

APENDIX 11.3: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE

1. This appendix details the landscape baseline description of the national and local landscape receptors considered within this assessment. This appendix should be read in conjunction with Technical **Chapter 11** and **Figure 11.9a Landscape Character Areas**.

National Landscape Character

2. At a national level the Project for Assessment predominantly falls within National Character Area 36 (NCA 36) - Southern Pennines. These NCAs were recorded as PDF documents published in 2014. The new Natural England website now hosts these as NCAs as interactive maps and updated data analysis which is updated on the website as new information becomes available, but not within the PDFs.

3. NCA 36 covers part of the Pennine ridge of hills, lying between the Peak District National Park to the south, and the Yorkshire Dales National Park to the north. The summary description of the NCA describes the landscape as follows:

"A landscape of large-scale sweeping moorlands, pastures enclosed by drystone walls, and gritstone settlements contained within narrow valleys. The area contains internationally important mosaics of moorland habitats that support rare birds such as merlin, short-eared owl and twite. The peat soils, including blanket bog, store significant volumes of carbon. With its high rainfall and impervious rocks it is an important area for water supply, with many reservoirs supplying water to nearby conurbations."

4. The summary description goes on to state that:

"The Southern Pennines are also important for recreation due to the extensive open access areas and footpaths, and the sense of escapism they offer, along with the ease of access from large towns. This dramatic landscape has inspired many, such as the Brontës and Ted Hughes."

5. The key characteristics of NCA 36 are recorded as follows:

- *"Large-scale, open, sweeping landscape with high flat-topped hills providing extensive views, cut into by narrow valleys with wooded sides."*
- *Mosaics of moorland vegetation on the plateaux, including blanket bog and heathland, supporting internationally important habitats and assemblages of upland birds, invertebrates and breeding waders.*
- *Enclosed upland pastures and hay meadows enclosed by drystone walls on the hillsides, and narrow valleys with dense gritstone settlements in the valleys, with steep slopes often densely wooded, providing strong contrast with open moorlands.*
- *Many reservoirs on the moors, supplying drinking water to adjacent towns, wintering and breeding habitats for birds and high quality recreation experiences.*
- *Medieval villages and smallholdings on the higher shelves of land above the valleys, with small fields and a dense network of lanes and paths.*
- *Local stone buildings, with stone flags on roofs, bring a high degree of homogeneity to towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads.*
- *Rich time depth, from prehistoric features such as carved rocks, to medieval boundary stones, old mineral extraction sites and more recently, mills, factories and non-conformist chapels.*

- *Historic packhorse routes traversing the moorlands, with more recent road, rail and canal routes located along valleys.*
- *Prominent features, including Stoodley Pike, Darwen Jubilee Tower, Rivington Pike, wind farms and communications masts, visible from afar."*

Statements of Environmental Opportunity (June 2025)

The NCA profile sets out five Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) and one additional opportunities listed below:

- *"SEO 1: Safeguard, manage and enhance the large areas of open, expansive moorland and the internationally important habitats and species they support, as well as protecting soils and water resources.*
- *SEO 2: Manage and enhance the pastoral character of the moorland fringes, lower hills and valleys, with their mosaics of pastures and meadows and their strong field patterns defined by drystone walls, to improve ecological networks and strengthen landscape character.*
- *SEO 3: Protect the comprehensive range of historic landscape features for their cultural value and the contribution they make to local distinctiveness and sense of identity.*
- *SEO 4: Improve opportunities for the enjoyment and understanding of the landscape and to experience a sense of escapism and inspiration, while also conserving the qualities of the landscape and its valuable historic and wildlife features.*
- *SEO 5: Protect the strong relationship between landscape and the underlying geology, the land uses it supports and its significance to the cultural identity of the area.*
- *Additional Opportunity 1: Manage existing woodlands and extend broadleaved woodland cover in appropriate locations to help deliver climate change mitigation, improve water quality and supply, improve biodiversity, provide biomass, and strengthen landscape character."*

Local Landscape Character

6. The LVIA is based on the relevant local Landscape Character Areas (LCA) shown on **Figure 11.9a**, agreed at scoping, listed in **Chapter 11** are contained in the following landscape character assessments:
 - South Pennines Wind Energy Landscape Study (2014) [Ref 2]; and
 - Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study (2018) [Ref 3].
7. Table 1 to Table 13 provides the relevant description of each landscape character area/ type (LCA/LCT) considered in **Chapter 11**. The summary description of character and key characteristics/ key environmental features range from the broader Landscape Character Type (LCT) to more detailed descriptions for some local LCAs.

South Pennines Wind Energy Landscape Study 2014

Table 1 LCA A1: South Pennine Moors

Landscape Character Type summary of character and key environmental features

LCA A1: South Pennine Moors is one of the LCAs within LCT A: High Moorland Plateaux

Landscape character summary

"The high moorland plateau rolls in a series of even, sweeping ridges across the central part of the area forming the heart and core of the South Pennines landscape. It is a windswept, exposed upland landscape raised above the dissecting valleys and is frequently enshrouded by mists and fog and possesses a strong sense of remoteness and 'wildness'. Distinctive physical features include the frost weathered tors and regoliths which crown some of the moorland summits and the characteristic stepped topography of interlocking terraces and edges corresponding to the interleaved layers of underlying Millstone Grit geology. The moorland is rich in history, culture and wildlife. The mosaic of upland habitats including heather moorland, blanket bog, acid grassland and wet and dry heathland are of great importance for key bird species as reflected in the designation of the South Pennines SPA. There is also good survival of prehistoric sites and the moorland landscapes represent a valuable resource for further archaeological research into the early stages of human exploitation. It is a landscape with strong cultural and literary associations forming a 'wild' backdrop to the novels of the Brontë sisters and an inspiration for the poetry of the former Poet Laureate Ted Hughes.

This is a 'remote' landscape very sparsely settled with only occasional isolated farmhouses, many now abandoned and in ruins and contributing to the sense of remoteness. Resource exploitation is visible in the form of power supply structures including pylons, transmission lines, wind turbine developments and communications masts, as well as reservoirs and mineral extraction sites. In some areas, intervisibility between these developments diminishes the sense of isolation.

