

▶ Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Land West of Mill Lane,  
Newton-Le-Willows

For: Wainhomes Ltd

Ref: M3360-LVA-22.05-V4



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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Barnes Walker Ltd has prepared this Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) on behalf of Wainhomes North-West Ltd, to accompany their planning application for the proposed residential development on land to the west of the A49 Mill Lane, Newton-le-Willows. The design proposals have been prepared by Wainhomes North-West with landscape and planting design by Barnes Walker Ltd.
- 1.2 The LVA has been undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and its key objective is to ascertain potential landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed development, whilst concurrently informing the design process for the site.
- 1.3 In order to prepare this document, desk-top studies were undertaken prior to a site based survey and assessment exercise. This work informed the preparation of the baseline report which confirmed the nature of the site and the surrounding landscape, any relevant landscape character assessments, associated planning policy and heritage assets before ascertaining the key landscape and visual receptors and their associated sensitivity. The report then goes on to describe the development proposals before ascertaining any potential landscape and visual effects which may result from the implementation of the proposals.
- 1.4 Anticipated landscape effects may be generated by the proposed development on the landscape resource, which include its physical features, character, fabric and the quality of the landscape. These could include direct, physical effects upon landscape elements, such as the loss of a tree or tangible effects to an existing landscape character.
- 1.5 Visual effects are the predicted changes to a view and the associated effect of those changes upon the relevant visual receptors. Typically, the various visual receptor groups may comprise the residents of properties, the users of Public Rights of Way, the users of recreational facilities, pedestrians, and users of a variety of forms of transport such as road users or rail passengers.
- 1.6 This appraisal has been undertaken with reference to, and using aspects of, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition 2013), by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 1.7 The location and context of the site and the study area associated with this LVA is described by Figure 1. Factors determining the extent of the study area are set out within the methodology in Appendix 2.

1.0 Introduction



Application Site Boundary

Study Area

Fig 1 Aerial Photograph - Site Location and Study Area

		<b>National Planning Policy Framework</b>		
2.1	Since March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) document has replaced the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's). The NPPF distils the content of these documents into a single comprehensive and concise document and now represents relevant planning policy at a national level. The original version of the 2012 NPPF has been revised since and the latest iteration was published in July 2021. Section 2 sets out the underlying principles of sustainable development that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. It sets out 3no. over-arching economic, social and environmental objectives to achieve sustainable development and the environmental objective is considered to be particularly relevant to the potential landscape and visual effects associated with the development proposals. The following sections are considered to be of relevance and contain further detail to inform how those principles are to be delivered:	2.2	The new Local Plan was adopted in July 2022 and sets out the vision and objectives for the development of the Borough up to and beyond 2037.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 2: Achieving Sustainable Development;</li> <li>• Section 12: Achieving Well-Designed Places; and</li> <li>• Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment</li> </ul>			
	<b>Local Planning Policy</b>		<u>Policy</u>	
	<u>St Helens Borough Council Local Planning</u>		<u>Local Plan Core Policies</u>	
		2.3	Extracts of the Core Policies of the Local Plan, which are considered to be of relevance to this LVA and the landscape context of the application site are as follows:	
		2.4	<i>Policy LPA02 – Development Principles</i> <i>New development in St Helens Borough will be required to support the following development principles where relevant:</i>	2.6
			<i>1. Create sustainable communities with a strong sense of place.</i>	<i>Policy LPC09: Landscape Protection and Enhancement</i>
			<i>5. Contribute to a high quality built and natural environment by: a) Securing high quality design in all development and a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings; b) Taking account of the Borough's landscape character and townscape, and the distinctive roles and settings of different areas of the Borough, in the location and design of new development;</i>	<i>1. Proposals for new development must, as appropriate having regard to their scale and nature: a) seek to conserve, maintain, enhance and / or restore any landscape features that are important to the character of the local area; b) demonstrably form the best option for meeting the aims of the development whilst minimising impacts on the landscape and appearance of the area and respecting local distinctiveness; c) be informed by relevant guidance including the St Helens Landscape Character Assessment and the Merseyside Historic Character Study; and d) include assessments of the impact of the proposal on the landscape and appearance of the area, carried out in accordance with any relevant best practice guidelines.</i>
		2.5	<i>Policy LPA08: Green Infrastructure</i> <i>2. The Council will work with other organisations where necessary to: a) expand tree cover in appropriate locations across the Borough to improve landscape character, water and air quality and the value of trees to wildlife; b) strengthen and expand the network</i>	<i>2. Where a development would lead to harm to the landscape or visual character of the area, mitigation measures will be sought to reduce the scale of such harm.</i>
				<i>of wildlife sites, corridors and stepping stone habitats to secure a net gain in biodiversity; c) improve and increase the connectivity of the Greenway network; d) increase the accessibility of open space within walking distance of housing, health, employment and education establishments to promote healthy lifestyles; e) reduce the risk of flooding, improve river water quality and riverine and riparian habitats within the Sankey Catchment; and f) ensure that development proposals on strategic employment and housing sites incorporate holistic Green Infrastructure Plans.</i>

## 2.0 Planning Policy

*Where the development would (despite any such measures) cause significant harm but also bring significant benefits, suitable compensation measures may be sought. If significant harm cannot be avoided, suitably mitigated, or compensated, planning permission will be refused unless the development would bring exceptional benefits that would outweigh the harm.*

### 2.7 Policy LPC10: Trees and Woodland

*1. The Council will, working where necessary with the Mersey Forest and other partner organisations, seek to increase the extent of tree cover across the Borough and to protect and enhance the multi-purpose value of trees, woodlands, and hedgerows.*

*2. New development, as appropriate having regard to its scale and nature, will be required to include the planting of new trees, woodlands, hedgerows and / or financial contributions towards off-site provision. Arrangements should be made for any tree(s) or hedgerow(s) that are planted to be replaced in the event of failure or damage within a prescribed period.*

*3. Proposals for new development will only be permitted if they would conserve, enhance and / or manage existing trees, woodlands, and hedgerows as appropriate, for example by being laid out to provide adequate spacing between existing trees and buildings and including long term management proposals.*

*4. Any development proposal that would affect a site containing tree(s) or woodland must be accompanied by a tree survey and an*

*arboricultural constraints/implications report, produced to the current British Standard, to enable the effect of the development on the tree(s) to be properly assessed and appropriate tree protection measures to be identified. Any approved tree protection measures must then be maintained throughout the period of any demolition and / or construction works.*

*5. Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of any area of ancient woodland or of any ancient or veteran tree will be refused unless there are wholly exceptional circumstances in which the need for, and benefits of, the development would clearly outweigh any resultant loss and a suitable mitigation strategy exists.*

*6. Development proposals should be designed and laid out in a manner that would retain any tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order, any other protected tree, any other tree of value including any veteran tree, trees of value as a group, any tree of substantive heritage value or any length of hedgerow, unless it can be justified for good arboricultural reasons or there is a clearly demonstrated public benefit that would outweigh the value of the tree(s) and or hedgerow(s). Where any tree is justifiably lost its replacement will normally be required on at least a 2 for 1 ratio, with impacts on woodlands mitigated in line with Policy LPC06. Any tree(s) planted must be replaced in the event of failure or damage during a prescribed period.*

*7. Proposals that would enhance the value and / or contribution of woodland in respect of*

*recreational or educational needs; health; the landscape or townscape; heritage; biodiversity; tourism; and / or economic regeneration will be supported.*

### 2.8 Policy LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development

*All proposals for development will be expected, as appropriate having regard to their scale, location, and nature, to meet or exceed the following requirements:*

*1. Quality of the Built Environment*

- a) Maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the local environment, with a focus on the importance of local distinctiveness, as well as using good design to improve the quality of areas that may have become run down and be in need of regeneration, for example with regard to the siting, layout, massing, scale, design and materials used in any building work, the building-to-plot ratio and landscaping;*
- b) Avoid causing unacceptable harm to the amenities of the local area and surrounding residential and other land uses and occupiers;*
- c) Ensure that the occupiers of new developments will enjoy a high standard of amenity and will not be unacceptably affected by neighbouring uses and vice versa;*
- d) Link in with surrounding movement patterns and not be prejudicial to the development of neighbouring land for example by creating landlocked sites;*
- e) Be located and designed so as to minimise opportunities for crime, for example by maximising natural surveillance;*
- f) Respect any existing natural features of the site by conserving, restoring or enhancing biodiversity and minimising any adverse impact*

## 2.0 Planning Policy

on important natural features; g) Provide landscaping, including tree-lined streets, as an integral part of the development, protecting existing landscape features such as trees, hedges and watercourses and enhancing the public realm; h) Encourage the inclusion of, or make a contribution to public art within appropriate schemes (for example where the development would be of a substantial size and / or in a prominent gateway or town centre location); i) Provide for the needs of special groups in the community such as the elderly and those with disabilities as identified in Policy LPC01; and j) Protect the setting, integrity, and character of heritage assets in accordance with Policy LPC11.

### 2.9 Policy LPD02: Design and Layout of New Housing

New residential developments will be required to: 1. be of a high quality design and use good architecture that respects and / or enhances the character of the surrounding area in terms of appearance, materials used, scale, mass, and pattern of structures, spaces and streets; 2. enhance local distinctiveness by reflecting good aspects of the character and environment of the local area, maintaining a strong sense of place, improving any poorer aspects and adding new features that benefit the local environment over the full lifetime of the development; 3. provide appropriate landscaping, including tree-lined streets, using native tree and shrub species and where appropriate other boundary treatments, thereby providing a strong Green Infrastructure in line with Policy LPA08; 4.

provide a safe, secure, attractive, permeable, legible and useable environment for all users, that reinforces existing connections and creates new ones where necessary, including for pedestrians, cyclists, less mobile people and the elderly; 5. promote safe living environments that encourage natural surveillance and reduce the levels and fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour; 6. ensure heritage assets are treated in accordance with Policy LPC11 to support the Council's ambition to promote the conservation and enhancement of the Borough's heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance; 7. consider the Borough's environmental assets (including, but not limited to, biodiversity and associated habitats, landscapes, trees, woodland and hedgerows) in accordance with policies LPC06, LPC08, LPC09 and LPC10, and where practicable incorporate positive aspects of these features into its design and layout;

### 2.10 Policy LPD06: Prominent Gateway Corridors

1. The prominent gateway corridors include the lengths of motorways, 'A' roads, waterways, and railway lines that cross the Borough.  
2. Along the prominent gateway corridors, priority will be given as appropriate to the delivery of measures that will improve the visual appearance of the area (with particular priority to any areas that are of poor or mediocre visual quality, prominent road junctions and railway stations). Priority will also be given to delivering any necessary

measures to improve access to railway stations. 3. All proposals for new development that would be within or visible from one or more prominent gateway corridor(s) must, as appropriate, having regard to its scale and nature: a) be of high architectural quality, ensuring that the density, design, height, and layout of any building(s) respond positively to the site and its setting; and b) provide appropriate landscaping as an integral part of their design and layout. accessible to the main concentrations of population and priority areas capable of assisting the development of footpath, cycle and bridleway routes within the Borough and linking with the surrounding countryside;'

2.11 Following the adoption of the St Helens Borough Local Plan up to 2037 (Local Plan), the Council have decided to prepare a number of new and updated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which will add further detail to the policies contained in the Local Plan.

