • <i>Broadleaf, conifer, and mixed woodlands form an important feature in some areas e.g., north of Burton, between Shotwick and Saughall and on the escarpment of the Old River Dee, which has species rich ground flora.</i> • <i>Area to the north of Burton is designated at the county level as part of the Dee Coastal Area of Special County Value (ASCV) by the former Ellesmere Port</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>and Neston Borough Council for its high landscape quality.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sandstone walls and metal 'Cheshire Railings' are also boundary features in some areas. Minor roads and sunken green lanes respond to the topography, winding their way from the A540 to Burton and the small picturesque historic villages of Puddington and Shotwick dotted along the area's southern boundary; ribbon development lies along the roads either as continuous cottages such as that along Dunstan Lane north of Burton, or dispersed cottages and farmsteads.</i> • <i>Shotwick Brook follows a narrow, wooded, steeply incised valley through Shotwick Dale and Shotwick Wood, ancient broadleaf woodland.</i> • <i>Other minor streams and brooks; mill ponds and field ponds are a feature of the landscape.</i> • <i>Conservation Areas at Burton, Puddington and Shotwick, with numerous listed buildings including Puddington Old Hall and Shotwick Hall; the site of Shotwick Castle and a heavy anti-aircraft gun-site at Puddington are Scheduled Monuments.</i> • <i>Building materials are commonly red-orange brick with slate roofs in a simple design.</i> • <i>Urbanising influence of Neston and Saughall on the boundaries of the area, together main road corridors (A540, A550 and A5117); road junctions are particularly intrusive with commercial development such as petrol stations, car showrooms at Two Mills, garden centre etc.</i> • <i>Recreational opportunities provided by access through Burton Wood nature reserve managed by the National Trust, the Wirral Country Park and Sustrans NCR 56 Wirral Way Recreational.</i> • <i>Route (dismantled railway), NCR 563 alongside the A5117, and equestrian facilities at Haddon House (The Wirral Riding Centre).</i> • <i>Electricity power lines cross the southern half of the area from the Deeside power stations and are visually prominent.</i> • <i>From the southern boundary there are expansive views westward across the Dee estuary towards north Wales and the Clwydian Hills; also views to the south towards the Shotton industrial area where both the</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<p><i>Connah's Quay power station and the dramatic new Dee Bridge are visible".</i></p> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 6c is considered to be high as the area is located within the Dee Coastal ASCV and due to the high scenic quality with some detracting elements, high levels of cultural heritage interests, and medium levels of conservation interests for biodiversity.</p>
<p>LCA 6d: Ness, Burton, Puddington and Shotwick Slopes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"A bedrock geology of Mercia Mudstones covered by a mantle of glacial drift deposits, giving rise to a gently undulating topography that slopes down towards the Dee Estuary from around 50 m to 5 m AOD.</i> • <i>Elongated transitional area between the elevated farmland inland and the low lying Dee levels.</i> • <i>Predominantly used for arable crops within the larger exposed fields, with grazing on the smaller pastures around Puddington and Shotwick.</i> • <i>Rectilinear pattern of large fields facing north-east to south-west resulting from reorganisation of earlier field systems, with some semi-regular ancient medieval enclosure around Puddington, and Shotwick.</i> • <i>Fields are mostly bounded by gappy hawthorn hedges with few hedgerow trees and occasional copses and coverts, giving an open windswept appearance.</i> • <i>Ancient broadleaved woodland to the south of Burton is of local wildlife value.</i> • <i>Area to the south and west of Burton is designated at the county level as part of the Dee</i> • <i>Coastal Area of Special County Value (ASCV) by the former Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council for its high landscape quality.</i> • <i>Settlement pattern restricted to a small number of dispersed farmsteads along minor rural green lanes and a nucleated group of large properties along Denhall Lane; the southern built edges of Neston, Burton, Puddington and Shotwick border the character area.</i> • <i>Building materials are commonly red-orange brick with slate roofs in a simple design. Sandstone walls are boundary features in some areas.</i> • <i>A few field ponds are inconspicuous features in the landscape, providing wildlife value; there are larger waterbodies at Denhall House Farm and Burton Mere RSPB Reserve.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conservation Area at Ness, and at Burton, Puddington and Shotwick on the edge of the character area, with numerous listed buildings including Puddington Old Hall and Shotwick Hall; the moated site of Shotwick Castle and Ice House at Burton are Scheduled Monuments.</i> • <i>Ness Botanic Gardens and parkland at Burton Manor are on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.</i> • <i>Recreational opportunities provided at The Mere fishing ponds and RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands reserve with a mosaic of wetland habitats important for birds including; internationally designated Ramsar site.</i> • <i>A popular coastal footpath provides an opportunity to experience the Dee Estuary close-to</i> • <i>Electricity power lines cross the southern end of the area from the Deeside power stations and are visually prominent; the Bidston to Wrexham railway passes through the western end of the area but is inconspicuous in the landscape.</i> • <i>Views to the north are limited by the wooded ridge north of Burton; views east are limited by the elevated southern edge of the Burton to Shotwick Undulating Enclosed Farmland.</i> • <i>Expansive views westward across the Dee Estuary towards north Wales and the Clwydian Hills; also views to the south towards the Shotton industrial area where both the Connah's Quay power station and the dramatic new Dee Bridge are visible".</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 6d is considered to be high as the area is located within the Dee Coastal ASCV and due to the high scenic quality with some detracting elements, medium levels of cultural heritage interests, and high levels of conservation interests for biodiversity.</p>