Key environmental features

- *A perception of remoteness, isolation and wildness provided by the altitude, absence of trees and settlement plus expansive views.*
- *Mosaic of upland habitats, including blanket bog habitat, wet heathland, dry heathland and acid grassland which support an internationally important range of bird species (South Pennines SPA).*
- *Blanket bog is of international importance, supporting a specialist flora and associated fauna and representing a habitat of which the UK has 7-13% of the global resource.*
- *Important archaeological landscape with much prehistoric interest. The blanket bog is a significant archaeological and paleoenvironmental resource.*
- *Strong cultural associations – powerful influence on and inspiration for the writing of the Brontë sisters and Ted Hughes, among others.*
- *Distinctive landform of terraces and gritstone edges reflecting the underlying geology and process of weathering. Frost weathered tors and regoliths are prominent features.*
- *High geological interest including several geological SSSIs, at natural and quarried locations.*
- *Reservoirs provide water and recreational resources, as well as supporting wildfowl and wader species.*
- *Absence of settlement, with only isolated dwellings and abandoned farmsteads."*

LCA A1: South Pennine Moors

"The South Pennine Moors are the core of the study area and form a long high plateau extending from Rishworth Moor in the south to the vast expansive sweep of high uninhabited moorland around Oxenhope Moor and Boulsworth Hill in the north. The plateau is subdivided into two main blocks, to the north and south, by the valley of the Calder, while to the west there are three smaller isolated, fragmented moors at Scout Moor, Shore Moor and Heald Moor. It is a large scale sweeping open landscape with strong skyline ridges and expansive views

offering a sense of remoteness, isolation and wildness. These special perceptual qualities are reinforced by the proximity to the surrounding urban areas and intersecting industrial valleys. The moorland contains a wealth of natural and cultural -features and forms the- -main part- of the SPA supporting internationally important bird populations. The wild landscape has been a powerful influence and inspiration on the writings of the Brontë sisters. The novels of Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre, among others, create an extraordinary literary landscape with a strong image in the minds of people worldwide. The South Pennine Moors have a special quality of rugged enduring grandeur, although the landscape is nevertheless very vulnerable.”

Table 2 LCA D4: Scout Moor and Shore Moor Fringe

Landscape Character Type summary of character and key environmental features

LCA D4 is located within LCT D: Moorland Fringes / Upland Pastures.

“Landscape character summary

The enclosed landscape of the moorland fringe and upland pastures are typically found between 250 and 300 metres altitude on the broad terrace flanking some of the main valleys and slopes fringing the open moors. These elevated areas have strong moorland connections both visually and economically, with the moors forming an integral part of the upland farming system. The land is divided into a patchwork of small fields enclosed by gritstone walls with areas of larger intake relating to later moorland enclosures. The land remains almost entirely grazing pasture and the remaining unimproved areas of in-bye hay meadows and damp pastures are extremely valuable for nature conservation and support a rich and distinctive flora and important bird species including twite, curlew, lapwing and snipe. Other enclosures are intensively farmed and the bright green improved sward forms a sharp distinction with the more subdued tones of the moors. Much of the moorland fringe is in a state of transition; with some areas being farmed intensively and others where farming is in decline and a variety of other, non-agricultural land uses are becoming common. Both can have a significant visual impact and this landscape type particularly sensitive and vulnerable to change. The area nevertheless retains an 'upland' character and sense of remoteness. Settlement comprises isolated scattered farmhouses and their associated buildings with occasional clusters of buildings and short terraces of weavers' cottages. There is a general absence of trees except where the summits of the steep wooded cloughs penetrate these upland areas and occasionally tree clumps around farmsteads. The whole area has an open character often with long views out across the valleys and, on the edges of the area, across the extensive urban conurbations beyond.

Key environmental features

- *Open, 'upland' landscape character created by the altitude, absence of trees and long views, often with a sense of remoteness and isolation.*
- *A characteristic patchwork of upland pastures including small irregular fields and larger rectangular fields representing a later phase of moorland enclosure.*
- *A dense network of gritstone walls creates the field enclosures. The stone walls provide shelter and habitat for wildlife and are also of considerable historical/ cultural interest.*
- *Remnant unimproved upland pastures including colourful species-rich hay meadows and damp pastures are an integral part of the mosaic of upland habitats and are of great importance for nature conservation. Flushed meadows are of special interest.*
- *Numerous paved packhorse routes linking with an extensive public rights of way network, providing not only distinctive features but evidence of the historic strategic importance of the moorland fringes.*
- *Dispersed settlement pattern comprising scattered farmsteads (sometimes in fairly close proximity) and occasional short terraces of houses.*
- *A network of narrow winding lanes connects the farmsteads and settlements. Stone walls without grass verges often bound the lanes.*
- *Distinctive vernacular architecture dominated by the millstone grit building stone and including laithe houses and weavers' cottages.*

- *Frequent long views across the intersecting valleys and/or out over the urban conurbations that surround the South Pennines uplands. “*

LCA D4: Scout Moor and Shore Moor Fringe

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

Table 3 LCA B2: West Pennine Moors

Landscape Character Type summary of character and key environmental features

This LCA B2 is located within LCT B: Moorland Hills.

“Landscape character summary

This landscape type comprises the lower, gentler outlying blocks of moorland to the north and west of the main Pennine ridge. They have a softer and more rounded profile compared to the sharp edges and ledges of the high moorland plateau and are surrounded by comparatively wide valleys. Only the high moorland tops retain a sense of remoteness and isolation, elsewhere there are views out across the surrounding wide valleys and urban areas. The presence of several large woodland blocks, both broadleaved and coniferous, also distinguishes these outlying areas from the high moorland core. The mosaic of upland habitats is of great nature conservation value, while the proximity to nearby urban centres means that these moors are very important for recreation.

Key environmental features

- *Glaciated rounded hills, generally lower in altitude and less severe than the high moorland plateaux.*
- *Mosaic of upland habitats, including blanket bog habitat, heather moor, wet heath and acid grassland.*
- *Important archaeological landscape with considerable evidence of prehistoric settlement and land use.*
- *Peat and blanket bog on the summits is an important natural and archaeological resource.*
- *A sense of remoteness and wildness created by the altitude, absence of settlement and long wide views.*
- *Accessible recreational resource for the surrounding urban areas with a number of recreational facilities and an extensive rights of way network.*
- *Close relationship with the adjacent urban areas providing the landscape backdrop for surrounding towns.”*

LCA B2: West Pennine Moors:

“The West Pennine Moors are aligned perpendicularly to the main Pennine ridge. The moorland occurs in number of discrete blocks at Withnell Moor, Smithills Moor, Turton Moor, Anglezarke and Rivington Moors, Oswaldtwistle Moor and Holcombe Moor. They are generally slightly lower in altitude than those of the main South Pennine spine, although include some notable high points, for example at Winter Hill on Rivington Moor. The hills can be seen from long distances and form a significant backdrop to the surrounding towns of Bury, Bolton and Blackburn. The area is of considerable archaeological importance reflecting past land use and settlement history and has been subject of considerable archaeological research. On the West Pennines the sense of remoteness and wildness is diminished as a result of the relatively small area of the individual moorland blocks and the dramatic and panoramic views across the adjacent urban areas of the Lancashire Plain and the Greater Manchester conurbation. The accessibility of the moorlands to the surrounding towns means that they are a very important recreational resource.”