2.12 Previously adopted Local Planning Policy was accompanied by the following Supplementary Planning Documents (amongst others):

- Design Guidance SPD September 2007
- Trees and Development SPD June 2008
- New Residential Development SPD June 2011

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

### The Application Site

- 3.1 The application site covers an area of circa 5 hectares and is located to the west of the A49 Mill Lane, at the south-eastern edge of Newton-le-Willows.
- 3.2 The site comprises part of a single, irregularly shaped agricultural field which is enclosed to the north, south-east and west by existing development and to the south-west by Newton-le-Willows Cemetery. Access to the field is gained via a gate located at the fields north-eastern corner, adjacent to residential properties fronting onto Mill Lane. The site boundary includes an access route from the north, together with the broadly triangular shaped southern part of the field.
- 3.3 The northern site boundary cuts across the open field and extends northwards to include the access road from Mill Lane. The northern part of the field, which largely lies outside the site boundary, is defined by the garden fences of existing housing located on Wayfarers Drive.
- 3.4 To the east, the site extends to the railway line and the boundary comprises steel security fencing with a number of scattered native species trees, mainly located within the railway land. Near to the southern tip of the site the railway is at a slightly higher elevation than the site, transitioning to be at grade within the areas to the north.

- 3.5 The western site boundary is defined by the course of Newton Brook, which takes a roughly north-east to south-west alignment along the edge of an area of grassland with scrub vegetation and trees. To the south, the brook passes beneath the railway line and forms the most southerly point of the site.
- 3.6 The ground levels across the site fall in a south-westerly direction towards Newton Brook. The higher levels within the north-eastern parts of the site, where the access would be taken from, lie at around 27.5m AOD. There is a noticeable dip in the levels within the southern parts of the site, to low points of around 15m AOD near to the brook.
- 3.7 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been undertaken by Trevor Bridge Associates and this should be referred to for the details of the existing trees and anticipated tree losses. Existing trees and tree groups are all positioned around the periphery of the site. On the boundary with the railway there are hawthorn and elderberry, mostly positioned offsite within the railway land. Along the boundary with Newton Brook there is a linear group of hawthorn and a large group of mixed native species including common oak, hawthorn, goat willow, white poplar, crack willow and wild cherry.
- 3.8 Although agricultural land, the site is influenced by the surrounding development and railway line and has an urban fringe character.



View of the application site looking to the north from its southern edge



View towards the application site from the north



### The Wider Study Area

- 3.9 The study area is confined to a relatively small and compact area around the site. This is by virtue of the low lying nature of the site and the enclosure provided by the surrounding built form, railway and tree planting which provides visual and physical containment.
- 3.10 The northern parts of the study area include the housing located on Wayfarers Drive which comprise modern, detached houses arranged around a number of short cul-de-sacs. To the north-west, the semi-detached houses and bungalows located on Warwick Avenue back on to the open space associated with Newton Brook which defines the boundary of the wider field.
- 3.11 To the east, the railway provides physical and, to some extent, visual separation between the site and the built development located to the west of the A49. The A49 provides the main access to Newton-le-Willows from the M6 motorway to the south, and as such carries a large volume of traffic including goods vehicles and HGV's. The built form located along the route includes residential properties, some large buildings at the former Red Bank Secure Unit and Red Bank Farm Shop and Butchery.
- 3.12 To the east of the A49 is the former Parkside Colliery. Self-seeded woodland and scrub vegetation has colonised the area, although
- there are remnants of the former industry, including derelict buildings and infrastructure, along with mounded landforms associated with the former use of the site.
- 3.13 The southern parts of the study area includes some farmland, although the presence of the railway, including a railway bridge and a nearby telecommunication mast, as well as visible large buildings somewhat urbanise the character. The field pattern is irregular with medium and larger sized parcels lacking in boundary hedgerows. To the south of the study area, the landscape becomes increasingly open, punctuated by a number of farmsteads and residential properties that begin to appear as isolated clusters within the wider landscape. There are however urban fringe land uses such as Alder Root Golf Course.
- 3.14 Newton Brook cuts through the sinuous open space which lies to the west. This consists of glades of open grassland, riparian planting, and significant quantities of native species trees and understorey planting. A Public Right of Way (PRoW 658) follows the course of the brook, tracking southwards from Newton-le-Willows railway station which lies to the north of the study area, within a landscape corridor between areas of housing. The route continues south, to run parallel with the site's western boundary before crossing underneath a railway bridge to link with the wider footpath network (PRoW 606). Further to the west, Newton-le-Willows cemetery adjoins the open space. There are
- 3.15 significant amounts of tree planting within the open space and the cemetery, enclosing the site and providing visual separation from the urban areas further west.
- 3.15 The influence of the nearby urban edge is evident from the majority of the study area, with open views towards the relatively dense built form of Newton-le-Willows, imbuing a sense of a semi-rural landscape with transitional, urban fringe characteristics.
- 3.16 The M6 motorway is a prominent feature within the wider landscape and is located circa 1km to the east of the application site, however its audible presence is experienced throughout the study area.
- 3.17 The topography within the study area is relatively flat and defined by shallow undulations. There is a fall in ground levels towards Newton Brook so that the central part of the study area, which includes the site, sits at the lowest levels of around 15-20m AOD with higher surrounding land of up to 30m AOD.
- The Newton-le-Willows Townscape**
- 3.18 The perceived centre of Newton-le-Willows is located circa 1km to the north of the site, where the A49 becomes High Street. The built form within the centre of the village is generally period, stone and brick built, 19th and 20th Century properties which are predominantly



Drinkhall Farm located to the south of the site



Typical residential street within the study area

in retail and commercial uses. The Church of St Peter is Grade II listed and located at the south-eastern end of High Street. The Liverpool to Manchester railway line, which runs on an east-west alignment through Newton-le Willows, dissects the town. Historic maps show how development expanded from the town centre to the north and south until 1940, when development began to expand further to the south and beyond the railway line.

3.19 Housing located to the south of the railway, within the Wargrave area, is almost entirely 20th Century semi-detached houses, built within the early to mid-part of the century. The housing is arranged within a grid like pattern of streets, with a material palette of largely brick and render, and slate and terracotta roofs tiles. Street frontages comprise a mixture of garden walling and hedgerows with intermittent front garden trees.

3.20 The housing located around Mill Lane (A49), to the east of Newton Brook, is a mixture of older, terraced housing and more recent detached, semi-detached houses and bungalows. The modern housing is generally positioned within a series of short cul-de-sacs which provides a more organic streetscape. The dominant building material is brick with tile roofs and the mostly detached houses have private drives and front gardens.

3.21 The development to the east of the railway line, which forms the site's eastern boundary, includes early 20th century housing and newer housing, as well as the large buildings of the former Red Bank Farm Secure Unit.

3.22 Overall, the transition from surrounding agricultural land to settlement edge, as perceived from the A49/Mill Lane and the local Public Rights of Way, is relatively subtle. This is due to the urban influences upon the semi-rural fringes of the settlement. The site is discreet in the landscape and is generally not experienced as part of this transition from countryside to settlement.

#### Landscape Character Assessments

3.23 The diverse characteristics of our broader landscape have, in most cases, been ascertained through the process of landscape character assessment (LCA). LCA is a technique used to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of what gives England's landscape its character. Assessments for the landscape in the vicinity of the site have been carried out at national and county scales as follows:

#### National

3.24 The character of the landscape of England has been assessed by Natural England and the resulting National Character Area (NCA) Profiles were published in 2013/14.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

- 3.25 The site falls within 'NCA 56 Lancashire Coal Measures'. The Lancashire Coal Measures NCA surrounds the towns of St Helens and Wigan, and extends from the Mersey Valley NCA in the south to the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain NCA in the north-west.
- 3.26 The Landscape Character Area description summarises this Landscape Character Area as follows:
- 'The area is dominated by its industrial heritage, long associated with mining activity. The resulting landscape is a complex mosaic of farmland, scattered urban centres, industry, active mineral sites and derelict or reclaimed workings, giving this area a strong and distinctive identity.*
- Within the urban fabric there are some large tracts of agricultural land and isolated pockets of former farmland. Agricultural land use is predominantly split between arable farming and permanent grassland for livestock.*
- Across most of the area woodland cover is very limited, although in recent years significant areas of community woodland have been created. Some small, isolated pockets of semi-natural habitat remain within this NCA, such as relict ancient woodlands and small areas of lowland raised bog. There are several country parks and Local Nature Reserves, giving opportunities for people to enjoy the natural environment.'*
- 3.27 The following key characteristics from the NCA56 document have been set out below as they are considered to be relevant to the site and the wider study area:
- *'Fragmented landscape created by a complex pattern of mining and industrial activity intermixed with housing; this is a densely populated area with a scattered settlement pattern.*
  - *Gentle hills and valleys run from the north-west to the south-east, creating a soft but varied topography.*
  - *The area is underlain by Coal Measures, which are buried under a patchy layer of glacial deposits, subsequently affected by a long history of mineral working.*
  - *Woodland cover is limited across most of the area (covering 9 per cent), except to the north-west of Wigan. Community woodlands have been established on many post-industrial sites, and bring multiple benefits, including for public access and nature conservation.*
  - *Some large tracts and isolated pockets of agricultural land remain within the urban fabric, principally used for permanent grassland or cereal production, although horse grazing and stabling are also common.*
  - *Field patterns are predominantly medium to*
- large and rectangular, mostly resulting from 18th-century and later change, with field boundaries defined by poorly managed hedges or post-and-wire fencing.*
- *Widespread ground subsidence, caused by coal mining activities, has resulted in the formation of subsidence flashes. These have created many areas of open water and wetlands, while scattered ponds and fragmented pockets of semi-natural habitat remain elsewhere.*
  - *The area has an increasingly recognised strong cultural and industrial heritage, associated with heavy industry and mineral extraction – particularly south of Wigan – while the majority of the pits, spoil heaps and open cast sites have now been reclaimed and landscaped.*
  - *The area is significantly influenced by transport and utilities infrastructure, with motorways, major roads and rail lines criss-crossing the landscape.*
- 3.28 The size and scale of the areas encompassed by the National Character Areas are vast and often bear limited relevance to sites of the scale associated with this appraisal. However, in this case, the broad characteristics of the NCA are relevant to the study area as it is a fragmented landscape with evidence of former industrial/mining use, areas of mixed housing and significantly influenced by main transport corridors.