LCA 6e: Copenhurst Plateau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"A bedrock geology of Mercia Mudstones covered by a mantle of glacial drift deposits that gives rise to a very gently undulating, plateau-like topography between 33 m and 44 m AOD.</i> • <i>Glacio-fluvial deposits mask the underlying mudstones giving rise to well drained sandy and coarse loamy soils. These soils support predominantly arable crops with some cattle grazing.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Close proximity to Ellesmere Port and other urban influences, including major transport corridors and industrial areas, has a significant effect on the character of the landscape.</i> • <i>Small to medium scale fields with a mixture of small, mostly regular, ancient medieval enclosure, regular post-medieval enclosures and larger, mostly regular fields resulting from reorganisation of earlier field systems.</i> • <i>Fields are mostly bounded by a predominantly intact hedgerow system, with hedgerow trees dominant and providing verdant enclosure.</i> • <i>Occasional copses to the north and south of the area add to the verdant character, some of which are local wildlife sites.</i> • <i>Sandstone walls, timber post and rail fencing and metal 'Cheshire Railings' are boundary features in some areas.</i> • <i>Field ponds are a feature of the landscape, some quite large and surrounded by vegetation; streams are minor and inconspicuous.</i> • <i>Opportunities for recreation are provided by Sustrans NCR 56 and the North Cheshire Way long distance footpath. There is a fishing pond at Four Oaks.</i> • <i>Settlement comprises the nucleated villages of Ledsham and Capenhurst, both Conservation Areas, with a number of dispersed farmsteads and cottages linked by secondary roads (not minor lanes).</i> • <i>Sporadic ribbon development stretches out along the roads adding to the urban fringe character, including kennels, a large plant nursery at Ledsham, caravan storage at a number of farms, fields used for quad biking/motor cross.</i> • <i>A range of building materials throughout the area, but typically brick (in a range of colours and textures including re-claimed brick) with modern style rendering and white washing.</i> • <i>Generally, a small scale landscape and enclosure where views are limited by hedgerows, trees and copses despite the plateau-like topography.</i> • <i>The A540, A550, A5117 and the Birkenhead-Chester railway are major, visually intrusive transportation corridors affecting the character of the area.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The huge Capenhurst industrial complex lies at the heart of the area and is the focus for numerous electricity pylons and overhead power lines which are more visually intrusive than the industrial buildings themselves”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 6e is considered to be medium due to the medium scenic quality with detracting elements, limited opportunity for recreation, medium levels of cultural heritage interests, and high levels of conservation interests for biodiversity.</p>
LCT 9: Cheshire Plain West	
LCA 9d: Saughall to Waverton Plain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Urban-fringe landscape with significant settlement density.</i> • <i>Prominent infrastructure characterises the urban fringe of Chester and routes radiating from it.</i> • <i>The urban and industrial character and infrastructure of Ellesmere Port to the north is a prominent landscape feature.</i> • <i>Rural pastoral landscape is diluted by many urban fringe uses which introduce complexity and intrusion to the landscape.</i> • <i>Elsewhere, a gently undulating landscape characterised by hedges and hedgerow tress providing limited vistas.</i> • <i>Areas of improved grassland for dairy farming and fodder crops, increasingly being challenged by other uses.</i> • <i>Limited woodland, confined to shelter belts and screening planting, some small copses, although hedgerow oaks are important elements of the landscape.</i> • <i>Historic medieval field patterns are still found across the area.</i> • <i>Extensive network of small field ponds which are generally inconspicuous in the landscape.</i> • <i>Significant villages of a suburban character punctuate the plain where historic form has often been diluted through of 20th century and later housing and employment development.</i> • <i>Elsewhere, settlement is scattered across the plain as freestanding farmsteads and some ribbon development.</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Sandstone Ridge presents a more elevated skyline to the east of the LCA.</i> • <i>Where hedgerows and tree networks remain, the area can present some degree of limited enclosure due to an absence of elevation and viewpoint.</i> • <i>Some loss of field boundaries diminishes this enclosure where some arable farming has been established.</i> • <i>The overall character of the area is of a transitional landscape from rural pasture to suburbanised, busy urban fringe with consequent dilution in tranquility”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 9d is considered to be low due to the low scenic quality with detracting infrastructure elements which erode tranquility, limited opportunities for recreation, and low levels of conservation interests for biodiversity.</p>
LCT 16: Mudflats and Saltmarsh	
LCA 16b: Dee Estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A flat, open, and expansive landscape of mudflats, and saltmarsh alongside the Dee Estuary.</i> • <i>A naturalistic landscape with winding channels forming intricate patterns in the salt marsh.</i> • <i>A dynamic landscape composed of rising and falling tides, constantly shifting sediments and flocks of over-wintering birds</i> • <i>Recognised as an internationally important site for wildfowl (protected by SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar designations). It is largely owned and managed by the RSPB.</i> • <i>A remote and peaceful landscape relatively undisturbed by humans and of international importance for nature conservation</i> • <i>Public access is largely limited to the edge of the area (access is not actively encouraged by the RSPB; MOD firing range at the southern end).</i> • <i>Devoid of settlement.</i> • <i>Large skies with long, uninterrupted views out to sea and to the Welsh hills.</i> • <i>Industrial works at Shotton and the Dee Bridge form a striking backdrop to the south.</i> • <i>Inter-tidal range has decreased historically following the canalisation of the Lower Dee with silting of the estuary, with only the highest tides inundating the whole marsh</i>