Table 4 LCA C1: Rossendale Hills

Landscape Character Type summary of character and key environmental features

LCA C1 Rossendale Hills is the only LCA within LCT C: Enclosed Uplands.

“Landscape character summary

The upland plateau of the Rossendale Hills is distinguished by the geology with outcrops of Lower Coal Measures in combination with the Millstone Grit and a mantling of glacial boulder clay. It is generally a flat landform with only the peat capped ridges and summits providing pattern and diversity in the landscape. The distinctive character of these bleak uplands is derived from the history of colonisation and human attempts to conquer the moors. A network of gritstone walls encloses virtually the whole of the upland area, and the landscape is dotted with small isolated farms. Many of these are now abandoned and in ruins as farming has retreated downslope. The area's industrial history is reflected by the landscape of miner-farmer small holdings and squatter settlements, and a legacy of abandoned coal and lead mines and associated spoil heaps. The overall impression is of a somewhat derelict landscape with rush infested pastures-and tumbled stone walls. Views of prominent high tension power lines which cross the plateau top reinforce the sense of bleakness.

Key environmental features

- *Undulating high plateau divided into three by intersecting valleys.*
- *Distinct cultural landscape and an unusual land use history (Forest of Rossendale) represented by the high altitude enclosure, the industrial and mining remnants, and the settlement pattern of small scattered dwellings and urban terraces.*
- *Different geology distinguished by presence of Coal Measures and lead veins. The legacy of abandoned lead and coal mines and spoil heaps, along with day holes and bell pits from the Middle Ages represent important cultural artefacts.*
- *Enclosure landscape with eighteenth and nineteenth century gritstone walls climbing to a high altitude enclosing the upland. Many fields are now abandoned and walls are in a state of disrepair.*
- *Blanket bog crowns the high summits providing both landscape diversity, biodiversity and an important archaeological resource.*
- *Distinctive settlement pattern with isolated houses and small scattered dwellings at a high altitude.”*

LCA C1: Rossendale Hills:

"The upland plateau of the Rossendale Hills is distinguished by the geology with outcrops of Lower Coal Measures in combination with the Millstone Grit and a mantling of glacial boulder clay. It is generally a flat landform with only the peat capped ridges and summits providing pattern and diversity in the landscape. The distinctive character of these bleak uplands is derived from the history of colonisation and human attempts to conquer the moors. A network of gritstone walls encloses virtually the whole of the upland area, and the landscape is dotted with small isolated farms. Many of these are now abandoned and in ruins as farming has retreated downslope. The area's industrial history is reflected by the landscape of miner-farmer small holdings and squatter settlements, and a legacy of abandoned coal and lead mines and associated spoil heaps. The overall impression is of a somewhat derelict landscape with rush infested pastures and tumbled stone walls. Views of prominent high tension power lines which cross the plateau top reinforce the sense of bleakness.

Table 5 LCA D5: Oswaldtwistle & Darwen Moor Fringe

Landscape Character Type summary of character and key environmental features

LCA D5 is located within LCT D: Moorland Fringes / Upland Pastures There is no detailed description of character for LCA D5.

"Landscape character summary

The enclosed landscape of the moorland fringe and upland pastures are typically found between 250 and 300 metres altitude on the broad terrace flanking some of the main valleys and slopes fringing the open moors. These elevated areas have strong moorland connections both visually and economically, with the moors forming an integral part of the upland farming system. The land is divided into a patchwork of small fields enclosed by gritstone walls with areas of larger intake relating to later moorland enclosures. The land remains almost entirely grazing pasture and the remaining unimproved areas of in-bye hay meadows and damp pastures are extremely valuable for nature conservation and support a rich and distinctive flora and important bird species including twite, curlew, lapwing and snipe. Other enclosures are intensively farmed and the bright green improved sward forms a sharp distinction with the more subdued tones of the moors. Much of the moorland fringe is in a state of transition; with some areas being farmed intensively and others where farming is in decline and a variety of other, non-agricultural land uses are becoming common. Both can have a significant visual impact and this landscape type particularly sensitive and vulnerable to change. The area nevertheless retains an 'upland' character and sense of remoteness. Settlement comprises isolated scattered farmhouses and their associated buildings with occasional clusters of buildings and short terraces of weavers' cottages. There is a general absence of trees except where the summits of the steep wooded cloughs penetrate these upland areas and occasionally tree clumps around farmsteads. The whole area has an open character often with long views out across the valleys and, on the edges of the area, across the extensive urban conurbations beyond.

Key environmental features

- *Open, 'upland' landscape character created by the altitude, absence of trees and long views, often with a sense of remoteness and isolation.*
- *A characteristic patchwork of upland pastures including small irregular fields and larger rectangular fields representing a later phase of moorland enclosure.*
- *A dense network of gritstone walls creates the field enclosures. The stone walls provide shelter and habitat for wildlife and are also of considerable historical/ cultural interest.*
- *Remnant unimproved upland pastures including colourful species-rich hay meadows and damp pastures are an integral part of the mosaic of upland habitats and are of great importance for nature conservation. Flushed meadows are of special interest.*
- *Numerous paved packhorse routes linking with an extensive public rights of way network, providing not only distinctive features but evidence of the historic strategic importance of the moorland fringes.*

- *Dispersed settlement pattern comprising scattered farmsteads (sometimes in fairly close proximity) and occasional short terraces of houses.*
- *A network of narrow winding lanes connects the farmsteads and settlements. Stone walls without grass verges often bound the lanes.*
- *Distinctive vernacular architecture dominated by the millstone grit building stone and including laithe houses and weavers' cottages.*
- *Frequent long views across the intersecting valleys and/or out over the urban conurbations that surround the South Pennines uplands. “*

Table 6 LCA F1: Irwell (Ramsbottom, Rawtenstall, Bacup)

Landscape Character Type summary of character and key environmental features

LCA F1 is located within LCT F: Settled Valleys.

“Landscape character summary

The deeply incised narrow valleys that dissect the high moorland plateau are one of the most distinctive landscape types of the South Pennines. Parts of many of the main valleys are crowded by towns and urban areas, which originated at the point of a river crossing and expanded during the early industrial age. The textile mills, with their distinctive chimneys, dominate the urban skyline and are a hallmark of the South Pennines landscape. The tall gritstone terraces of weavers' cottages are a characteristic feature of the hillsides and canals, rail and roads often line the narrow valley floor. Settlements are generally concentrated on the south-facing slopes and along the narrow valley floor. North facing slopes usually remain free of development so that even within urban areas there are frequently views towards woodlands, the patchwork of in-bye pastures and the moorland edge. Broadleaved woodlands, many of ancient origin, cling to the steep slopes and fill the valley side cloughs, reinforcing the sense of enclosure within the valleys. The deep 'hidden' side ravines with their fast flowing becks and dense woodland cover are also a distinctive feature.