- Local – Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens (2006)
- 3.29 In January 2006 the Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens was produced by LUC for St Helens Council. The main purpose of this study was to undertake a comprehensive landscape character assessment (LCA) of the urban, urban fringe and rural landscapes of the Borough of St Helens to ensure it informs future planning and development. The LCA assesses both the urban and rural landscapes and categorises these into different Landscape Character Types (LCT). These LCT are subdivided into a number of Landscape Character Areas (LCA).
- 3.30 The document places the site within LCT 12: Separate Settlement. The relevant extract of the document is contained in full within Appendix 1, however relevant key characteristics of the LCT are identified as follows:
- *settled areas of landscape which have developed outside the main urban landscape of St Helens, and have a distinct settlement character and defined edges to create a separate settlement;*
  - *landuse primarily defined by developed settled land use, characterised by a variety of development forms, primarily residential;*
  - *physically separated from St Helens and other*
- settlements by rural or urban fringe landscape, but with settlement edge defined to a lesser or greater clarity to give a sense of arrival and departure from one settled landscape into another.*
- 3.31 The site falls within LCA 12 SS1 Newton-le-Willows which is described as follows:
- *the settlement is located on a raised area in the fork of two river valleys – the pronounced narrow valley to Sankey Brook and the Sankey Canal which borders to the southwest and Newton Brook to the east and south (dammed to form Newton Lake to the north east). Both river valleys offer some containment to the setting in particular the Sankey which denotes part of the administrative boundary to the Borough;*
  - *the settlement is divided into two broad areas: Newton to the east contains a medieval centre retaining a strong historic street pattern centring on High Street and associated architecture, punctuated at the eastern end by the prominent tower and building of St Peters Church. Earlestown to the west was established during the construction of viaduct over Sankey canal where extensive works and housing was provided for the construction workers in brick terraces that are common throughout the Borough.*
  - *the striking line of terraces in and around*
- Haydock Street respond to a former railway line, now dismantled, but the street orientation and adjacent grid pattern at Viaduct Street contrast markedly with more recent crescent development;*
- *although more contemporary housing developments exist on the edge of the settlement, modern development within the town centre and medieval core has been less pronounced and still retains a strong character. This is supported by intact pockets of historic industrial terraced housing which creates a localised sense of place and adds to the diversity of the settlement;*
  - *the Town contains the historic industrial Vulcan works and associated ‘village’ to the south of the settlement. The village has a strong identity and intimate scale which is reinforced by the dramatic scale and proximity of the adjacent buildings to the Vulcan Works.*
- 3.32 More detailed local landscape character assessments carried out by Local Planning Authorities often identify landscape characteristics which offer a better representation of those found within the vicinity of a particular site or surrounding area. In this case the landscape character assessment focuses on the character of the settlement of Newton-le-Willows and specifically the main built up areas. The site and the study area lie within the south-eastern fringes of the

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

- settlement and as such the area description is of limited relevance to this LVA.
- 3.33 The document also provides the following descriptions with regard to positive and negative features:
- Positive Features:*
- Historic heritage - Medieval core and street structure and historic terraces still exist and contrasts with the industrial works and terraces of Earlestown*
- Natural boundary of the Sankey Canal to the south*
- Sense of identity enforced by clarity of separation from neighbouring settlements*
- Negative Features:*
- Uninspiring suburban sprawl on the edge of settlement to north creating abrupt edge with rural landscape*
- Large industrial area visually encroaching into high value Sankey Valley area*
- 3.34 The site and the study area do not include any of the positive features identified by the Landscape Character Assessment.
- 3.35 Similarly the landscape evaluation (extract below) focuses on the historic core. Of relevance is the reference to the strength of character 'declining towards the edge of the settlement' and the visibility sensitivity which notes that 'For its size, the settlement is relatively contained with few views in and out of the area'. Other than this the landscape evaluation is not particularly applicable to the study area.
- Landscape Evaluation*
- Landscape Sensitivity - Medium to High*
- Strength of Typical Character - Strong. Very strong local character with historic core and spines, declining towards the edge of the settlement.*
- Condition/Intactness - Moderate. The historic areas are still very much intact although some encroachment of modern elements.*
- Aesthetic Character - Moderate. Strong. Strong sense of setting and core to settlement.*
- Visual Sensitivity - Medium*
- General Visibility - Low-Medium. For its size, the settlement is relatively contained with few views in and out of area. Some intervisibility with rural area to north west.*
- Population - High. As large towns and route through town there are a high number of receptors to change within the area.*
- Mitigation Potential - Low to Medium. Sensitive historic core, within which it would be difficult to mitigate changes. Beyond core opportunities to mitigate changes improve, although red brick terraces have a strong sense of character.*
- 3.36 The 'Landscape Strategy' is derived from a combination of the strength of character and landscape condition and is defined as 'Conserve and Restore'. The 'Landscape Management Issues and Opportunities' focus on maintaining the quality of the historic core and improvements to the sense of arrival into Newton-le Willows from the north and west, neither of which are applicable to the study area.
- 3.37 The 'Judgement about Potential to Accommodate Development' does not preclude the potential to accommodate development within the site or study area.
- 3.38 A small part of the eastern portion of the study area, comprising the land to the east of the A49, is identified as Landscape Character Type 2 Agricultural Moss and Landscape Character Area AM4 Highfield Moss. This land is flat and has colonised with self-seeded woodland and scrub. This vegetation, together with the intervening housing and buildings at the former Red Bank Secure Unit and the physical boundaries formed by the railway and A49, means that there is no physical or visual

3.0 Baseline Setting



- Study Area
- Application Site Boundary
- LCT 12: Separate Settlement, LCA SS1 Newton-le-Willows
- LCT 2: Agricultural Moss, LCA AM4 Highfield Moss

Fig 2 Landscape Character Areas Plan

connectivity between the site and this LCA. As such there would be no effects upon this LCA as a result of the development of the site, and this LCA has not been considered as a landscape receptor within this assessment.

#### Heritage Assets

- 3.39 There are no listed buildings or other heritage assets located within the site. There are no listed buildings located within the study area but there is a registered battlefield to the south-east of the site and to the east of the A49 Mill Lane/ Newton Road, which lies on the edge of the study area. The battlefield is listed as 'Battle of Winwick (also known as Battle of Red Bank) 1648' and is associated with the English civil wars at the time of Oliver Cromwell.

#### Landscape Receptors

- 3.40 The landscape within the study area is located within National Character Area NCA 56 Lancashire Coal Measures. National Character Areas cover vast areas of land including both rural and urban areas. The landscape character of the site and associated study area for this appraisal presents some elements and character that is consistent with the identified key characteristics of the relevant NCA. Given that urban areas form a key characteristic of the NCA, the nature and scale of the proposed development is not expected to affect the inherent characteristics to any great extent. The

NCA is therefore not included as a landscape receptor.

- 3.41 The Landscape Receptors for this assessment comprise the following:
- LCT 12: Separate Settlement, LCA SS1 Newton-le-Willows; and
  - The landscape features within the site.

#### Landscape Value

- 3.42 The Methodology sets out how various factors are considered to help determine and inform judgements associated with landscape value. These factors are consistent with GLVIA3 Box 5.1 and Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note TGN-02-21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations. The tables below provide narrative information associated with each individual factor, which when combined, inform an overall judgement regarding the value of the landscape in the parts of the study area that fall within land associated with the above landscape receptors. The landscape value of each of the landscape receptors is therefore judged as being Exceptional, High, Medium, Low or Very Low.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

Table 1a - Considerations associated with the value of LCT 12: Separate Settlement, LCA SS1 Newton-le-Willows within the study area	
Landscape Designations	There are no landscape quality designations, such as AONB or National Park, within the site or study area. All of the land to the south-east of Newton-le-Willows is shown as an area of Landscape Renewal on the St. Helens UDP Proposals Map. The land which lies between the site and the cemetery is designated as Open Space and Greenway.
Landscape condition	The overall condition of the landscape is considered to be ordinary. The landscape is fragmented by transport corridors and has an urban fringe character. The land use is mixed with some agriculture, open space, residential uses and some large community buildings. The farmland comprises large sized fields with clusters of built form and a noticeable lack of field boundary hedgerows or hedgerow trees. Tree cover mostly occurs along the course of Newton Brook which continues to the west of the site and forms an attractive and well used public open space between the site and adjacent urban edge/cemetery.
Distinctiveness	The landscape within the study area is inconsistent with many of the key characteristics of the LCT/LCA. The study area does include the 'contemporary housing developments on the edge of the settlement' but not the strong character of the medieval core, striking lines of terraced housing or strong identity of Vulcan Village. The landscape is considered to be uninspiring urban fringe and lacking in identity.
Natural Heritage	The site includes part of the Local Wildlife Site (LWS86) which runs alongside Newton Brook. The wider study area incorporates blocks of Priority Habitat Inventory Deciduous Woodland, particularly around Newton Brook to the west of the site and around the former Parkside Colliery to the east of the A49.
Cultural Heritage	Conservation interest is limited and there are no Listed Buildings or other cultural heritage designations within the site or main part of the study area. There is a Registered Battlefield located on the southern edge of the study area within a tract of land to the south-east. The battlefield is listed as 'Battle of Winwick (also known as Battle of Red Bank) 1648'.
Recreational value	The land which lies between the western boundary of the site and the cemetery is designated as Open Space and comprises footpaths and a Public Right of Way that connects the urban edge to the wider network of footpaths and open landscape to the south. There are a limited number of Public Footpaths that run through the wider study area to the south and west of the site.
Perceptual (scenic)	The relatively flat topography combined with intervening vegetation and built form combine to limit and restrict longer distance views. The road network, railway, overhead cables, streetlighting and presence of residential development reduce the perception of a rural landscape.
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Levels of wildness are limited due to the proximity of the urban edge, transport infrastructure and the intensively managed nature of the farmland. Levels of tranquillity are generally relatively low, however this increases with distance from the urban edge, with higher levels of tranquillity occurring along some sections of footpaths away from the urban edge and road network.
Associations	There are no known relevant associated with the site or wider study area.



Functional	The rural land within the study area functions primarily as agricultural land and has limited ecological value/natural function, whereas the Greenway/Open Space to the west of the site is considered to function to a greater extent. It provides an accessible recreational resource for the surrounding residents and provides a vegetated transitional space between the built form and open landscape.
Overall Judgement of Landscape Value	Low Value – the landscape which falls within LCT 12: Separate Settlement/ LCA SS1 Newton-le-Willows, within the study area, is considered to be of a low value.

Table 1b - Considerations associated with the value of the landscape features within the site	
Landscape Designations	The landscape within the site is not protected by national or local statutory landscape designations.
Landscape condition	The site is used for arable crops and there are few existing features. There is intermittent vegetation along the railway but this is largely off-site, within the railway land and is of low quality. There is a linear group/remnant hedgerow of mature hawthorn growing alongside Newton Brook which the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) classifies as being of moderate value. There is a large mixed species, linear group of trees which includes some individual specimens located along the eastern side of Newton Brook. This group is classified as good by the AIA.
Distinctiveness	The site does not include uncommon characteristics or features considered to be rare or distinctive.
Natural Heritage	Part of the Local Wildlife Site (LWS86), which runs alongside Newton Brook, falls within the site boundary.
Cultural Heritage	There are no heritage assets within the site.
Recreational value	There is no public access to the site and it does not have recreational value.
Perceptual (scenic)	The perception of a rural landscape is diminished by the presence of urbanising features such as the railway and urban edge. The site is well enclosed by built form, the railway and vegetation and there are no long distance views from the site to the wider landscape.
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Levels of wildness and tranquillity are low due to the surrounding urban land uses and railway.
Associations	There are no known relevant associated with the site or wider study area.
Functional	The rural land within the site functions primarily as agricultural land and has limited ecological value/natural function, albeit localised parts of it function to a greater extent where vegetation is present an along Newton Brook.
Overall Judgement of Landscape Value	Low Value – the landscape features within the site are considered to be of low value.

### Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.43 As described within the Methodology (Appendix 2), the sensitivity of the landscape is a combined judgement of value (as ascertained within the above tables) and susceptibility to change.
- 3.44 GLVIA3 defines susceptibility to change as 'the ability of the landscape to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline and/or landscape planning policy or strategy'. Susceptibility to change is graded on a scale of high, medium or low and will vary according to the nature of the development proposed, which in this instance, is new residential development and associated green infrastructure.

Receptor	Value of the Landscape	Susceptibility to Change	Resulting Sensitivity
LCT 12: Separate Settlement, LCA SS1 Newton-le-Willows	Low (Table 1a)	Low – Housing development within the site, whilst creating direct change to the undeveloped field, would be consistent with the existing surrounding land use and scale of the adjoining townscape, and will be consistent with the character of the LCA, which is defined by settlement. The existence of woodland within the adjacent open space, visible housing at the settlement edges and gentle undulations in the landscape provides a context in which development can be sited and only influence a limited area. Appropriate mitigation can be provided to enhance the assimilation of new housing into the existing context – with hedgerow and tree planting being a particularly appropriate option for the site given the surrounding vegetation. Furthermore, the relatively small scale and urban fringe nature of the site, the peripheral nature of its key landscape features and the nature of the proposed development combine to moderate the susceptibility of the LCA to the proposed development.	Low
Landscape features within the site	Low (Table 1b)	Low - Aside from the agricultural field there are groups of trees. These features are common, provide a limited contribution to the wider area and with the exception of the trees located at the proposed entrance into the site, have clear potential to be retained.	Low

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

### Visual Receptors

- 3.45 Due to the presence of intervening vegetation, built form and localised undulations in the topography, publicly accessible views of the site are limited to views from the west and a fleeting view from the A49 to the north-east. The visual envelope is confined to a small area with only short range views possible.
- 3.46 The following groups or individual visual receptors have been identified as they experience a view of the application site. The receptors identified and their associated viewpoint photographs are considered to be representative of the current visual prominence of the application site. Individual receptors have been grouped where a number of receptors in a similar location experience similar views.
- 3.47 The identification of all potential visual receptors, which in the case of this appraisal, were predominantly people using Public Footpaths and road users, was undertaken by way of a desktop survey, followed by site-based survey work. Their identification was primarily determined by the topography of the surrounding area and the presence of screening trees and built form.
- 3.48 The survey work associated with this appraisal was undertaken during March 2021 when there was an absence of leaf cover on the deciduous trees in the area. As a result, the visibility of the application site and the features contained therein were assessed at a time of year when surrounding deciduous vegetation was providing the lowest levels of screening/ filtering.
- 3.49 Photographs of the application site, the surrounding landscape and specific viewpoints were taken on the day when the survey was undertaken. Some of the views included wide panoramas and it was therefore considered beneficial to join some of the individual photographs together to produce panoramic views. All photographs were taken using a Nikon D80 Digital SLR camera and specific viewpoints were photographed using a 50mm lens.
- 3.50 The following visual receptors and associated viewpoint photograph locations are described by Figure 3.

3.0 Baseline Setting

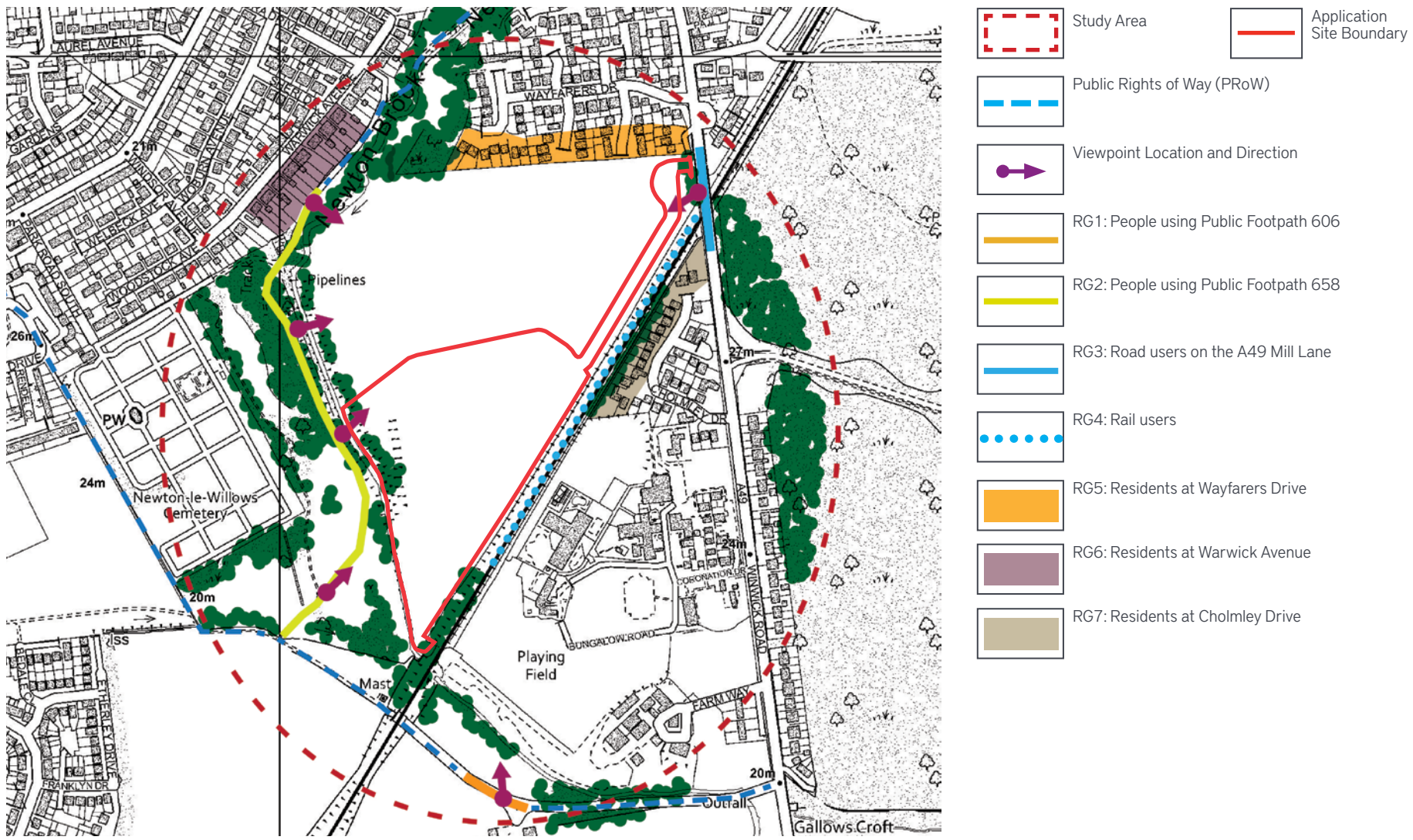


Fig 3 Visual Receptor and Viewpoint Location Plan

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

### People Using Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 3.51 Receptor Group 1 (RG1)- People using Public Footpath 606- see Viewpoint 1 – People walking in a north-westerly direction, towards the railway underbridge, experience views looking northwards towards the site from a short section (approximately 50m) of the route. The view is from a slightly elevated position. The foreground includes a field which slopes northwards towards the vegetated valley of Newton Brook. The railway lines cut through the landscape in the middle distance and obscure the lower lying site to the north-west. Trees located within the open space located to the west of the site, can be seen in the distance.

Views from this location also include fencing associated and buildings associated with the former Red Bank Farm Secure Unit located to the east of the railway and farm machinery and stored materials associated with Red Bank Farm. From other locations on this footpath, intervening trees and vegetation contain the footpath, filtering and restricting views in most instances.



VP1 View looking north from Public Footpath 606

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

3.52 RG2 – People using Public Footpath 658- Viewpoints 2-5 – People walking in a northerly or southerly direction experience a sequence of views of the application site looking north-east towards the site. At its southern end, the footpath tracks in a north-easterly direction and there are forward facing views across grassland with trees partially filtering views of the site. The railway line and the houses located on Wayfarers Drive are visible in the distance (VP2). The footpaths turns to run parallel with the course of Newton Brook. Views of the site are oblique and experienced from close proximity with the trees and vegetation growing alongside Newton Brook in the foreground filtering views of the application site (VP3).

As the route progresses northwards, it runs alongside the parts of the field which lie to the north of the site and views of the site itself are heavily filtered by intervening vegetation. The views of the application site are likely to change on a seasonal basis due to the extensive intervening vegetation, with visibility of the site increasing when levels of leaf cover are low. Views include the visually prominent built form of Newton-le-Willows in the background, particularly the properties along Wayfarers Drive and Cholmley Drive to the north and east, and the railway line to the east.



VP2 View looking north-east from Public Footpath 658

3.0 Baseline Setting



VP3 View looking north-east from Public Footpath 658



VP4 View looking east from Public Footpath 658



VP5

View looking south-east from Public Footpath 658



## 3.0 Baseline Setting

### Road Users

3.53 RG3- Road users travelling along A49 Mill Lane- Viewpoint 6 – There is a fleeting view towards the site from the short section of the A49 (approximately 50m) which lies to the north of the railway line and to the south of the existing housing. The road is elevated in this location as it crosses the railway, and the wider field is partially visible when looking in a westerly direction. There is a line of trees/ overgrown hedgerow along the boundary and this filters views, although there is a gap in the vegetation near to the railway bridge allowing more open views. The views of the field within which the site lies are oblique to the direction of

travel. The northern parts of the field are visible in the foreground, with the southern parts of the site less visible as the ground levels fall away to Newton Brook. The houses located on Wayfarers Drive are visible to the north, the railway line can be seen along the eastern boundary of the field, and the woodland vegetation along Newton Brook forms a backdrop to the view (VP6). The existing housing restricts any views of the site from sections of the road further north. To the south of the railway bridge, views of the site are restricted by the properties and vegetation located along Cholmley Drive.



VP6 View looking south from Mill Lane

**Rail Users**

3.54 RG4-Passengers of trains travelling along the railway are likely to experience views of the site from within close proximity as the eastern boundary of the site borders the railway. Views of the site are oblique to the direction of travel and would be glimpsed due to the high speed at which the train would pass the site. Whilst the views may be clear, they would be from a short stretch of a route which includes existing urban and suburban development.

**Private Residents**

3.55 RG5- Residents at Wayfarers Drive – The properties on the urban edge border the wider field to the north of the site. Residents of these properties experience open and direct views across the northern part of the field towards the application site. Most of these houses side on to the field boundary and as such views are generally oblique. The openness and clarity of views is emphasised by the lack of intervening vegetation or built form in this location, however views are somewhat limited by garden boundary fencing and hedgerows. The southern part of the field in which the site lies is around 200m away and the ground levels are falling away towards Newton Brook.

