

Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd

INTERMODAL LOGISTICS PARK NORTH (ILPN)

Intermodal Logistics Park North (ILPN) Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI)

Project reference TR510001

Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)

Appendix 10.3: Landscape Character

October 2025

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

This document forms a part of a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) for the Intermodal Logistics Park North (ILPN) project.

A PEIR presents environmental information to assist consultees to form an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of a proposed development and provide feedback.

This PEIR has been prepared by the project promoter, Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd. The Proposed Development is described in Chapter 3 of the PEIR and is the subject of a public consultation.

Details of how to respond to the public consultation are provided at the end of Chapter 1 of the PEIR and on the project website:

<https://www.tritaxbigbox.co.uk/our-spaces/intermodal-logistics-park-north/>

This feedback will be taken into account by Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd in the preparation of its application for a Development Consent Order for the project.

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Appendix 10.3 ◆ Landscape Character

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Introduction

- 1.1 The following landscape character areas (LCAs) have been scoped into the assessment of effects on landscape character and therefore are the ‘assessment LCAs.’ They comprise LCAs which have been identified in the following published landscape character studies:
- Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens (St Helens Council, 2006).¹
 - Wigan: A Landscape Character Assessment (Wigan Council, 2009).²
 - Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment (Warrington Borough Council, 2007).³
- 1.2 Additionally, the Wigan Character Assessment is referenced in a Greater Manchester Combined Authority document:
- Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2018)⁴.
- 1.3 The Greater Manchester study provides an update to the areas identified in the district level landscape character assessments and will therefore be referenced in relation to Wigan landscape character areas.
- 1.4 The local landscape character studies are of an appropriate level of detail that they will form the basis of the assessment of landscape effects of the Proposed Development. The local character assessments describe character types and areas within the study area and while the

¹Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens, (St Helens Council 2006) Available online at [https://www.omegawestdocuments.com/media/documents/4.%20Planning%20Application%20Documents%20\(Parkside%20Phase%201\)/4.134%20St%20Helens%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%20\(2%20Agricultural%20Moss%20&%20AM4%20Highfield%20Moss\).pdf](https://www.omegawestdocuments.com/media/documents/4.%20Planning%20Application%20Documents%20(Parkside%20Phase%201)/4.134%20St%20Helens%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%20(2%20Agricultural%20Moss%20&%20AM4%20Highfield%20Moss).pdf)

²Wigan: A Landscape Character Assessment (Wigan Council, 2009), Available online at <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Resident/Planning-and-Building-Control/LandscapeCharacterAssessment.pdf>

³Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment (Warrington Borough Council, 2006), Available online at https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/landscape_character_assessment_2007.pdf

⁴Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2018), Available online at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1727/greater-manchester-landscape-character-and-sensitivity-report.pdf>

effects of all such areas which would be subject to some visual influence of the Proposed Development will be considered in the landscape assessment, there will be focus on the direct change to the host character areas, i.e. those which the DCO Site falls within:

- St Helens AM4: Highfield Moss (Agricultural Moss Character Type).
- Wigan 1A: East Lancashire Road Corridor Lowton Heath to Lately Common (Undulating Enclosed Farmland Type).

1.5 Additionally, small extents of the DCO Site fall within the following areas:

- Wigan 6A: Highfield Moss (Mossland Character Type).
- St Helens SS1: Newton Le Willows (Separate Settlement Character Type).
- Warrington Area 1C: Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton (Undulating Enclosed Farmland Character Type).

1.6 Refer to Figure 10.3.2 which illustrates the location of local landscape character areas.

1.7 The subsequent sections summarise the baseline context and construction and operational effects of the Scheme for each LCA. The LCAs are not grouped by the authority that they are located within as the focus initially is on the host character areas, where the greatest landscape change is likely to occur, and subsequently considers the other LCAs within the Study Area.

ST HELENS AM4: HIGHFIELD MOSS

Site Photographs of LCA AM4



Photo 1: A view taken from Viewpoint 2 which is located on the northern edge of AM4, looking south-west



Photo 2: A view taken from Viewpoint 15 which is located on the western edge of AM4, looking north-east towards the former Parkside Colliery site

Baseline Description

Key Characteristics

- 1.8 LCA AM4: Highfield Moss is a character area which is of Character Type: Agricultural Moss, which is described within the Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens as:

'The area is generally flat and open with an overriding horizontal composition enabling panoramic views across the surrounding landscape to immediate development horizons and the more distant hills; there is a large regular field pattern historically part of the Parkside and Newton Parks landscape bordered by small maintained hedgerows with isolated trees and small pockets of scrub woodland. Often, informal earth footpaths follow the line of the hedgerows;