Key environmental features

- *Deep incised valley profile with steps and terraces and deep side cloughs reflecting the underlying geology and weathering processes.*
- *Sense of enclosure provided by the steep-sided profile and presence of woodland, emphasising contrast with the open moorland.*
- *Broadleaved woodland, much of ancient origin, on the valley sides and in the side cloughs supporting important fern, bryophyte and bird species.*
- *Characteristic linear pattern of urban settlement on the valley floor and the lower south-facing slopes, from which there are frequently views out to the woodland, pastures and the moorland edges.*
- *Distinctive vernacular architecture including mills, packhorse bridges and terraces of weavers' cottages providing evidence of the important role that these valleys played in our industrial history.*
- *Rivers and canals creating green corridors and a valuable recreational resource as well as important wetland habitats, supporting a number of notable rarities.*
- *Valley wetland habitats including fens and wet pastures.*
- *Wealth of historical and archaeological interest, reflecting the historic evolution of the area.*
- *In-bye pastures and hay meadows on the valley sides form an important element of the upland habitat mosaic.*
- *Gritstone walls create the distinctive field pattern which is highly visible on the sloping valley sides. The stone walls provide shelter and habitat for wildlife, and are also of considerable historical/cultural interest. “*

F1: Irwell (Ramsbottom, Rawtenstall, Bacup)

The River Irwell arises from moorland springs on the moorland above Bacup and flows within a narrow, high-sided valley in a westward direction to Rawtenstall and then south to Ramsbottom. Tributary streams flow southwards through Lumb and Crawshawbooth cutting the high land of the Forest of Rossendale before joining the main valley. The character area also includes the separate wider valley of the river Spodden which runs south through Whitworth. On the steepest sides of the Irwell there are outcrops of Millstone Grit creating a gorge-like landform, and in the deepest parts of the valley the north facing slopes remain in almost permanent shade. Along the valley bottom the towns of Rawtenstall, Bacup and Waterfoot merge to form a dense ribbon of urban and industrial development. The urban areas contain many fine buildings representing some of the South Pennines most important industrial heritage. The Irwell valley is distinctive for the relatively small amount of woodland compared, for example, to the valleys to the west. Within the dense urban centres there is always an awareness of the proximity of wilder countryside with views up to the moorland edge, although in many areas extensive quarrying has disfigured the skyline view. The essential landscape character of the area is created by the juxtaposition of the deep river valley with its important areas of industrial heritage and the wild moorland.

Table 7 LCA G6: River Roch & Tributaries

Landscape Character Type summary of character and key environmental features

LCA G6 is located within LCT G: Wooded Rural Valleys. There is no detailed description of character for LCA G6.

"Landscape character summary

The steep-sided wooded valleys, which dissect the high South Pennine moorland, are a special feature of the area. They have a secluded, intimate character derived from the deeply incised topography and abundant woodland which clothes the valley sides often blocking the sky from view. Although they exist in close proximity to the densely urbanised and industrial valleys, these side valleys are largely hidden and inaccessible except by foot. Their depth and extent is surprising and creates the sense of a hidden, secret landscape. The swift-flowing streams which tumble over the hard gritstone rocks are edged with a luxuriant carpet of mosses and ferns. These waters once provided the power for the early industrialisation of the region and the side valleys are lined with the remains of former mill sites.

Key environmental features

- *A secluded, 'hidden' intimate and tranquil character created by the incised landform, densely wooded slopes and absence of modern development.*
- *Distinctive incised landform with stepped terraces and a narrow valley floor.*
- *Fast flowing, moss and fern edged, streams cut down into the bedrock.*
- *Waterfalls are a characteristic feature where the streams cut alternating hard and soft layers of the underlying Millstone Grit geology.*
- *A mosaic of wetland habitats including freshwater streams, damp pasture and meadows, marsh and millponds on the valley floor.*
- *Thick broadleaved woodland including ancient woodland of high nature conservation value, clothes the valley sides.*
- *Patchwork of light and shade created by the juxtaposition of woodland and pastures.*
- *Local areas of landslip on the steep valley sides expose important geological sites and create a distinctive landscape feature.*
- *Strings of now derelict water-powered mills with associated features including mill ponds and races occur along the valley floor and reflect the emergence of early industrialisation.*
- *Archaeological features related to woodland management, such as charcoal hearths are common. "*

Table 8 LCA I3: Haslingden Grane

Landscape Character Type summary of character and key environmental features

LCA I3 is located within LCT I: Reservoir Valleys.

“Landscape character summary

The valley reservoirs, constructed in the mid-late nineteenth century to supply water for Lancashire's growing urban population, create a distinctive landscape type. The valleys are dominated by a series of large level expanses of water and associated engineered landforms of bunds and embankments. The Victorian landscape is evident in the form of the coniferous plantations, gothic detailing and ornamentation, and sturdy dressed stone walls. Today, the valleys are predominantly rural in character with attractive areas of pasture and broadleaved woodland surrounding and linking the waterbodies. The valleys with their extensive woodlands and plantations have the capacity to absorb relatively high numbers of people (for recreation) from the surrounding urban areas, without becoming overcrowded and recreational use is now an important influence on landscape character.

Key environmental features

- *Open valley profile with gently sloping sides, influenced by glacial activity.*
- *Dominated by numerous large reservoirs with characteristic ornate Victorian detailing. The reservoirs provide water resources, support important populations of wintering wildfowl and waders, and are a focus for recreation.*
- *Broadleaved and coniferous plantations bordering and linking reservoirs, giving the area a high capacity for visitors.*
- *A sparsely settled, strongly rural landscape.*
- *Evidence of historic industry at Higher Mill, located in the valley floor at Helmshore.”*

LCA I3: Haslingden Grane

“The Grane valley is a somewhat remote wide valley to the west of the town of Haslingden. The valley floor is occupied by three large reservoirs; Calf Hey, Ogden and Holden Wood, while the valley sides contain a mix of coniferous and broadleaved plantations and open pastures. Quarried crags and edges overlook the valley and border the surrounding high moorland. This was once a well-populated valley with farmers, quarryworkers and a number of mills. The entire valley was depopulated in association with the reservoir construction in an effort to reduce the risk of waterborne diseases. Today, the valley has an overwhelming air of desolation with many abandoned farmsteads and ruined cottages dotting the valley sides. The Grane is gradually being rediscovered by visitors and is increasingly used for informal recreation with car parks and footpath links established.

Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study (2018)

Table 9 LCA 20: Affetside and Ainsworth and LCA 22: Holcombe to Greenmount and Higher Summersea, LCA 24: Knowle and Rooley Moors, Fringes and Foothills and LCA 29: Rough Hill to Brun Moor

Landscape character description - Key characteristics

LCA 20, LCA 22, LCA 24 and LCA 29 form part of LCT: Open Moorlands and Enclosed Upland Fringes (West/South Pennines).

“Topography, geology and drainage

- *An elevated, upland landscape rising up to the higher Pennine moorlands/plateaux in the north and east of Greater Manchester. The landform was formed by glacial action and is widely varied and locally distinct, with broad sweeping uplands, areas with dramatic folds, terraces and slopes and occasional stream valleys.*
- *Underlying bedrock geology of Pennine Coal Measures (mudstones, siltstones, sandstones) and Millstone Grit. The uplands are characterised by expansive peat deposits.*
- *Generally, soil fertility is poor; the majority of agricultural land is classed as Grade 4 or 5.*
- *Small streams and brooks drain the uplands into numerous reservoirs. Some also drain into major rivers including the River Tame and River Irwell.*

Land use and field patterns

- *Higher elevations characterised by unenclosed open moorland used for rough grazing (predominantly by sheep). Large-scale wind farms occupy some of the higher moorland areas, notably Knowl Moor (Scout Moor Wind Farm) and Shore Moor. A military Danger Zone is located on the edge of Holcombe Moor.*
- *Upland fringes comprise semi-improved grassland pasture enclosed by a network of gritstone walls (with some replacement by post and wire fencing). Enclosures form a patchwork of small irregular and larger rectangular fields, including Parliamentary enclosures.*
- *Land use in the upland fringes is primarily sheep and cattle farming, with some remnants of unimproved upland pastures. Localised areas are used for horse and pony paddocks.*
- *Past and present quarrying activity has left frequent imprints on the landscape. A number of these sites have been restored as semi-natural habitat and some serve as destinations for recreational activity e.g. Crompton Moor. Golf courses form occasional features close to the urban edge.*
- *Reservoirs also form valued recreational destinations with visitor facilities, including Watergrove Reservoir and Ogden Reservoir. Smithills Country Park covers a large area around Smithills Moor.*

Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover

- *Rich mosaic of upland habitats including heather moorland, blanket bog, acid grassland and wet and dry heathland. Extensive areas are internationally or nationally designated for their nature conservation value, including the South Pennine Moors SPA/SAC/SSSI/SBI and West Pennine Moors SSSI.*
- *Within the enclosed upland fringes, disused quarries, reservoirs, broadleaved valley woodlands, species rich grassland and wetlands are often locally designated as Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs).*
- *On the whole, woodland is sparse on the unenclosed uplands. Coniferous/mixed plantations are associated with reservoirs and quarries. Tracts of broadleaved woodland clothe the sides of valleys. Trees also feature along field boundaries within the enclosed upland fringe.*

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- *Important archaeological landscape containing Scheduled remains including a Blackstone Edge Roman Road, a Roman Fort (near Castle Shaw) and Scheduled Bowl Barrow (near Knarr Barn). The peat*

- *deposits on the uplands are also likely to contain a rich record of preserved prehistoric archaeology.*
- *Evidence of the industrial heritage of the area, with numerous disused quarries and mines. Near to settlements, mills and chimneys form frequent landmarks.*
- *The enclosed landscape contains a number of historic settlements, many of which are designated as Conservation Areas with clusters of Listed Buildings, including prominent churches.*
- *Inspirational landscape, with well-known cultural associations. The open moorland provided inspiration for Ted Hughes (from neighbouring Calderdale) and poet Ammon Wrigley. Monuments including Peel Tower (Grade II listed) are located in elevated locations.*

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- *Remote with a lack of development within the open moors. The upland fringes have a sparsely settled character, with traditional millstone grit stone-built farms, dispersed cottages and houses and several historic villages with a unifying stone vernacular.*
- *Occasional halls, manors and country residences are also scattered throughout the landscape, including Smithills Hall (Grade I Listed) in Bolton District and Shore Hall (Grade II* Listed) in Rochdale District.*
- *Relatively sparse road network, with farms and settlements linked by minor roads and tracks. Some larger routes cross the landscape, including the M62 and numerous A-roads.*
- *Forms an attractive, undeveloped remote backdrop to and has a strong visual relationship with nearby urban areas.*
- *The unenclosed moorlands include large areas of Open Access Land. Long distance routes pass through the LCT, including the Pennine Way National Trail, Rochdale Way and Rotary Way, which link to a strong rights of way network. Many routes crossing the moorland are based on historic packhorse routes.*

Views and perceptual qualities

- *Long, panoramic views are afforded by the high elevation of the landscape. There is often intervisibility with the dramatic Dark Peak moorlands of the Peak District National Park, particularly in the eastern parts of the LCT.*
- *The landscape evokes a strongly rural, remote and continuation of character of the Pennine uplands with gritstone walls, traditional farms, sheep grazed pastures and rough moorland.*
- *The unenclosed moorland is characterised by muted colours with subtle colour changes. The landscape is strongly influenced by the changeable weather conditions.*
- *This landscape is often associated with a sense of openness, remoteness and isolation. This perception can be broken in places by views of urban development and the presence of intrusive modern features including the M62 motorway."*
- *Wind turbines and pylons/overhead lines punctuate the mostly open and undeveloped skylines. Masts are a feature of higher ground and are occasionally found in clusters.*
- *Within the stream valleys, there is a contrasting sense of enclosure due to topography and woodland cover.*

Table 10 LCA 23: River Irwell (north Bury) and Kirklees, LCT 25: River Roch

Landscape character description - Key characteristics

LCA 23 and LCA 25 are located within in LCT Incised Urban Fringe Valleys.