Local Landscape Character Areas	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Historic port and seaside resort of Parkgate”.</i> <p>Landscape value: The value of LCA 16b is considered to be medium due to the good landscape condition although influenced by detracting elements, high levels of conservation interests for biodiversity, and limited opportunities for recreation.</p>

Areas of Special County Value

1.3.16 The following ASCV has been identified in Cheshire West and Chester (Ref 10) and has been summarised in **Table 5** below:

Table 5: Areas of Special County Value

Areas of Special County Value	Key Characteristics
<p>Area 2: Dee Coastal Area (ASCV)</p>	<p>“Distinctiveness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>distinct transitional landscapes between gentle pastoral and wooded slopes, through to expansive and dramatic flat saltmarsh, estuary and upland landscapes;</i> • <i>unlike the Mersey estuary landscapes of CWaC, views from the ASCV uniquely encompass large expanses of tranquil saltmarsh, reed beds and open water and are not visually dominated by development and industry;</i> • <i>the ASCV is frequently experienced without strong intervisibility to other landscape areas within CWaC, but views to north Wales are expansive;</i> • <i>the central ‘island’ of the ASCV provides an easily accessible pastoral and coastal fringe landscape despite complete enclosure by Neston on the landward side; and</i> • <i>distinctly coastal character and large skies, but high tides rarely rise to meet the land at high water mark.</i> <p>Perceptual Character:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>gentle but prevailing sense of transition between land and sea viewed from within the ASCV;</i> • <i>big skies, coastal light and salty air.</i> • <i>important presence and focus towards the waterscape and the movement and reflected light it presents within the landscape;</i>

Areas of Special County Value	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>relatively high levels of tranquillity away from main transport routes, even close to the settlements within or abutting the ASCV;</i> • <i>strong sense of contrast between wildness of the saltmarsh and reedbeds adjacent to the managed farmland and parkland landscapes;</i> • <i>occasionally unexpected enclosure close to the high water mark where mature reedbeds obscure all views out to towards the estuary; and</i> • <i>diurnal and season changes in views across intertidal areas and saltmarsh habitats.</i> <p>Landscape and Scenic Qualities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>dramatic vistas across the estuary, particularly from elevated viewpoints away from the ASCV boundary at high water mark;</i> • <i>attractive contrast between open water, saltmarshes and reedbeds and managed farmland and woods;</i> • <i>prominence and distinctiveness of the Welsh hills to the west;</i> • <i>localised important parkland and historic garden landscapes; and</i> • <i>generally, landscape components are in good condition, but the ASCV central area in some areas presents a perception of landscape in transition, partly naturalising or in decline.</i> <p>Natural Character:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pockets of woodland, including Burton Local Wildlife Site; and</i> • <i>very extensive coverage of international and national wildlife site designation across the tightly abutting saltmarshes (and overlying the ASCV marginally at Parkgate), but perception of that landscape and its ecological importance is strong within much of the ASCV.</i> <p>Function:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>important linear Public Rights of Way network, particularly coastal paths including Sustrans NCR 56 Wirral Way Recreational Route / Wirral Country Park;</i> • <i>important landscape for experiencing the estuary landscapes and important nature conservation interest;</i> • <i>important concentration of public historic sites across the ASCV southern area.</i> • <i>maintains a strong agricultural function”.</i>