3.56 RG6- Residents at Warwick Avenue- These properties are located to the west of Newton Brook and to the north-west of the site. The

houses back on to the open space which runs alongside Newton Brook and as such the residents views are significantly filtered by the vegetation growing within this land, and restricted at low level by the existing garden boundary fencing and vegetation. Views also focus on the northern parts of the field rather than the application site, which largely lies to the south.

3.57 RG7 - Residents at Cholmley Drive- These properties are located to the north-east of the application site and to the east of the railway. The residents of these properties which border the railway have views across the tracks, largely to the northern part of the field within which the site is located. There are likely to be some views of the application site from the backs of houses located to the south of Cholmley Drive. These views would generally be oblique and include the railway and associated steel security fencing in the foreground. The views would be filtered by intervening vegetation and restricted at low levels by the existing garden boundary fences.

**Sensitivity - Public Views**

3.58 As set out within the Methodology (Appendix 2) and in GLVIA3, the sensitivity of visual receptors is derived from judgements made regarding the value attached to the view as indicated by planning designations, relationships to heritage assets, associations with art, recognition in guide books/tourist maps or the provision of

facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking, sign boards, interpretive material etc), and the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change, which is indicated by their occupation or activity and the extent to which their attention is focussed on the view.

3.59 The value of the views experienced by visual receptors using the Public Footpath network surrounding the site is considered to be medium. The views are not recognised through any planning designations or in relation to heritage assets and they do not appear to be acknowledged by any guides or mapping. The views are through semi-urban open space and for the most part, are curtailed by woodland or the settlement edge.

3.60 The value of the view experienced by visual receptors using the road network is considered to be low. The A49 is a busy road which provides vehicular access through a largely urban area. The route is not recognised through planning designation or in relation to heritage assets and is not a scenic trail.

3.61 The value of the view experienced by visual receptors using the rail network is considered to be low. The railway passes through both urban and rural areas and the route is not recognised through planning designation or in relation to heritage assets.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

3.62 The susceptibility of a viewer to change in the landscape will vary according to their location and occupation. Table 3 below, sets out the susceptibility to change and sensitivity of the identified visual receptor types.

3.63 As stated within the Methodology (Appendix 2), this appraisal acknowledges the presence of residents experiencing a view of the site, however it does not specifically or fully assess any effects the proposed development may have on these private views. As a result, the value, susceptibility to change and the resulting sensitivity of these receptors is not considered hereafter.

Receptor	Value of the View	Susceptibility to Change	Resulting Sensitivity
People using Public Footpaths – RG1 and RG2	Medium	High – People using the footpaths are engaged in outdoor recreation with a focus upon the enjoyment of the landscape	Medium-High
Road Users on the A49 Mill Lane – RG3	Low	Medium –The road corridors are dominated by vehicles with people using the routes for access, rather than for their enjoyment of the views/ landscape.	Low-Medium
Rail Users – RG4	Low	Medium –The rail corridors are used by people for access, rather than for their enjoyment of the views/ landscape.	Low-Medium

## 4.0 Development Proposals

- 4.1 The development proposals are shown on the Landscape Masterplan - see Figure 4 below.
- 4.2 The planning application is in full and seeks approval for the construction of 99 no. residential dwellings with associated access roads, driveways and gardens.
- 4.3 The housing would largely be two storeys with occasional two and a half storey properties. Materials would comprise red brick and grey tiled roofs. The majority of the proposed properties would be orientated to face the access road and associated cul-de-sacs, however a number of properties would be orientated to face and overlook the proposed open space to provide passive surveillance.
- 4.4 Vehicular access to the proposed development would be from the A49 at the northern end of the wider field, via a 'T' junction. Some earthworks would be required due to the level change and some clearance of vegetation would be needed to establish sight lines. The construction of the access road would necessitate the removal of a single category A2 (high value) oak tree and two other category B2 (moderate value) oak trees, as well as a group of hawthorn (category B2). The proposals include the planting of replacement trees around the site entrance and further trees along the access road. Highway footpaths following the access road would provide pedestrian
- access and these would connect to footpaths which would link through open spaces within and around the proposed housing.
- 4.5 Along the eastern boundary, the residential properties would be set back from the railway, with a landscape buffer providing a linear area of open space which would be overlooked by the fronts of houses. A native hedgerow would be planted along the boundary with the railway to provide some screening of the fencing. Wildflower meadow with native species trees and some ornamental trees such as amelanchier and cherry would be incorporated within the open space.
- 4.6 Open space is incorporated at the southern end of the site and would be planted with wildflower grassland, riparian trees such as alder and willow and woodland understorey planting.
- 4.7 A wide swathe of open space is proposed along the western boundary with Newton Brook. The existing vegetation located along the boundary with Newton Brook would be retained. The open space would be planted with wildflower meadow, native riparian trees and woodland understorey. A number of ornamental species such as cherry would be incorporated to add interest. The boundary with the proposed housing would be planted with a native species hedgerow to provide separation.
- 4.8 Footpaths would connect from the housing areas through the open spaces providing opportunities for circular walks.
- 4.9 Where properties side on to public areas, boundaries would comprise brick piers within timber infill panels and sections of curved solid brick walling. Knee rail fencing would be used to define semi-private land. Front gardens would be defined with hedgerows.
- 4.10 Medium and smaller sized native species street trees would be planted where there is sufficient space, such as around parking areas and along the main spine road into the site. Ornamental trees would be planted throughout the site within front gardens, parking areas and along streets to provide a positive aesthetic, biodiversity and seasonal interest.

4.0 Development Proposals



Fig 4 Landscape Layout M3360-PA-01-V6

## 5.0 Landscape Effects

- 5.1 Section 5.1 of the GLVIA 3rd Edition states 'An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource.'
- 5.2 In order to determine the significance of the potential landscape effects which may result from the development, the sensitivity of each of the landscape receptors has been established within the baseline of this appraisal. Table 4 below considers the magnitude of effect upon each of the landscape receptors and combines that judgement with the already defined sensitivity in order to determine the nature of the anticipated landscape effects, which may result from the implementation of the development proposals.

## 5.0 Landscape Effects

Table 4 - Landscape Effects				
Receptor	Sensitivity (Table 2)	Size and scale of change/geographic extent and duration	Magnitude	Significance of Effect
LCT 12: Separate Settlement, LCA SS1 Newton-le-Willows	Low	<p>The proposals are broadly consistent with the LCT Separate Settlement which is described in the Landscape Character Assessment as 'landuse primarily defined by developed settled land use, characterised by a variety of development forms, primarily residential'. There would be changes to the visual qualities of the immediate area, but the wider context includes residential land use. The proposed development would result in the loss of the agricultural land within the site, resulting in some localised loss of openness and a distinct change in character from an open field to one of residential built form, however these effects are considered to be very much localised. The containment provided by the vegetation located within the open space to the west, the housing located to the north and east, as well as the railway, limits the effects to a confined area. The proposals allow for the retention of existing characteristic yet commonplace features including the vegetation growing alongside Newton Brook which would ensure visual containment and softening of the development in views from the open space to the west. There would be the introduction of natural elements such as trees, hedgerows, and wildflower grassland which are broadly consistent with the area, and which would increase biodiversity. The existing urban fringe character of the landscape of the site and its immediate surroundings would be affected by the proposed development, however the development is not expected to exert itself on the wider study area owing to the level of intervening screening afforded by surrounding groups of trees and the built-up nature of the settlement edges.</p> <p>Effects would be long term (over 15 years) and permanent, however the establishment of the proposed planting would, as it becomes established, become increasingly effective in assimilating the proposed development into its urban fringe setting and the wider LCT/LCA.</p>	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse

## 5.0 Landscape Effects

Landscape features within the site	Low	<p>The existing landscape features, being the boundary trees and groups of trees, would be substantially retained. There would be the loss of a single category A2 (high value) oak tree and two other category B2 (moderate value) oak trees, as well as a group of hawthorn (category B2) to facilitate the access to the site from the A49. Replacement trees would be planted at the site entrance to compensate for this loss. There would be native tree planting within the public open spaces, woodland understorey planting, hedgerows and street trees along access roads. Wildflower grassland would be introduced within the open spaces. The landscape proposals would help to soften the appearance of the proposed built form and would enhance biodiversity. Proposed planting would be native, characteristic of the locality and the quantum proposed would exceed that which would be lost. Effects upon the landscape features would be long term and irreversible, however the establishment of the proposed planting would, as it becomes established, become increasingly effective in mitigating effects. At Year 1 effects would be adverse but upon maturity of the proposed vegetation, the effects upon landscape features is likely to be beneficial.</p>	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse
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## 6.0 Visual Effects

- 6.1 It has been ascertained that the key groups of people or individuals who experience a view of the application site or part thereof, comprise those using public footpaths (public views), road and rail users (public views) and the residents of properties (private views).
- 6.2 The type of visual receptor, the nature of the various existing views of the application site and the sensitivity of the visual receptors have been considered and ascertained within section 3 of this appraisal.
- 6.3 The objective of this section of the appraisal is to understand how those views may be affected, in order to ascertain the nature of any visual effects which may arise from the implementation of the development proposals. In line with the relevant guidance and the methodology (see Appendix 2), the sensitivity and the magnitude of effect was ascertained for each visual receptor, in order to inform the process of determining the likely significance of any visual effects at Year 1.
- 6.4 The assessment of the potential visual effects which may result from the implementation of the development proposals on the application site, has been ascertained for each of the visual receptors (numbered RG1 to RG4) within Table 5 – Visual Effects.