Access within the moss landscape is limited and where roads exist they are of a narrow rural character constructed in elevation above the surrounding moss landscape with soft verges;

An area of undeveloped moss exists, comprising an area of rough grassland and scrub

woodland;

Although the area is of rural character large scale infrastructure is present such as the M6 which crosses the area orientated northwest to southeast. Railway lines which border the area to the west and north and a pylon line are also prominent signs of infrastructure in the landscape. In addition, a number of urban elements, such as kerbs, street lighting and security fencing, are present and these together with the infrastructure elements contributes to a degraded rural character;

In particular the unnaturally straight alignment of the M6 running at elevation on an embankment present a dominant landscape feature which physically and visually divides the character area. The embankment severs many of the land use patterns including tree belts and field boundaries which fragments the landscape character, and subdivides the character area into 'pockets' of this character area east and west of the M6 corridor;

This subdivision of the character area is further reinforced by the more degraded landscape character to the west associated with the significant landscape disturbance attributed to Parkside Colliery. The former colliery site disrupts the field pattern with large areas of hard standing. In addition screening bunds to the east of the colliery are marked small scale unnatural linear features which create a prominent horizontal visual horizon and interrupts views across the landscape. The degraded character is emphasised by the line of pylons which crosses the former colliery to the north;

There is minimal settlement within the area with only isolated scattered farmsteads. Vernacular buildings are constructed of red brick with slate roofs tied into the landscape pattern at field corners with small woodland copses and mature individual trees;

Small areas of woodland and / or shelterbelts are usually associated with these farmsteads including, in one example, a line of poplar trees that contrast with the horizontal form of the landscape. The presence of woodland increases to the west with wooded field boundaries to Newton Park Farm and along the incised Newton Brook which delineates the administrative boundary to the south. This increase in woodland subtly reduces the experience of openness in this landscape, in particular where it encloses views from the minor rural roads.'

Positive Landscape Features:

'Open rural landscape with retention of large rectangular historical field pattern.'

Negative Landscape Features:

'The degradation of hedgerows and tree belts.

Large scale infrastructure creates a degraded and fragmented rural character, in particular the prominent M6 route corridor which runs at elevation.

inappropriate tree species such as poplar.

Encroachment of unsympathetic structure and materials (i.e. pylons, steel railings along railway).

Former colliery site imposing a degraded character to west of M6 corridor.'

Landscape Sensitivity

1.9 Overall Landscape Sensitivity is judged in the LCA to be Low to Medium:

- The Strength of Typical Character is judged to be *'Moderate – overriding flat open historical agricultural landscape still predominant landscape character – impacted and modified by infrastructure development.'*
- The Condition/Intactness is judged to be *'Low - Disturbance from former colliery site and features such as the M6, pylons and railways significantly detract and fragment the rural character.'*
- The Aesthetic Character is judged to be *'Moderate - There is some quality in the open landscape to the east and remnants of the former landscape to the west with views to the hills to the north and a rural character beyond.'*

1.10 Overall Visual Sensitivity is judged in the LCA to be Low to Medium:

- General Visibility is judged to be *'Medium - There is high visibility with the surrounding landscape as a result of the open flat landscape.'*
- Population is judged to be *'Medium - There are a limited number of people that live and work in the area but large number of people cross this landscape.'*
- Mitigation is judged to be *'Medium – difficult to mitigate changes by infrastructure to flat landscape, but possible to mitigate changes to vegetation structure.'*

Landscape Strategy

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

1.12 The St Helens Council Landscape Character Assessment identifies the following Management Issues and Opportunities for this LCA:

'Restore hedgerows and maintain existing hedgerows and woodland belts. Encourage native species and maintain moss. Encourage the use of more sympathetic rural materials in the landscape. Avoidance of further incremental encroachment of infrastructure with urban characteristics. The former colliery site represents a major opportunity for the restoration of the underlying parkland landscape, which could be combined with opportunities for enhancement and landscape change. Any change proposed both development and/or landscape enhancement should carefully consider the relationship the current rural landscape to the south eastern edge of Newton-le-Willow. Currently the railway line represents a defined townscape edge which has retained a relatively compact settlement form. Further development could seek to visually and physically 'extend' the settlement up to the unnatural edge of the M6 corridor, which could heighten the impact of any development.'

1.13 The following recommendations are made with regards to woodlands:

'The development of extensive woodland within this area is generally inappropriate. Any woodland development would contrast and conflict with the open, flat characteristics and the strong horizontal composition. Large woodland blocks would restrict views towards the wider Pennines, which is an important characteristic of this area.'

It is recognised that there is an increased wooded character to the west, which should be maintained. Further planting to reinforce these tree lines will maintain the experience of grandeur that the mature tree lines impart to this landscape. However, careful siting and design of woodland planting should seek to maintain the predominantly open character of this landscape.