Areas of Special County Value	Key Characteristics
	<p>Statement of Importance:</p> <p><i>“the county significance of the Dee Coastal Area ASCV relates in a large part to the context it sets as a transitional landscape between land and the intertidal Dee Estuary saltmarsh and mudflats, and the opportunities it offers for experiencing the undeveloped, accessible and highly distinctive coastline with outstanding panoramic views. Sloping topography falls gradually from the east towards the coastline where the boundary between open water and land is subtle yet at the same time complex and transient, as seasonal and daily tidal flows vary the extent to which the coastal flats appear either as land or open water. Visually distinctive saltmarsh and reed beds define the inter-tidal area of the Dee Estuary in this area, but do not fall within the ASCV itself, which is characterised by mostly simple pastoral farmland and small woodlands or shelter belts of trees. The special qualities of the area are primarily due to the coastal ‘experience’ and the ability the areas offer to enjoy a wider landscape context of land, sea and the Welsh uplands to the west. The land within the ASCV does present its own locally distinctive and valued character, however, particularly in the southern area with its enclosed pastoral and woodland character, attractive settlements such as Burton and its historic registered landscape components including Burton Manor and Ness Botanic Gardens. To the central area of the ASCV historic field patterns and rough grazing presents valued and accessible semi-natural open space to local residents, whilst the northern area affords access to the historic coastline and longer views from more elevated points such as Boathouse Lane and the Public Rights of Way network. The inter-relationship of land, saltmarsh and tidal flats also presents highly significant habitat interest for all three areas”.</i></p> <p>Landscape value: The value of Area 2: Dee Coastal Area (ASCV) is considered to be high based on the key characteristics listed above.</p>

LANDMAP

- 1.3.17 LANDMAP is a tool produced by Natural Resources Wales to inform sustainable decision making and planning, from national to local levels.

LANDMAP (Ref 11) describes the key characteristics, qualities, and components of the datasets. The following datasets are included in LANDMAP:

- geological landscape;
- landscape habitats;
- visual and sensory;
- historic landscape; and
- cultural landscape services.

1.3.18 The characteristics contained within the datasets shown on **Figure 15-4B1: LANDMAP (EN010166/APP/6.3)** and summarised in **Table 6** below are used to define LCA. A combination of the key characteristics and the evaluation rating of the visual sensory data has been used to inform the consideration of the value of the landscape receptor.

Table 6: LANDMAP - Local Landscape Character Areas

LANDMAP	Characteristics
Built Land	<p>Areas of built-up land to the north with large-scale industrial areas, including Connah's Quay, docks, urban areas, and transport infrastructure. Low levels of tranquility and disturbance and influenced by detracting features.</p> <p>Areas described as complex and chaotic and as follows: <i>"Connah's Quay coastal and estuary urban area - an extensive, often linear and interconnected urban area along the edge of the coast & estuary, with larger towns, sprawling suburban edges and large-scale heavy industry including docks"</i>. Perceptual qualities described as <i>'Unattractive. Noisy. Threatening. Settled'</i>.</p> <p>Other areas of Built Land comprise inland urban areas and villages.</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual Sensory: The Visual Sensory across these areas is evaluated to be low with some of the villages evaluated as medium.</p> <p>Landscape value: Taking account of the above, the landscape value of Built Land is considered to be low.</p>
Coastal Intertidal Marsh	<p>Coastal and flat lowland areas are adjacent to the estuary. Landscape contains rare elements with high levels of scenic quality, wilderness, and integrity. Strong sense of place with perceptual qualities described as <i>"Attractive. Exposed. Threatening. Wild. Spiritual"</i>.</p> <p>The landscape has unique and rare qualities due to the influence of the estuary and high conservation interests</p>