Table 5 - Visual Effects				
Visual Receptor	Sensitivity (Table 3)	Size and scale of change/geographic extent and duration	Magnitude	Significance of Effect
People using the Public Footpath 606 – RG1	Medium-High	<p>People walking in a north-westerly direction, towards the railway underbridge, experience views looking northwards towards the proposals from a short section (approximately 50m) of the route. The view is from a slightly elevated position.</p> <p>VP1 - The foreground of the view which includes a field sloping northwards towards the vegetated valley of Newton Brook would not change. The railway lines which cut through the landscape in the middle distance would obscure the lower level parts of the proposed development. The upper storey and roofs of the proposed housing would be partially visible above the alignment of the railway and would be filtered by intervening trees. The development would be seen against the backdrop of the trees located along Newton Brook and in the context of existing fencing, built form, stored materials and farm machinery associated with the former Red Bank Farm Secure Unit and Red Bank Farm. From other locations on this footpath, intervening trees and vegetation contain the footpath, filtering and restricting views in most instances. Views would be partial and vary seasonally. Upon maturity of the proposed planting the views of the built form would be further softened and filtered. As a result, the size, scale and geographic extent of the changes would be moderated.</p>	VP1 – Low Adverse-Negligible	VP1 – Minor Adverse

6.0 Visual Effects

People using the Public Footpath 658 – RG2	Medium - High	People walking in a northerly or southerly direction experience a sequence of views of the proposals looking north-east. At its southern end, the footpath tracks in a north-easterly direction and there are forward facing views across grassland with trees partially filtering views of the proposals, with housing visible in the distance. As the route progresses northwards, it runs alongside the site for a short section and then along the parts of the field which lie to the north of the site. Views towards the proposals are oblique and are partially enclosed by vegetation.		
		VP2 – There would be forward facing views across grassland with proposed housing partially visible behind the intervening vegetation which grows alongside Newton Brook. The housing would be seen in the middle distance, replacing views of more distant housing and the railway line. The views of the application site are likely to change on a seasonal basis due to the extensive intervening vegetation, with visibility of the site increasing when levels of leaf cover are low.	VP2 – Low-Medium Adverse	VP2 – Moderate Adverse
		VP3 – In views from the sections of the route which run alongside the site, the proposed housing would be filtered by intervening vegetation. Views of the proposals would be oblique and experienced from close proximity, with the trees and vegetation growing alongside Newton Brook in the foreground filtering views. Housing would be seen in closer proximity than the existing visible housing, and in the context of the railway line to the east. The views of the application site are likely to change on a seasonal basis due to the extensive intervening vegetation, with visibility of the site increasing when levels of leaf cover are low.	VP3- Low-Medium Adverse	VP3- Moderate Adverse
		VP4 and VP5 – In views from the sections of the route which run to the north of the site, the proposed housing would be seen at greater distance and would be filtered by intervening vegetation. The housing would be seen in the context of existing visible roofs of houses located on Wayfarers Drive and Cholmley Drive to the north and east. The views of the application site are likely to change on a seasonal basis due to the extensive intervening vegetation, with visibility of the site increasing when levels of leaf cover are low.	VP4/5 – Low-Adverse	VP4/5 – Minor-Moderate Adverse

Road Users on the A49 Mill Lane – RG3	Low-Medium	<p>RG3 - Road users of the A49 Mill Lane have a fleeting view towards the proposals from the short section of the A49 (approximately 50m) which lies to the north of the railway line and to the south of the existing housing. The existing housing restricts any views of the site from sections of the road further north. To the south of the railway bridge, views of the site are restricted by the properties and vegetation located along Cholmley Drive.</p> <p>VP6 - The road is elevated in this location as it crosses the railway, and the northern parts of the field would be visible in the foreground, particularly due to the loss of existing roadside vegetation which would open up the views into the site. The proposed access would be a noticeable feature. Proposed housing within the site would be visible in the middle distance, in the context of existing houses located on Wayfarers Drive to the north and the railway line to the east. Trees located along Newton Brook and within the Cemetery would form a backdrop to the view. Views of the main part of the site are oblique to the direction of travel. The views would be experienced from a short section of the route (approximately 50m) and would be fleeting.</p>	VP6 – Low-Medium adverse	VP6 – Minor-Moderate - adverse
Rail Users – RG4	Low-Medium	<p>Passengers on trains travelling along the railway would experience a fleeting view of the proposed development from within close proximity as their train passes the eastern boundary of the development. The views of the proposals would be oblique to the direction of travel and would be glimpsed due to the high speed at which the train would pass the site. Whilst the views may be clear, they would be from a short stretch of a route which includes existing urban and suburban development.</p>	Low Adverse-Negligible	Minor Adverse
Private Residential Receptors	<p>RG5 - Residents at Wayfarers Drive border the wider field to the north of the site. Residents of these properties would experience open and direct views across the northern part of the field with the access road visible and the proposed housing seen part way down the field (approximately 200m away). Most of these existing houses side on to the field boundary and as such views are generally oblique. Views would be somewhat limited by garden boundary fencing and hedgerows.</p> <p>RG6 - Residents at Warwick Avenue are located to the west of Newton Brook and back on to the open space which runs alongside the watercourse. Views would be significantly filtered by the vegetation growing within the open space along the brook, and restricted at low level by the existing garden boundary fencing and vegetation. The access road is likely to be partially visible with the proposed housing oblique to the main focus of the view.</p> <p>RG7 - Residents at Cholmley Drive which border the railway would experience views of the proposals from the backs of houses. These views would generally be oblique and include the railway and associated steel security fencing in the foreground. The views would be filtered by intervening vegetation and restricted at low levels by the existing garden boundary fences.</p>			

## 7.0 Summary and Conclusion

Landscape Effects		Landscape Features		Visual Effects	
	Landscape Character	7.4	There are few existing site features due to the agricultural nature of the site. All existing trees and tree groups are peripheral and would be substantially retained.	7.7	A total of four visual receptor groups were identified comprising individuals, or groups of individuals, who experience publicly accessible views of the application site. These included the views for those using public rights of way (RG1 and RG2), those using the A49 Mill Lane (RG3) and those travelling on the railway (RG4).
7.1	The character of the application site would inevitably be changed by the proposed development however, the level of adverse landscape effect associated with these changes is considered to be localised to the site and its immediate environs. The containment provided by the vegetation located within the open space to the west, the housing located to the north and east, as well as the railway, would limit the effect of the development upon the character of the wider study area and associated LCT/LCA.	7.5	To facilitate the access from the A49, there would be the loss of a three oak trees and a group of hawthorn. Trees would be planted around the site entrance to compensate for those lost. There would be native tree planting, woodland understorey and hedgerows planted within the public open spaces and street trees along access roads. Proposed planting would be native, characteristic of the locality and the quantum proposed would exceed that which would be lost. The landscape proposals would help to soften the appearance of the proposed built form and would enhance biodiversity.	7.8	The limited number of visual receptors and their close proximity, is an indication of the low visual prominence of the site due to the containment provided by surrounding vegetation and built form.
7.2	The proposals are broadly consistent with the LCT Separate Settlement which is described in the St Helens Landscape Character Assessment as 'landuse primarily defined by developed settled land use, characterised by a variety of development forms, primarily residential'.	7.6	The development proposals are expected to generate a minor adverse effect on the landscape features in the short term (Yr1). In the longer term however, the extensive landscape proposals would have become established and in doing so, would be expected to generate a low level of beneficial landscape effect upon the landscape features of the site.	7.9	The highest level of anticipated Year 1 adverse visual effect, is assessed as moderate and is attributed to receptor group RG2, users of the public right of way 658. This path runs through the open space located to the west of the site and west of Newton Brook. Views of the proposals would be oblique and experienced from close proximity, with the trees and vegetation growing alongside Newton Brook in the foreground filtering views. The views of the application site are likely to change on a seasonal basis due to the extensive intervening vegetation, with visibility of the site decreasing when trees are in leaf.
7.3	Given the site's urban fringe character and the nature of the development proposals and landscape scheme, the proposed development is expected to generate a minor adverse effect upon the local landscape character which the Landscape Character Assessment describes as 'Landscape Character Type 12: Separate Settlement/ Landscape Character Area SS1 Newton-le-Willows'.			7.10	In all instances, the establishment of the comprehensive landscape proposals, particularly the tree planting, would in the

## 7.0 Summary and Conclusion

medium to longer term, become increasingly prominent within the views experienced and in doing so would become increasingly effective at integrating and assimilating the development into its setting. As a result, by Year 15 the establishment of the landscape proposals would have to some extent, ameliorated the assessed levels of short term, adverse visual effect.

### Conclusion

- 7.11 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has ascertained that the implementation of the development proposals would not generate any significant levels of adverse landscape effect upon the existing landscape resource or any significant adverse visual effects upon the key visual receptors.



Appendices

### CHARACTER TYPE 12 SEPARATE SETTLEMENT

#### Character Area:

- Newton le Willows (12 SS 1)
- Billinge (12 SS 2)
- Rainford (12 SS 3)
- Garswood (12 SS 4)
- Haydock (12 SS 5)
- Rainhill (12 SS 6)

#### Key Characteristics

- settled areas of landscape which have developed outside the main urban landscape of St Helens, and have a distinct settlement character and defined edges to create a separate settlement;
- distinctive separate character of the settlement is reinforced by the historic development on elevated landscapes on gentle slopes and broad ridgelines above, or on the edge of a broad valley;
- landuse primarily defined by developed settled land use, characterised by a variety of development forms, primarily residential;
- prominent church building with vertical spire often denotes historic core with associated old market street or main street lined by a number of individual sandstone stone houses. The prominence of the church in the wider landscape and as an orientation feature is emphasised by the elevated location developed as the modern core of the settlement;
- defined historic centre and street structure with varying degrees intactness and some original historic architecture;
- physically separated from St Helens and other settlements by rural or urban fringe landscape, but with settlement edge defined to a lesser or greater clarity to give a sense of arrival and departure from one settled landscape into another.

#### Location and Boundaries

Separate settlements are located on the broad rolling landscape to the north and east which is subtly elevated from the lower 'bowl' of St Helens.

### Newton le Willows (12 SS 1)



#### Area Description

- the settlement is located on a raised area in the fork of two river valleys – the pronounced narrow valley to Sankey Brook and the Sankey Canal which borders to the southwest and Newton Brook to the east and south (dammed to form Newton Lake to the north east). Both river valleys offer some containment to the setting in particular the Sankey which denotes part of the administrative boundary to the Borough;
- the settlement is divided into two broad areas: Newton to the east contains a medieval centre retaining a strong historic street pattern centring on High Street and associated architecture, punctuated at the eastern end the prominent tower and building of St Peters Church. Earlestown to the west was established during the construction of viaduct over Sankey canal where extensive works and housing was provided for the construction workers in brick terraces that are common throughout the Borough.
- the striking line of terraces in and around Haydock Street respond to a former railway line, now dismantled, but the street orientation and adjacent grid pattern at Viaduct Street contrast markedly with more recent crescent development ;
- although more contemporary housing developments exist on the edge of the settlement, modern development within the town centre and medieval core has been less pronounced and still retains a strong character. This is supported by intact pockets of historic industrial terraced housing which creates a localised sense of place and adds to the diversity of the settlement;
- the Town contains the historic industrial Vulcan works and associated 'village' to the south of the settlement. The village has a strong identity and intimate scale which is reinforced by the dramatic scale and proximity of the adjacent buildings to the Vulcan Works.



**Landscape Analysis****Positive Features**

Historic heritage - Medieval core and street structure and historic terraces still exist and contrasts with the industrial works and terraces of Earlestown.

Natural boundary of the Sankey Canal to the south.

Sense of identity enforced by clarity of separation from neighbouring settlements.

**Negative Features**

Uninspiring suburban sprawl on edge of settlement to north creating abrupt edge with rural landscape.

Large industrial area visually encroaching into high value Sankey Valley area.

**Developed Edge Analysis**

The area is urban with a rural surround and has a complex urban edge with different boundary characters, including:

- back gardens;
- residential roads;
- main roads;
- change of slope at top of river valley and associated woodland;
- industrial works boundary fencing;
- recreational sports ground;
- cemetery;
- railway.

The strongest edge is formed by the Sankey Valley to the south of the settlement. The sense of arrival from the west is emphasised by dipping down into the Sankey Valley and crossing the river. The boundary is formed by the (double) watercourse and the valley landform and also enforced by some riparian vegetation and property fencing. There is opportunity of enforcing this edge by enhancing the riparian vegetation along the valley slopes.