Topography, geology and drainage

- *Typically narrow, incised valleys cutting through rolling hills which include the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills (where the enclosing landform rises to around 300m AOD).*

- *Upstream the rivers and tributaries are typically narrow and fast flowing, forming steep sided V-shape valleys and gorges. Further downstream the rivers widen and meander across flatter valley bottoms.*
- *Underlying bedrock geology dominated by Pennine Coal Measures, comprising mudstones, siltstones and sandstones topped by fluvial deposits. Bedrock strata are exposed in places due to fluvial erosion.*
- *Small tributary cloughs formed by seasonal streams flowing straight down valley sides, characterised by fast-moving streams, pools and falls.*

Land use and field patterns

- *The valleys cut through thick glacial deposits supporting lower quality, in places poorly draining farmland.*
- *Small to medium pastoral fields and horse paddocks on the valley sides and areas of wet grassland and scrub along the valley floor. Some arable fields are found on the drier, flatter ground on the valley floors.*
- *Semi-regular fields of 19th century origin marked by (often gappy) hedgerows and post-and-wire fencing. Areas of arable farmland include agglomerated 20th century fields. There are rare examples of medieval strip fields around settlements.*
- *Dry stone walls (some in a state of disrepair) delineate pastures on higher slopes, reflecting the character of nearby upland foothill landscapes.*
- *A significant amount of the land with the valleys is used for recreation with amenity grassland associated with golf courses, frequent playing fields and Country Parks.*
- *Other land uses include utility infrastructure with numerous reservoirs and water treatment works, flood alleviation schemes, industrial development, and large electricity substations.*

Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover

- *Valleys typically traced by riparian woodland with banks of dense broadleaved woodland (some ancient) distinctive moss-covered trees and a wildflower-rich understorey.*
- *Woodland and areas of parkland create important wildlife corridors between densely populated urban areas, with significant areas designated as Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) and managed as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).*
- *SSSI-designated habitats found at Nob End and Ashclough in the Irwell Valley; the Lowside Brickworks and Hollinwood Branch Canal in the Medlock Valley; Ladcastle & Den Quarries and Huddersfield Narrow Canal within the Tame Valley.*
- *Post-industrial and reclaimed land at various stages of regeneration, with locally valued mosaics of scrub, herbaceous vegetation and reedbeds. These include LNRs at Moses Gate Country Park, Clifton Country*
- *Park, Glodwick Lows1 and Reddish Vale Country Park.*

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- *The valleys have a long industrial heritage as a power source for the 19th and 20th century cotton industry. Rivers are often flanked by large, sometimes derelict, mills built of gritstone or red brick with tall chimneys forming distinctive skyline features.*
- *Other industrial relics include canals (including the Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area), railways, weirs, cobbled roads, and scheduled sites such as Samuel Oldknow's lime kilns in Stockport and Ringley*
- *Old Bridge (Bolton).*
- *Landmark viaducts and aqueducts including Marple Aqueduct (Grade I Listed, Scheduled Monument), Uppermill (Oldham), Broadbottom (Stockport), Tame (Tameside) and Darcy Lever (Bolton) – all Grade II listed viaducts.*
- *Earlier scheduled sites include the remains of a Castlesteads promontory fort on the east bank of the Irwell (Bury) and the site of a post-medieval glassworks near Clarke's Bridge within the Tame Valley.*

- A number of Conservation Areas, some now forming part of larger urban areas, often linked to historic river crossings. Examples include the Eagley Bank, Brooksbottoms, Ramsbottom and Summerseat.
- Historically important buildings include churches, traditional farmstead buildings, occasional medieval manor houses and halls. Examples include the 14th century parish church of St Mary in Radcliffe (Bury) and the Tudor manor house of Bramhall Hall in Stockport.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Modern and historical industrial complexes, recreational buildings, scattered farmsteads and small settlements connected by winding lanes. Some steeper areas are inaccessible by road.
- The valleys are typically overlooked adjacent urban areas, with some redevelopment sites for housing located on exposed ridges, emphasising their close proximity to densely populated areas.
- Major rail and road routes, including the M60, M66, M67 and M6 cross and run partly through some of the valleys. These linear features incorporate extensive cuttings, embankments, bridges and junctions.
- Networks of footpaths criss-cross the valleys. Some are formal public rights of way; others simply desire lines running from the surrounding urban areas.
- Numerous long distance footpaths and cycle routes run through the valleys and along canals, including the Pennine Bridleway, Trans Pennine Trail and E2 European Long Distance Route. Other routes include the Tame Valley Way, Cheshire Ring Canal Walk, Midshires Way, Rotary Way and Irwell Sculpture Trail.
- The East Lancashire Heritage Railway in the Irwell Valley is a popular tourist attraction. It stops at historic stations at Summerseat and Ramsbottom and a new station at Burrs, and links up with the Irwell Sculpture Trail.
- Other disused railway lines provide recreation and nature conservation corridors, including within the Irwell, Kirklees, Medlock and Tame valleys.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Views are typically contained by the steep valley sides and woodland. From the more elevated locations along the valley sides there are views to the surrounding Pennine uplands (including the Peak District National Park) and over Greater Manchester.
- The elevated valley sides of the Irwell and Kirklees afford views to the landmark hills of Harcles Hill and Scout Moor, with the Peel Monument and Scout Moor Wind Farm forming focal points. Wimberry Stones Brow/Indian's Head is a distinctive upland landform feature visible from the Tame in Oldham.
- The Saddleworth War Memorial is a prominent skyline feature on Alderman's Hill (also known locally as "Pots and Pans Hill") above the Tame Valley.
- While proximity to urban areas, transport and other infrastructure can significantly affect their character, the narrow valley landforms and often dense woodland cover provide a sense of seclusion and tranquillity.
- Major transport infrastructure can sever the valleys' visual unity, influence local views and break perceptions of tranquillity and the small landform scale. Large pylons frequently dominate views.

Table 11 LCA 26: Prettywood, Pilsworth and Unsworth Moss

Landscape character description - Key characteristics

LCA 26 is located in LCT: Mosslands and Lowland Farmland.

"Topography, geology and drainage

- *Landform generally flat or gently undulating, with elevation generally ranging from 0-30 metres AOD. It rises to over 100m in places, e.g. at Lostock Junction and Hunger Hill (Bolton), Ashton Moss (Tameside) and on the edge of Unsworth (Bury).*
- *Underlying bedrock geology of Coal Measures (mudstones, siltstones, sandstones) overlain by fluvioglacial sands and gravels with pockets of peat and clay.*
- *Floodplain landscape, often poorly drained, with numerous brooks, occasional small reservoirs and large number of ponds, flashes and ditches.*
- *Soil quality is variable; restored agricultural land typically has thin, sandy, poorly drained soils (Grade 3 or Grade 4) whereas areas of reclaimed mossland have rich, peaty soils, some of which are of high agricultural productivity (Grade 1 or Grade 2).*

Land use and field patterns

- *Land use largely reclaimed lowland farmland, mainly arable but with some pasture, interspersed with distinctive areas of remnant mossland.*
- *Areas of lowland farmland have a pattern of medium to large scale fields, generally defined by gappy hedgerows, with few hedgerow trees. Field are of post medieval (e.g. south of Lostock and Lostock Junction), 18th, 19th and 20th century origin.*
- *The mosslands are a simple, ordered landscape divided geometrically into a series of small to large sized fields with deep, open drainage ditches as field boundaries, interspersed with moss woodlands. Field are of post medieval (e.g. Warburton Park), 18th, 19th and 20th century origin.*
- *Some recreational provision including golf courses.*

Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover

- *Remnant mosslands and large geometric moss woodlands are an important nature conservation resource, and many are locally designated as Sites of Biological Interest (SBI).*
- *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) at Red Moss (Bolton), Brookheys Covert (Trafford), Highfield Moss (Wigan) and Astley and Bedford Mosses (Wigan), the latter of which is also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).*
- *In lowland farmland areas there are small pockets of woodland, either on small steep-sided valleys, along motorway edges or associated with settlement edges. Areas of willow and alder carr fringe wetlands, which include ponds, flashes and ditches.*
- *Farmland is drained by narrow brooks e.g. Middle Brook at Lostock (Bolton) and Whittle Brook at Unsworth (Bury), which contribute to the network of wetland habitats within the landscape.*

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- *In ancient times, the mosses were regarded as “dangerous wildernesses”¹, and the unstable nature of the moss deterred the early development of settlement and roads, reflected in a current lack of development in contrast to surrounding settled areas.*
- *Mosses were also strategically important barriers to forces moving north or south e.g. in 1745 the Jacobite army was diverted towards Manchester at Wigan, rather than heading south across the mossland.*
- *Urban expansion and past widespread coal extraction has resulted in a fragmentation of the mosslands. Remnant spoil heaps and former railway corridors are now important for wildlife and recreation.*
- *Conservation Areas at Warburton and Dunham Woodhouses in Trafford, both containing a number of Listed Buildings including the Grade I listed Old Church of Saint Werburg in Warburton. Grade II* Listed Buildings include Morley’s Hall, Light Oaks Hall (Wigan) and Buckley Hill Farmhouse (Tameside).*
- *Scheduled Monuments include a promontory fort on the Glaze Brook at Great Woollen (Trafford) and a moated site at Morley’s Hall (Wigan).*

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- *In lowland farmland areas, settlement comprises small villages along country lanes, and scattered farmhouses.*
- *In the mosslands, farm buildings are located along the long, straight lanes at the edge of the mosses.*
- *Straight lanes known as 'rides' are often higher than the mossland (due to peat shrinkage), and are sometimes emphasised by trees and scrub.*
- *Parts of the landscape are influenced by large scale industrial and commercial development, housing, motorway corridors and railway lines e.g. large scale commercial development at Middlebrook (Bolton), Heywood (Rochdale), M60 at Clifton Moss (Bolton/Salford). There is also evidence of past mineral and extractive industries.*
- *Public footpaths tend to run along field boundaries. Some long distance routes cross the landscape, including the Trans Pennine Trail and National Route 62 at Dunham Massey and the Middle Brook Valley Trail at Lostock. There are small areas of Open Access land (moss and woodland).*

Views and perceptual qualities

- *Views tend to be internal due to the flat or gently undulating, low-lying nature of the land, with surrounding development often forming the backdrop. Overhead lines form prominent vertical elements e.g. crossing Barton Moss (Salford) and Carrington Moss (Trafford).*
- *Some distant views from elevated areas of farmland e.g. from Lostock Junction south across Chew Moor to the opposing settled ridge and from Lostock north to the Pennine Foothills at Rivington in Chorley / Blackburn with Darwen.*
- *Some wide, sweeping views across mossland areas are available from local high points, e.g. motorway flyovers and bridges over canals.*
- *There are some views south from Trafford into neighbouring Warrington and Cheshire East districts, across the Bollin Valley.*
- *The mosslands have a sense of remoteness, with few buildings and roads in poor condition, some of which terminate in dead ends. Mists and fogs are common on cooler nights. The sense of remoteness can be perceived as unsettling.*
- *Motorways are audibly and visually dominant in some areas, reducing tranquillity e.g. the M61 at Chew Moor and the M62 at Irlam/Barton."*

Table 12 LCA 27: Simster, Slattocks and Healds Green

Landscape character description - Key characteristics

LCA 27 is located in LCT: Urban Fringe Farmland.

"Topography, geology and drainage

- *Rolling landscape with elevation ranging between 30 and 250m AOD. The landform becomes gentler as it falls towards the floodplains of the rivers Mersey and Bollin (from 10 to 60m AOD).*
- *Elevated farmland to the north and east, close to the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills, mainly comprising undulating hills and valleys.*
- *Landform dissected by narrow, often steep sided wooded cloughs, and drained by a network of streams and ponds (of local ecological value) throughout.*
- *Underlying bedrock geology at higher elevations dominated by Pennine Coal Measures mudstones, siltstones and sandstones. The Mersey and Bollin floodplains comprise sandstones of the Wilmslow and Chester formations, as well as deposits from the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation.*
- *Glacial till and fluvial deposits overlay the bedrock, creating the rolling landform.*

Land use and field patterns

- *Variable land use, with the more elevated land in the north and east typified by lower grade agricultural land used for dairy farming, horse grazing and sheep rearing. Pockets of dry heath, acid grassland and moorland fringe are also present.*
- *Pastoral land characterised by small and medium sized fields, forming various patterns from rectilinear to distinctive web shaped originating from Parliamentary enclosure.*
- *Flatter, more fertile floodplain areas give rise to a mix of pasture and arable cultivation. Fields tend to be larger with subtle boundary features, with occasional small pasture fields to the east of Altrincham.*
- *Field boundaries comprise often gappy, species-poor hedgerows with occasional established clumps of hedgerow trees. Post and wire fencing replaces hedges in many locations, whilst occasional stone walls provide definition at higher elevations, but many are in a degraded condition.*
- *Frequent recreational land uses with sports fields and golf courses located close to the urban edge. The manicured lush greens of the courses contrast sharply with areas of semi-improved grazing land.*
- *The open farmland contrasts strongly with adjoining residential and industrial urban areas, often forming a rural buffer to the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills.*

Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover

- *Open landscape with sparse woodland cover generally limited to isolated plantation woodland, hedgerows and the steep cloughs that bisect the rolling farmland.*
- *A small number of Ancient Woodlands (e.g. Oaken Bank Wood and Glade Wood within Hopwood Woodlands Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Rochdale) provide important habitats and wildlife corridors.*
- *Established clumps of hawthorn and dog rose line some of the field boundaries and highways, with some incorporating mature broadleaved trees.*
- *Other SBI-designated habitats include areas of dry heath, acid and of species rich grassland. Elton Reservoir, south-east of Bury, remains a legacy of the area's industrial past and is an important site for water fowl. Flashes also form locally important wetland habitats of industrial origin.*