LANDMAP	Characteristics
	<p>for biodiversity and is described as an <i>'area of national & international value'</i>.</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual Sensory: The Visual Sensory across these areas is evaluated to be high to outstanding.</p> <p>Landscape value: Taking account of the above, the landscape value of Coastal Intertidal Marsh is considered to be high.</p>
Lowland	<p>Simple and discordant landscape with strong contrasts extending over intensive agricultural land to the north of the River Dee. Low scenic quality with detracting features and influence from adjacent industrial and urban areas with low levels of integrity and rarity. The Dee Coastal Levels within this character area is described as follows:</p> <p><i>"Dee Coastal Levels - open strip of coastal & estuary levels with diverse mixture of rectilinear fertile arable & pastoral farmland drained by ditches with wetland and urban fringe uses. There are significant areas under clear/white plastic. Uses which tend to degrade the landscape include turf and soil sale. Settlement is scattered including farmsteads with glass and ribbon development in places. Hedgerows are low cut and gappy in places and there are few trees such as sycamore or beech"</i>.</p> <p>Perceptual qualities are described as <i>"Unattractive. Noisy. Threatening. Settled"</i>.</p> <p>Parts of this area are described as having a <i>"very low quality visual & sensory experience"</i>.</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual Sensory: The Visual Sensory across these areas is evaluated to be medium with areas evaluated as low adjacent to the industrial areas.</p> <p>Landscape value: Taking account of the above, the landscape value of Lowland is considered to be medium.</p>
Mosaic Rolling Lowland	<p>Gently sloping and rolling lowland which extends up to the estuary edge with distinct east/west grain and mosaic of wooded linear stream valleys, traditional and improved farmland, and a linear settled and urban fringe lower edge and an overall estuarine influence.</p> <p>The area contains Buckley inland urban area which comprises <i>"nucleated settlements within the farmland fringe landscape character area, which are close spaced to create a suburban landscape, with a</i></p>

LANDMAP	Characteristics
	<p><i>predominance of residential buildings and public open spaces, parks & golf courses</i>".</p> <p>Diverse and discordant with strong contrasts containing both detracting features and attractive views. Perceptual qualities described as "<i>Attractive. Unattractive. Noisy. Exposed</i>".</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual Sensory: The Visual Sensory is evaluated to be moderate.</p> <p>Landscape value: Taking account of the above, the landscape value of Mosaic Rolling Lowland is considered to be medium.</p>
Upland	<p>Upland area including upper and lower plateau and scarp slopes. The lower plateau is simple and harmonious with few detracting features and described as follows:</p> <p><i>"Attractive upland but pastoral slopes of the Clwydian hills with diverse pattern of overgrown hedges and small woods. Forms the lower eastwards facing slopes of the Clwydian Range comprising from scrub and open rough grassland to medium scale improved grassland shoulders, and smaller more intimate scale hedged pastures with traditional farming. Field pattern is complemented by linear woodlands following side slope valleys and watercourses"</i>.</p> <p>The upper plateau comprises exposed upland moorland with few detracting features and high levels of tranquillity and wildness. The upper plateau is simple and harmonious with few detracting features and described as follows:</p> <p><i>"Long line of rolling hills defined by a distinct ridge line rising steeply from the Vale of Clwyd, dominated by moorland vegetation. A series of intersecting valleys and spur slopes define the western edge. Spectacular views from and of the Vale"</i>.</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual Sensory: The Visual Sensory is evaluated to be high to outstanding.</p> <p>Landscape value: Taking account of the above, the landscape value of Upland is considered to be high.</p>

National Landscape

- 1.3.19 The study area contains the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly referred to as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

1.3.20 The relevant characteristics of the National Landscape as contained within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Management Plan 2014 to 2019 (Ref 12) are provided in Table 7.

Table 7: Key Characteristics of the Cwydian Range and Dee Valley

	Special Qualities
The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape	<p>Special Qualities:</p> <p>Landscape Character and Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> including high levels of tranquility, remoteness, wilderness, space, and freedom. Tranquility is associated with an atmosphere of calm and stillness; peace and quiet; and with dark night skies. includes access to the landscape and the uninterrupted and extensive views and a sense of belonging and attachment to the landscape. <p>Habitats and Wildlife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes heather moorland and rolling ridges, broadleaved woodland and veteran trees, river valleys and the River Dee, and limestone grassland, cliffs, and screes. <p>Historic Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes historic settlement and archaeology, traditional boundaries, industrial features, and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site. <p>Access and Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> visitor and cultural attractions such as Loggerheads, Moel Famau, Castell Dinas Bran, Valle Crucis Abbey, the Horseshoe Pass and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Horseshoe Falls. National Trails and promoted routes, such as the Dee Valley Way and the North Berwyn Way. <p>Culture and People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identified as a rich mix of culture and strong sense of community amongst the villages, towns, hamlets, and scattered settlements. <p>Landscape value: Taking account of the above, the landscape value of the National Landscape is considered to be high.</p>

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