The south eastern edge is partially contained by the railway although the actual developed edge is often offset from the railway by landuses such as sports pitches and a cemetery. The Vulcan Village provides a strong sense of arrival to the south. The north eastern edge of the settlement forms a fairly robust settlement edge comprising back gardens and associated vegetation, and mature woodland belts to adjacent fields. Beyond which outwith the immediate settlement is the gently curving line of the M6 corridor raised on embankments, and forming an immediate visual horizon. Arriving from the north and west moving across or off of the M6 corridor creates a contrast of character and sense of arrival to the settlement.

The developed edge to the north west comprises an abrupt contemporary edge of residential road and / or contemporary housing that is poorly related to landform and comprises sharp edges and angles.

Overall the developed edge of Newton le Willows is regarded as **Moderate** reflecting its diverse nature and condition.

**Landscape Evaluation**

<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<b>Medium to High</b>
Strength of Typical Character	Strong. Very strong local character with historic core and spines, declining towards the edge of the settlement.
Condition / Intactness	Moderate. The historic areas are still very much intact although some encroachment of modern elements.
Aesthetic Character	Moderate - Strong. Strong sense of setting and core to settlement.

<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>	<b>Medium</b>
General Visibility	Low - Medium. For its size, the settlement is relatively contained with few views in and out of area. Some intervisibility with rural area to north west.
Population	High. As large town and route through town there are a high number of receptors to change within the area.
Mitigation Potential	Low to Medium. Sensitive historic core, within which it would be difficult to mitigate changes. Beyond core opportunities to mitigate changes improve, although red brick terraces have a strong sense of character.

**Landscape Strategy**

From the combined assessment of strength of character and landscape condition the landscape strategy is defined as **Conserve & Restore**.

<b>Condition</b>	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Moderate	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
	<b>Strength of Character</b>			

**Landscape Management Issues & Opportunities**

Important to maintain the quality and clarity of the historic core in contrast with more recent surrounding development. In tandem with this the clarity of the historic church towers and spires in the wider settlement should be maintained. Future landscape change in the centre of the settlement should be restricted to development which can complement the historic and industrial character of the settlement.

Important to retain and improve the strong sense of arrival into Newton-le-Willows with improvements to the north and avoidance of ribbon development along the A49. There should be more management of the Sankey Valley edge through the introduction of more riparian woodland planting which would reinforce the natural settlement edge.

**Woodland Recommendations**

Although Newton le Willows is predominantly an urban area, there are some opportunities to encourage a stronger woodland edge to the Sankey Valley to the south west as well as the Lyme and Wood Pit Spoil Heap to the north.

There are limited opportunities to enhance existing woodland 'corridors' that pass through the town such as the Newton Lake stream and the railway corridor with the use of broadleaf species.

In addition there are also opportunities to enhance the grounds of the town's schools through edge woodland planting.

**Judgement about Potential to Accommodate Development**

Minimal development may be possible on the northwestern fringes to create a more robust edge. Further industrial development at the Sankey Canal to the south of the settlement should be prevented from physically and visually encroaching further on the Sankey Valley.

Development to the north west should seek to improve the setting to the settlement whilst retaining a sense of separation with Haydock, in particular when travelling between the settlements.

Development of the fields which currently buffer the M6 corridor from Newton-le-Willows should be avoided to maintain a sense of setting and the currently quality of the historic core at Hewton.

## Introduction

The assessment of landscape and visual effects will be undertaken with reference to and using aspects of the guidance found within 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' 3rd Edition, published by the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) 2013 (termed GLVIA3 hereafter).

As stated within GLVIA3 paragraph 1.20, the guidelines are not prescriptive and the approach and methodology has been tailored to the specific requirements of the proposals.

GLVIA3 recommends the following five key stages in the assessment of landscape and visual effects:-

- Scope;
- Establishing the landscape and visual baseline;
- Describing the landscape and visual effects;
- Assessing the significance of the landscape and visual effects;
- Ascertaining the overall significance of landscape and visual effects

These five stages are applied separately to the landscape assessment and the subsequent visual assessment. GLVIA3 recognises that landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked procedures.

Landscape effects are the predicted effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right. Landscape effects can be generated by a developments effect upon the physical landscape and or upon its character, fabric and quality. These could include direct physical impacts upon landscape elements, but also includes aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of a landscape which may contribute to an existing landscape character.

Visual effects are the predicted changes to a view and the related impact on the general visual amenity experienced by people (visual receptors). The various visual receptor groups comprise individuals or groups of people that experience a view of the application site from a publicly accessible location. They will typically include the users of Public Rights of Way, users of recreational facilities, pedestrians and users of a variety of forms of transport such as the drivers and passengers of vehicles, cyclists or rail passengers.

With regards to the visual amenity of the residents of private properties, GLVIA3 recommends that private views can be dealt with by a separate 'residential amenity assessment' as in planning terms, residents are not entitled to a view. The presence of residents experiencing a view of the application site and the nature of the views experienced will be acknowledged and considered within the baseline. The LVA will only fully assess the visual effects upon the receptors that experience publicly accessible views.

## Study Area

The overall study area for the landscape and visual assessment will be established by undertaking a desk-based survey and refined by subsequent site-based survey work.

The site-based work will be undertaken by a chartered member of the Landscape Institute with experience of landscape and visual assessment.

Site-based work will initially involve travelling throughout the area around the site, in order to inform and confirm the extent of the study area.

The study area will therefore include the site and the wider landscape which could be influenced by the development proposals and the extent of the area from which the development is potentially visible.

This desk and subsequent site-based work will also establish the representative viewpoints for the visual appraisal.

## Landscape Effects

GLVIA3 paragraph 5.1 states 'An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource.'

### The Landscape Baseline - Desk Based Assessment

The assessment will include a review of the relevant planning policy and other guidance and relevant information including:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) and subsequent revision (July 2021);
- St Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (October 2012);
- St Helens Unitary Development Plan (September 2007);
- Proposed Main Modifications (November 2021) to be made to the St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 Submission Draft;
- The Local Plan 2020-2035 Submission Draft Policies Map;
- Natural England National Character Area NCA 56 Lancashire Coal Measures;
- Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens (2006);
- Supplementary Planning Documents;
- Ordnance Survey mapping;
- Historic Mapping;
- Defra (MAGIC) website;
- Online aerial mapping;
- Sustrans website; and
- Published walking or cycling routes.

#### The Landscape Baseline – Site Based Assessment

Site assessment work will initially entail travelling around the confirmed study area by car/cycle and by foot to understand the landscape features within the site and the surrounding area and to confirm the accuracy of the relevant published character assessments.

The landscape baseline will incorporate descriptions of the application site and the surrounding landscape, before referencing all published landscape character assessments and ascertaining the presence of any designated heritage assets such as Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

GLVIA3 paragraph 5.33 states that the landscape baseline should map describe and illustrate the character of the landscape and its individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects, emphasising any key characteristics that contribute to the distinctive character of the landscape. It also states that the condition of the landscape should be indicated with reference to elements therein, such as buildings, hedgerows or woodland.

#### Landscape Value

In accordance with paragraph 5.44 of GLVIA3, the Landscape Baseline will also consider the value of the landscape resource within the study area.

GLVIA3 paragraph 5.45 states ‘the value of the landscape receptors will to some degree reflect landscape designations and the level of importance which they signify, although there should not be over reliance on designations as the sole indicator of value.’

The fact a landscape is not subject to a designation, does not mean that it does not have any value. Where there is no evidence to indicate landscape value, the assessment will utilise an approach akin to the Box 5.1 assessment as set out within GLVIA3 paragraph 5.28 and Landscape Institute Technical Guidance

Note TGN-02-21, Assessing landscape value outside national designations, which draw on the factors that are generally agreed to influence value, which can be Exceptional (International/National), High (National/Regional), Medium (Regional/Community), Low (Community/Local) or Very Low (Local). In addition to acknowledging the presence of any landscape designations, these factors comprise the following:

- Landscape Condition (Table 1 below to be utilised to assist judgements on condition): A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- Distinctiveness: Consideration as to whether the landscape has a strong sense of identity through reference to relevant Landscape Character Assessments.
- Natural Heritage: Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.
- Cultural Heritage: Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.
- Recreational Value: Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.
- Perceptual (scenic): Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.
- Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity): Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness,

- tranquillity and/or dark skies.
- Associations: Landscape which is connected with notable people, events or the arts.
- Functional: Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

#### Assessment of Landscape Effects

Having established the landscape baseline, the relevant landscape components or 'receptors' are identified and will normally comprise physical landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, dry-stone walls etc and identified landscape character areas within the study area.

Having ascertained the landscape receptors, the assessment will then identify interactions between those receptors and the development proposals at Year 1.

In order to determine the significance of the potential landscape effects which may result from the development, the sensitivity and the magnitude of effect of each of the landscape receptors must be established. The sensitivity and magnitude of effect can then be combined to ascertain the significance of effect for the landscape receptors – see Table 4.

#### Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity determines the degree to which individual landscape receptors may be affected by a development proposal. In order to establish the sensitivity of the relevant landscape receptors, their susceptibility to specific change must be considered alongside

a judgement on their respective value (the value, susceptibility and associated sensitivity of the landscape resource is established within the Landscape Baseline).

Susceptibility to change means the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the type of the proposed development (whether it be housing, warehouses, a wind farm etc), without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies and with reference to Table 2 below, is graded on a scale of High, Medium or Low.

Combining the value and susceptibility judgements attributed to each landscape receptor then informs a judgement regarding their sensitivity, which is graded on a scale of High, Medium or Low.

#### Magnitude of Effect

GLVIA3 recommends that the magnitude of effect upon landscape receptors is assessed using three considerations as follows:

- The size or scale of the change to the landscape resulting from the implementation of the development proposals - Determining the size or scale of landscape effect takes account of landscape elements which are lost and those which are improved, the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered and whether the effects change the key characteristics of the landscape;

- The geographical extent of the area influenced by the development proposals - this could comprise the site only, its immediate setting or possibly the wider landscape at the scale of the landscape type or character area within which the development is located, or also at a larger scale where more than one landscape type or character area within the wider study area is influenced;
- The duration of the effect is judged on a scale of short term (0-6 years), medium term (7-15 years) and long term (15 years and beyond). Reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and the practicality of a particular effect being reversed and is judged on a scale of reversible, partially reversible and permanent. For example, housing can be considered permanent, whereas a wind turbine can be considered as reversible as they have a limited life and could be removed and the land reinstated.

The overall magnitude of effect is judged as High, Medium, Low or Negligible and this judgement can be adverse or beneficial. Table 3 below describes the magnitude of effect criteria for the landscape assessment.