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- *The Trans-Pennine railway, dismantled railway routes and canals serve as a reminder of the area's industrial past; the importance of the Macclesfield Canal is reflected in its Conservation Area status.*
- *Scheduled Monuments limited to moated sites north-west of Broadoak Farm (near Marple), another a Arley Hall east of Standish, and Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.*
- *Birch village (Rochdale) and part of Summerseat (Bury) are Conservation Areas. The landscape also forms part of the setting to a number of other Conservation Areas on its doorstep.*
- *Grade II Listed Buildings sparsely scattered throughout. The LCT includes the Grade II* Listed Brandlesholme Old Hall (Bury), Hopwood Hall (Rochdale) and Old Manor Farm (Stockport).*

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- *Generally a dispersed pattern of scattered farmsteads and individual dwellings constructed of locally sourced gritstone. Occasional small settlements are linked by local roads and winding country lanes.*
- *In some areas settlement takes the form of 20th century ribbon development strung along roads. Some industrial development and distribution parks are also located close to major roads.*
- *A network of major road and rail routes, including the M62, M61 and A627(M) motorways, form dominant features with extensive cuttings, embankments, bridges and junctions.*
- *Numerous rights of way and cycle routes permeate the landscape, linking to the surrounding urban areas. The Rotary Way and Rochdale Way are long distance footpaths connecting to the local network.*
- *Disused railway lines provide recreation and nature conservation corridors, including in Wigan and the Midshires Way in Stockport.*

Views and perceptual qualities

- *In general the more elevated, rolling farmland has an exposed and open character with little sense of enclosure and strong visual connections with surrounding landscapes.*
- *Views within the floodplains are typically restricted by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and development, creating a more enclosed landscape with pockets of seclusion and relative tranquillity.*
- *Wide panoramic views from high points over the Greater Manchester conurbation contained within a bowl dramatically flanked by the South/West Pennines and the Peak District National Park.*
- *Long views towards the coastal plain to the west stretch as far as Fiddler's Ferry Power Station near Widnes.*
- *Historic mills with tall chimneys and warehouses also form landmarks on the skyline.*
- *Transport corridors and pylon lines are very apparent, with the lack of tree cover within the rolling open farmland leaving the large roads and motorway visually exposed and audible."*

Table 13 LCA 28: Rochdale and Oldham South Pennine Foothills

Landscape character description - Key characteristics

LCA 28 is located in LCT: Pennine Foothills (West/South Pennines)

"Topography, geology and drainage

- *Transitional landscape sloping up from the northern fringes of Greater Manchester towards the uplands of the South and West Pennines.*
- *Strongly rolling and undulating topography punctuated by locally distinctive hills and carved by intricate stream valleys. Elevation ranges from 100 to over 350 metres AOD at Besom Hill.*
- *Primary underlying geology of Pennine Coal Measures, with areas of Millstone Grit overlain with glacial till deposits. Soil fertility is generally poor, with much of the LCT defined as Grade 4 agricultural land, with some pockets defined as Grade 3.*
- *Streams drain through cloughs to a number of reservoirs, although these are generally smaller than those on higher ground within the Unenclosed Uplands and Fringes LCT.*

Land use and field patterns

- *Land use is dominated by lush semi-improved grassland pastures enclosed by a mix of gritstone walls, hedgerow boundaries and post and rail fencing. Horse paddocks are often found adjacent to settlement.*
- *Varied small-medium scale enclosures, divided by a mixture of field boundaries including gritstone walls, hedgerows and post and rail fencing. Field are predominantly piecemeal post-medieval enclosures, with some modern agglomeration.*
- *Various other land uses, including quarries and reservoirs and frequent recreational facilities such as golf clubs. Country Parks are located at Tandle Hill (Oldham District) and Hollingworth (Rochdale District).*

Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover

- *Numerous semi-natural habitats scattered throughout the farmland including woodland, grassland, heathland and streams/brooks, some of which are locally designated as Sites of Biological Importance.*
- *Well wooded landscape with extensive tree and woodland cover with trees in stream valleys, along field boundaries and avenues of trees along roads. Tracts of dense broadleaved woodland also define cloughs,*
- *including large areas of ancient woodland.*

- *Reservoirs including Hollingworth Lake (designated as a Site of Biological Importance) enhance the nature conservation interest and are important for wintering waterfowl.*

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- *Numerous Conservation Areas reflecting the historic character of settlements, including Ainsworth, Nangreaves, Stone Breaks, Clegg Village and Riding Gate which contain clusters of Listed Buildings.*
- *A number of historic buildings are scattered throughout the landscape including Grade II* Listed Buildings including Clegg Hall, Grotton Hall and Birchinley Manor Farmhouse.*
- *Evidence of the area's industrial heritage in the form of old mill buildings, chimneys, disused quarries and mines and the Rochdale Canal.*

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- *Settlement mainly comprises scattered traditional stone farmsteads and halls, with some small groups of dwellings including Victorian terraces. The largest settlement is Ainsworth, located between Bury and Bolton. The foothills provide an important separation function between distinct urban areas.*
- *Numerous footpaths and bridleways cross and provide access to the landscape from nearby urban areas and also link to the moorlands. These include the Rotary Way, Oldham Way and Rochdale Way.*
- *Road pattern mainly comprises minor winding lanes and tracks connecting farms. Occasionally, more major routes cross through the LCT, including the M62 and several A-roads.*

Views and perceptual qualities

- *Variable visual character depending on topography and vegetation cover; there are long views across the urban conurbation to the West and South Pennine uplands beyond where vegetation allows. Areas within the Peak District National Park are visible from some vantage points. Other areas are visually enclosed due to valleys or vegetation which creates wooded skylines.*
- *Occasionally, masts and pylons/overhead lines intrude on the wooded skylines. Other intrusive modern influences include the M62 motorway and prominent views of urban development, including tower blocks breaking horizons.*
- *Other skyline features including chimneys, the war memorial in Tandle Hill Country Park and views to monuments on higher ground within the uplands including Peel Tower and Bishop Park Monument.*
- *Windswept and exposed on higher ground as the landscape transitions to the upland fringe. This contrasts with the sheltered, enclosed feel of the valleys which have limited views in and out.*
- *Areas with relatively high levels of tranquillity despite the close proximity of urban development and major infrastructure e.g. Tandle Hill Country Park."*

References

Ref 1- Natural England, 2014. National Character Area Profile: 36 South Pennines. Available online at <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/Southern-Pennines/> [Accessed 05.06.2025]

Ref 2- Julie Martin Associates and LUC, on behalf of Rossendale, Burnley, Calderdale, Kirklees and Barnsley Councils, 2014. South Pennines Wind Energy Landscape Study.

Ref 3- LUC on behalf of Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2018. Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment.