

Land at the west of Smithy Bridge Road

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Appendix D

Extract from Rochdale UDP 2006, Policy NE/6 Landscape Protection and Enhancement.

September
2022

Prepared for:



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- 21.24 The Council will also seek to sustain and enhance the quality of the landscape within the Borough through its own regeneration and countryside management programmes, partnership with community interests, major landowners and government agencies and promotion of good management practices to private landowners.
- 21.25 The Plan also recognises the importance of woodland in the environment and the contribution it can make to landscape and townscape quality, local and recreational amenity, biodiversity and the reduction of pollution. It may also increasingly be a source of alternative energy and a sustainable and viable opportunity for rural economic diversification.
- 21.26 The Borough has woodland cover of approximately 2.5% of the total land area, which is significantly lower than the England average of around 7% cover. This policy will support the aim of the Council's Woodland Strategy to increase significantly, the level of tree and woodland cover in the Borough. It also recognises the need to retain existing trees and woodland, in particular mature woodland important for nature conservation, and trees and woodland which form an important part of the local street scene or landscape character and structure.
- 21.27 The Council will also seek to protect and enhance the tree and woodland resource through the implementation of its Woodland Strategy, Township Action Plans, management plans and improvement programmes. The Council is also a partner in the Pennine Edge Forest initiative, a partnership comprising the districts of Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport and Tameside and supported by the Forestry Commission, Natural England and the North West Development Agency amongst others. Pennine Edge Forest (PEF) aims to create a positive role for woodland in urban and rural regeneration and to provide a forest resource with the maximum benefit for local communities and biodiversity. The Council will work (individually and through PEF) with Red Rose Community Forest, other Southern Pennines partners and initiatives, the Forestry Commission and other Government and environmental agencies, landowners and community interests to promote, protect and enhance the woodland resource.

NE/6 LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT

Development will be permitted where it conserves the physical and cultural attributes of the landscape and contributes, as appropriate, to the regeneration, restoration, enhancement or maintenance of the landscape likely to be affected.

Proposals with potential landscape and visual implications will be assessed having regard to the extent to which they would:

- a) Make a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the area (including views into and from the site and surrounding area);
- b) Remove incongruous landscape features;
- c) Assist the conservation of:
 - i. Landscape elements that contribute to local distinctiveness;
 - ii. Historic elements which make a significant contribution (individually or cumulatively) to landscape character and quality (e.g., field, settlement or road patterns, existing buildings, sites and features of archaeological interest);
 - iii. Semi-natural vegetation which is characteristic to the landscape type;
 - iv. The visual condition of landscape elements; and
 - v. Tranquillity and the amenity and informal recreation value of the landscape.

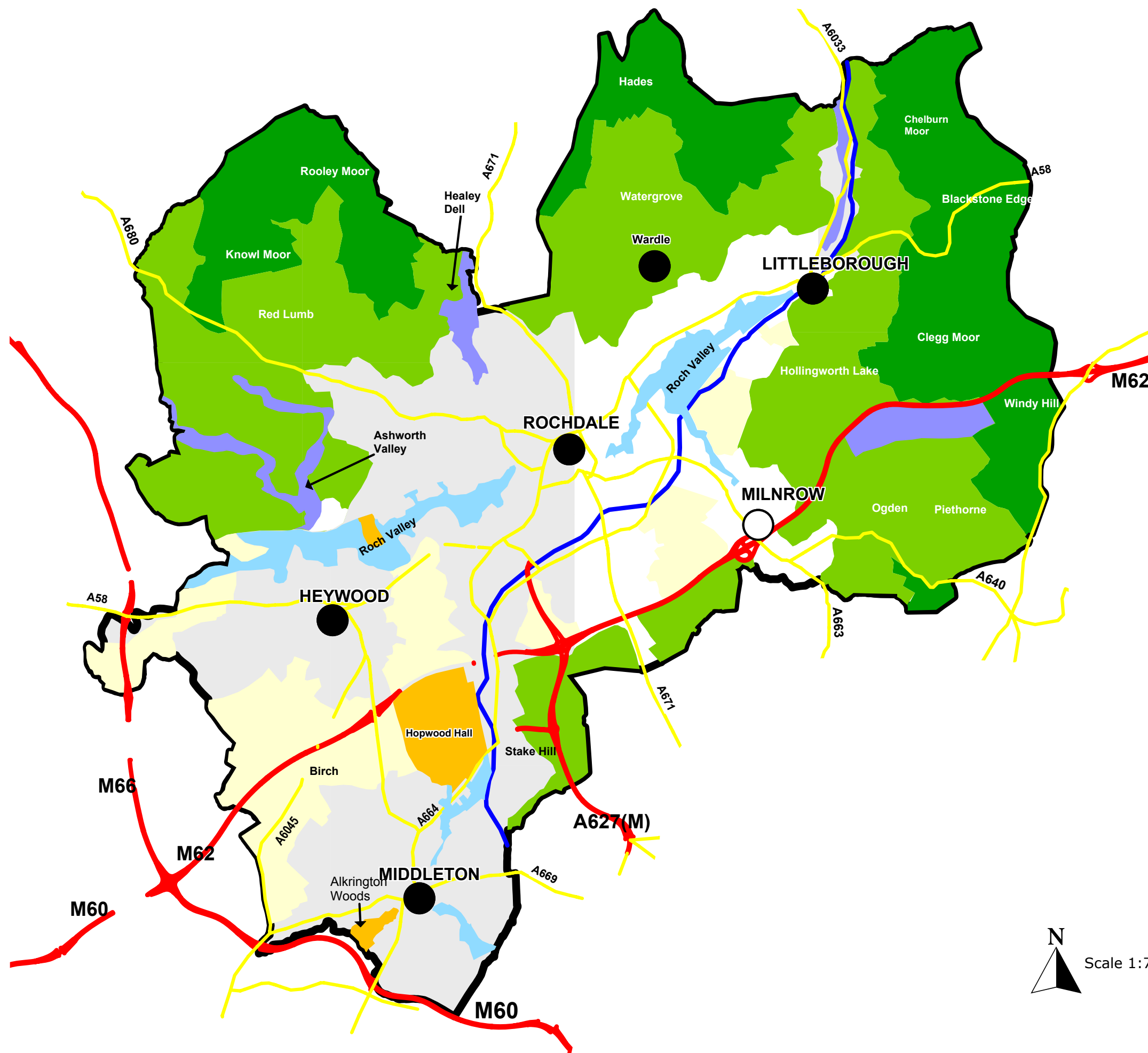
Development which adversely affects the character or physical structure of the landscape or which would detract from the physical record of the historic and cultural evolution of an area will not be permitted.

- 21.28 The landscape which surrounds the settlements of Greater Manchester and the wider Southern Pennines is diverse and a major cultural resource within the region with particular literary, industrial and ecological significance. The landscape seen today derives from a varied legacy of industrial and agricultural development stretching over hundreds of years coupled with the remains of much earlier human activity. It is important to ensure that the natural, visual and historic character, quality and distinctiveness of the landscape is recognised by and reflected in development proposals.
- 21.29 New development can make a positive contribution to landscape conservation where it is well sited, of an appropriate scale, and takes full account of existing landscape character and quality or opportunities to strengthen or reintroduce such value through design, layout and use of materials.
- 21.30 Government guidance supports the objective of enhancing landscape character and countryside quality and this is developed in the Joint Character Map of England prepared by Natural England and English Heritage, where the features of land use, land form, biodiversity and the historic development of town and country, and other factors which characterise the landscape of England are highlighted at a sub regional level. Further work has been carried out by the Standing Conference of South Pennine Authorities (now Pennine Prospects) and others to produce a South Pennine Landscape Assessment, accompanied by Landscape Guidelines and a Countryside Design Summary to inform developers, land managers and others.
- 21.31 Informed by the above documents and previous local landscape assessment, the Council has carried out its own appraisal of landscape character and quality. This has identified a series of landscape character areas (see illustration) with associated important landscape features, potential threats to their character and good practice principles for future management which may include the restoration or enhancement of landscape character and features lost due to previous land use or management. The appraisal will be subject to periodic review to monitor future beneficial or adverse change.
- 21.32 In determining planning applications, reference will be made to the documents outlined above and all proposals will be expected to clearly show how they contribute to the conservation, regeneration, restoration or enhancement of the landscape in identified Character Areas.

Landscape Character Areas (brief descriptions)

Unenclosed Moorland	• sweeping landform with open 'wilderness' character • tranquil • extensive views • a mosaic of upland habitats often underlain by blanket peat • a sealed prehistoric landscape • active and relict land uses including water supply, power transmission, mineral extraction and agriculture (rough grazing) • very sparse settlement with evidence of previous habitation now abandoned • large areas of open public access on foot and horseback
Enclosed Upland	• often exposed farmland on steep slopes adjacent to high moorland • evidence of prehistoric human activity in the landscape • varied field patterns (some relict), often bounded by dry stone walls and hedgerows, from medieval to later 19th century enclosure • limited tree cover restricted to steep sided cloughs, shelter belts, scattered copses and more recent plantations in water catchments • extensive network of paths and tracks • general tranquil, often bleak and isolated character • scattered farmhouses, hamlets and industrial buildings both active and relict, illustrating the traditional dual economy of the area • land uses based on agriculture (mixed grazing), water supply and power transmission with evidence of former quarrying • semi improved acid and neutral grasslands and wet, rushy pastures, some now reverting to moorland
Settled Farmlands	• more domesticated farmscape with occasional small settlements on lower slopes and valley edges adjacent to urban centres • improved grasslands used for cattle, sheep and horse grazing • varied styles of enclosure including dry stone wall, hedgerow and fences

Landscape Protection and Enhancement (Policy NE/6)



KEY	
	Unenclosed Moorland
	Enclosed Upland
	Settled Farmlands
	Canal Corridor
	Industrialised Valleys
	Urban Valleys
	Urban Area
	Historic Parkland

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 Scale 1:70,000



	• varied mix of open land uses including farming, equestrian, outdoor sports (e.g., golf) and managed areas of countryside • scattered tree and woodland cover, more significant than in upland areas • evidence of medieval settlement • historic industrial development evidenced by textile mills and mineral extraction sites active and relict • greater influence of adjacent urban areas through ribbon and suburban development, landfill and cemetery sites etc, often fragmenting character
Canal Corridor	• varied landscape character in urban and rural stretches • substantially intact watercourse with evidence of historic development and use of the canal • 'Pennine' section includes open and steep sided (often wooded) valleys with extensive evidence of the industrial evolution of the canal corridor • urban stretches include densely developed industrial corridors along the watercourse separated by lower lying undulating farmscapes • significant historic interest dating from before canal construction • strong relationship with historic communications network through the valleys (road, rail) • high ecological value of vegetation in the watercourse and of adjacent open land
Industrialised Valleys	• steep, narrow valleys with fast flowing rivers and streams, more open towards moorland edge • generally secluded, tranquil character with extensive evidence of industrial past • relict and active industrial sites based on water and steam powered mills (18th and 19th centuries) often with associated lodges, weirs and localised coal workings • wooded cloughs and extensive areas of semi natural ancient woodland with open pastures and scrub • extensive network of paths and tracks
Urban Valleys	• tightly bounded by main urban centres • varied character including open farmland, woodland, utilities infrastructure, equestrian uses, golf courses, allotments and landfill sites • mixed environmental quality • continuity of valleys sometimes interrupted by urban development but extensive stretches of open, well wooded valleys remain • secluded feel to some more heavily wooded areas • important industrial archaeology in many areas • mixed character and quality of buildings • extensive and sometimes fragmented network of paths and tracks • intermittent long distance views to the moorland beyond
Historic Parkland	• intact and relict grounds and gardens with associated woodland and open spaces • a mix of formal and informal landscape areas • evidence of various periods of development from medieval origins to more recent • historic houses and ancillary buildings and structures from various periods including more recent additions and alterations • strong relationship to wider landscape in river valleys and farmland

NE/7 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

Where it is necessary to protect important trees and woodlands which contribute to the quality of the built or rural environment, the Council will make Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). No work of any nature should be carried out which could possibly affect the health of a tree or trees included in a Tree Preservation Order without the proper written authority of the Council. This includes any work which is carried out to trees or other works which could damage root systems or any part of the tree above ground. Any works carried out to trees must constitute good arboricultural practice.

21.33 There are currently more than 190 Tree Preservation Orders covering trees and woodlands in the Borough which will be given special protection. The policy requires that all proposed works to a tree require the prior written consent of the Council. Where works come within the scope of section 9 of the Forestry Act 1967 (as

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