#### Landscape Effects

In order to draw conclusions about the nature of landscape effects, the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the landscape effects need to be combined to allow a final judgement to be made (see Table 4 below). The resulting effect may be Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible and can be either

## A.2

## Appendix 2- Methodology

Condition	Criteria
Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong landscape structure, characteristics, patterns, balanced combination of landform and landcover;</li> <li>• Appropriate management for land use and landcover;</li> <li>• Distinct features worthy of conservation;</li> <li>• Strong sense of place; and</li> <li>• No detracting features.</li> </ul>
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust landscape structure, characteristics, patterns and balanced combination of landform and landcover;</li> <li>• Appropriate management for land use and landcover with potential scope to improve;</li> <li>• Distinct features worthy of conservation;</li> <li>• Sense of place; and</li> <li>• Occasional detracting features;</li> </ul>
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognisable landscape structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of landform and landcover are still evident;</li> <li>• Scope to improve management for land use and land cover;</li> <li>• Some features worthy of conservation; and</li> <li>• Some detracting features.</li> </ul>
Ordinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguishable landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and landcover;</li> <li>• Scope to improve management of vegetation;</li> <li>• Some features worthy of conservation; and</li> <li>• Some detracting features.</li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak landscape structures, characteristic patterns of landform and landcover are often masked by land use;</li> <li>• Mixed land use evident;</li> <li>• Lack of management and intervention has resulted in degradation; and</li> <li>• Frequent detracting features.</li> </ul>
Very Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degraded landscape structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of landform and landcover are masked by land use;</li> <li>• Mixed land use dominates;</li> <li>• Lack of management/intervention has resulted in degradation; and</li> <li>• Extensive detracting features.</li> </ul>
Damaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damaged landscape structure;</li> <li>• Single land use dominates;</li> <li>• Disturbed or derelict land requires treatment; and</li> <li>• Detracting features dominate.</li> </ul>

Table 1 – Landscape Condition

Level of Susceptibility	Definition
Higher Susceptibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscape is of an open nature/ is large scale/has natural topographical variations and/or there is a negligible/low level of containment so is susceptible to the introduction of uncharacteristic elements/features;</li> <li>• The landscape is of a small, intimate scale that is susceptible to the introduction of uncharacteristic elements/features;</li> <li>• There are historic assets/features present, such as remnant parkland and semi-natural woodland;</li> <li>• There is an overriding rural character;</li> <li>• Many of the valued existing landscape characteristics and features would be difficult to replace or mitigate, although it may be possible to enhance/mitigate to some extent;</li> <li>• There are higher levels of wildness and tranquillity.</li> </ul>
Lower Susceptibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are limited variations in the topography;</li> <li>• There is a limited presence of natural landform;</li> <li>• The landscape is of a more enclosed nature that results from a strong woodland structure;</li> <li>• Predominantly agricultural land which is intensively farmed, leaving limited semi-natural habitat;</li> <li>• There is a perceived prominence and presence of human activity.</li> </ul>

Table 2 – Indicators of Landscape Susceptibility Change

beneficial or adverse. It must be noted that the table is a guide to aid the assessor in the decision-making process, therefore in some instances, the ascertained level of effect may not be consistent with the sensitivity/magnitude combinations given in Table 4.

#### Landscape Assessment Timeframes

The landscape effects are considered at one point in time as follows:

Year 1 – Operational

#### Visual Effects

GLVIA3 paragraph 6.1 states 'An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity.'

#### The Visual Baseline - Desk and Site Based Assessment

The desktop studies undertaken, combined with site-based analysis will inform the visual baseline for the appraisal. The site-based work will be undertaken by a chartered member of the Landscape Institute with experience of landscape and visual assessment.

Site-based work will initially involve travelling throughout the area surrounding the site in order to ascertain levels of visibility on the ground (taking account of screening trees, hedgerows and built form), in order to inform and confirm the extent of the study area, the key relevant visual receptors (individuals

or groups of people who experience a view of the application site) and the associated representative viewpoints. This information will be set out within the appraisal with descriptions of the views experienced.

Viewpoint photography will be undertaken in accordance with Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals, using a digital single lens reflex camera (Nikon D80) with a 50mm F/1.4 USM lens (guidance recommends the use of a 50mm lens as it provides imagery akin to that of the human eye).

It is important to note that the visual receptors and in particular, the representative viewpoints are representative of the visual prominence of the application site and will not necessarily form an exhaustive list of all receptors and associated viewpoints.

#### Assessment of Visual Effects

In order to determine the significance of the potential visual effects which may result from the development, the sensitivity and the magnitude of effect associated with each of the visual receptors must be established. The sensitivity and magnitude can then be combined to ascertain the nature of the anticipated visual effect for each individual visual receptor.

#### Receptor Sensitivity

Sensitivity determines the degree to which visual receptors will be affected by a development proposal. In

Magnitude of Effect	Typical Criteria
Higher (adverse or beneficial)	Major alteration to key features or characteristics in the existing landscape and or the introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic/ characteristic. Typically, this would be where there would be a great scale of change to the character of the landscape for the long or medium-term.
Medium (adverse or beneficial)	Partial alteration to key features or characteristics of the existing landscape and or the introduction of prominent elements. Typically, this would be where there would be a notable scale of change to the character of the landscape for the medium and long- term; or where there would be a great scale of change on the landscape for the short-term.
Low (adverse or beneficial)	Minor alteration to key features and characteristics of the existing landscape and or the introduction of features which may already be present in the landscape. Typically, this would be where there is a notable or low scale of change to the character of the landscape for the short-term; or where there would be a low scale of change on the landscape in the medium or long-term.
Negligible (adverse or beneficial)	A very minor alteration to key features or characteristics of the existing landscape. Typically, this would be where in the short, medium or long term the scale of change on landscape character would be barely perceptible.

Table 3 – Criteria for the Assessment of the Magnitude of Effect of Landscape Character



order to establish the sensitivity of the visual receptors, their susceptibility to specific change in the views experienced, must be considered alongside a judgement on the respective value of those views. The resulting sensitivity is graded on a scale of High, Medium and Low.

**Susceptibility** – The susceptibility of different visual receptors to potential changes in views and visual amenity is subject to the occupation or activity of people experiencing a view and the extent to which their attention is focussed on the views (see Table 5).

GLVIA3 paragraphs 6.32 to 6.35 provides general guidance upon the levels of susceptibility associated with different, yet common types of visual receptor. A level of Susceptibility to Change of High, Medium or Low will be attributed to each of the visual receptors.

Judgements associated with assigning a level of susceptibility to the visual receptors will not necessarily always accord with Table 5. As indicated with Road Users, the susceptibility may vary up or down from the values set out within Table 5 and instances where such variations occur, the basis for the judgement will be set out within the assessment.

**Value of the View** – The value of the views experienced is determined as High, Medium or Low, with reference to GLVIA3 paragraph 6.37, which states that the following should be taken account of:

- recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations; and

- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through reference to a view in a guidebook or on a tourist map, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking places, sign boards and interpretative material) and references to them in literature and art that indicates a highly valued view, which often can be experienced by many people.

**Receptor Sensitivity** – The sensitivity of the visual receptors is ascertained by combining the judgements associated with their susceptibility and the value of the views they experience, to inform a judgement regarding their sensitivity, which is graded on a scale of High, Medium or Low.

#### Magnitude of Effect

Each of the visual effects identified will be evaluated in terms of its size or scale, its geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The resulting magnitude of effect is graded on a scale of High, Medium, Low or Negligible.

When considering the size or scale of the change in the view the following criteria are considered:

- loss or addition of features within the view including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development eg introducing housing into a view where housing is already present will represent a lower level of change than the introduction of housing into a view where there is no housing present;

Sensitivity	Magnitude				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor/ Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor/ Moderate	Negligible
High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Negligible	

Table 4 – Landscape Effects - Method for Assisting Decision Making When Determining Landscape Effects

Visual Receptor	Susceptibility to Change
Users of Public Rights of Way and other recreational routes	High
Public Open Space and visitor attractions where views contribute to the experience	High
Road Users (drivers and passengers of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians) – Susceptibility could be lower from main roads or higher from rural lanes/tourist routes	Varies
Rail Passengers	Medium/ Low
Golfers	Medium/ Low
Users of sports pitches	Low
Employees/workers in their workplace	Low

Table 5 – Susceptibility to Change

- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of scale, mass, form, height and colour; and
- The nature of the view of the development proposal in terms of the length of time over which it will be experienced and whether the views will be full, partial or glimpses.

The geographical extent of a visual effect will vary with different viewpoints and is likely to be reflected by the following:

- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor – changes to direct views will generally be considered to be of greater importance than changes to oblique views;
- The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development; and
- The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

The duration of visual effects is judged on a scale of short term (0-6 years) to long term (15 years and beyond), taking account of the establishment of proposed planting. Reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and the practicality of a particular effect being reversed and is judged on a scale of reversible, partially reversible and permanent. For example, housing can be considered permanent, whereas a wind turbine can be considered as reversible, as they have a limited life and could be removed and the land reinstated.

The overall magnitude of effect is judged as High, Medium, Low or Negligible and this judgement can be adverse or beneficial. Table 6 below describes the magnitude of effect criteria for the visual appraisal.

#### Visual Effects

In order to draw conclusions about the anticipated levels of visual effect, separate judgements about the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the visual effects need to be combined to allow a final judgement to be made (see Table 7). The resulting significance of effect may be Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible and can be either beneficial or adverse. It must be noted that the table is a guide to aid the assessor in the decision-making process, therefore in some instances, the ascertained level of visual effect may not be consistent with the sensitivity/magnitude combinations given in Table 7.

GLVIA3 paragraph 6.44 states 'In making a judgement about the significance of the visual effects, the following points should be noted:

- Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant;
- Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant;

- Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.'

#### Visual Appraisal Timeframes

The visual effects are considered at one point in time as follows:

Year 1 – Operational (additional narrative regarding longer term visual effects will be provided within the visual tables where appropriate).

The visual effects ascertained at Year 15 after completion take account of the establishment of the embedded mitigation and are considered to be representative of the residual visual effects of the development.

A.2

Appendix 2- Methodology

Magnitude of Effect	Typical Criteria
High (adverse or beneficial)	Major alteration to the existing view and/or the introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic/characteristic. Typically, the development will be in close proximity to the receptor, with a large proportion of the view affected with little or no filtering. The scale of change would be great and would exist from the medium-term and beyond.
Medium (adverse or beneficial)	Partial alteration to the existing view and or the introduction of prominent elements in the view. Typically, the development would affect a moderate proportion of the view up to and beyond the medium term or the development would be seen in close proximity, with a large proportion of the view affected in the short term.
Low (adverse or beneficial)	Minor changes to the existing view and or the introduction of features that are already present within the view. Typically, this would result from a low scale of change to the existing view; where a moderate to low proportion of the view would be affected in the short term; where the development would be visible in distant views beyond the medium term; where only a small proportion of the view is affected beyond the medium term; or, where high degrees of screening/filtering reduce the effect beyond the medium term.
Negligible (adverse or beneficial)	A very minor alteration to the existing view. Typically, this would result where a development is barely perceptible at any point in time; where the change would be barely perceptible within a longer distance view; where a small proportion of the view is affected; or, where the scale of change from the existing view would be barely perceptible.

Table 6 – Criteria for the Assessment of the Magnitude of Effect on Views

Sensitivity	Magnitude				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor/ Moderate	Minor	Negligible	
Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor/ Moderate	Negligible	
High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Negligible	

Table 7 – Visual Effects - Method for Assisting Decision Making When Determining Visual Effects