The degraded small-scale hedgerows should be restored and it is possible that 'wet woodlands' of predominantly Birch, Willow Ash and Alder should be created in association with moss pits and / or areas of poor drainage.

There is an opportunity to sensitively create more mixed broadleaf woodland cover in association with the M6 corridor where appropriate to the adjacent landscape patterns and the undulating landform on and adjacent to the land fill site at Parkside.'

1.14 The LCA makes the following recommendations on the Potential to Accommodate Development:

'To the east of the M6 corridor, there are constraints to further infrastructure development and inappropriate landscape enhancement that would emphasise the segregation and fragmentation of landscape character. There are potential opportunities for sensitive siting of small scale development, although this should use appropriate scale and types of materials to avoid further incremental encroachment of urban features into this landscape and should take into consideration the capacity of the landscape to accept further change. The western boundary of Newton le Willows should act as a constraint to the expansion of the settlement into this character area.'

To the west, the existing disturbance caused by the former colliery site should be restored and enhanced. In any development and/or landscape enhancement proposals, careful consideration should be given to the visual and physical landscape relationship of the settlement edge of Newton-le-Willows and the defining linear form of the M6 corridor. It is recommended that should large scale landscape change be considered in this area that a more detailed landscape and visual assessment be used to inform any preliminary option appraisals.'

Current and Future Baseline

1.15 The published description of landscape character within AM4 forms a reliable evidence base for the assessment of landscape effects, however the following are notable changes which have been observed on site and from desk based research:

- The Parkside Link Road opened to traffic in June 2025. This is located in a central position

within AM4, connecting Winwick Lane in the south with Newton-le-Willows and the Parkside Colliery site in the west.

- Parkside West development: the land west of the M6, on the former Parkside Colliery site, is subject to Local Plan Policy LPA10, which details that the site shall be considered suitable for Class B2 and B8 employment uses.

Susceptibility

1.16 Based on a review of the baseline description of LCA AM4 and site observations, the following is evident with regards the susceptibility of this LCA to the type of development proposed:

- This is a landscape dominated by generally flat and large-scale arable fields. The large-scale of the landscape indicates a medium level of susceptibility to change.
- There is minimal settlement within the area with only isolated scattered farmsteads, indicating a lower level of susceptibility to change.
- It is an open and rural LCA, however the overriding horizontal composition enables panoramic views across the surrounding landscape to immediate development horizons. Large scale infrastructure is present such as the M6 which crosses the area orientated northwest to southeast. Railway lines which border the area to the west and north and a pylon line are also prominent signs of infrastructure in the landscape. This indicates a lower level of susceptibility to change.
- The presence of the former Parkside Colliery within the western extent of the LCA reduces susceptibility. This subdivision of the character area is further reinforced by the more degraded landscape character to the west associated with the significant landscape disturbance attributed to Parkside Colliery. The former colliery site disrupts the field pattern with large areas of hard standing. This area is to be redeveloped as the Parkside West allocated site and will include large-scale warehouses, similar to those proposed at ILP North. This indicates a lower level of susceptibility to change within LCA AM4.

1.17 Overall, there are some indicators of medium to high susceptibility to change, such as the rural character and the general lack of built form, however the LCA is large in scale, with a dominance of arable fields, and it is affected by some declining condition which detracts from the rural character, in particular the removal and fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The future presence of the Parkside West development will further limit susceptibility. The susceptibility of the LCA is therefore considered to be **Low to Medium**.

Value

1.18 Whilst it is likely to be locally valued, there are no notable indicators of a higher level of landscape value and this area doesn't associate with any landscape designations.

1.19 Overall, this part of the LCA is judged to be of **Low** landscape value.

Combined judgement of sensitivity

- 1.20 Considering both the Low susceptibility and Low value of LCA AM4, the overall sensitivity of has been assessed as **Low to Medium**.

Construction Effects

- 1.21 The majority of the western half of the Proposed Development would be located within LCA AM4 and construction operations would therefore be evident here. The following would be the key construction operations located within LCA AM4:
- site preparation, demolition and clearance;
 - earthworks;
 - construction of new site access via the new Parkside Link Road (PLR);
 - realignment of Parkside Road and construction of new roundabouts on the PLR;
 - internal highway works;
 - construction of the rail terminal;
 - construction of rail infrastructure, including the Western Rail Spur; and
 - construction of storage and logistics buildings.
- 1.22 During construction there would be removal of vegetation, however this would be relatively limited in the context of the large size of the Site. The main area of vegetation clearance would be within the western rail spur, directly to the east of the west coast mainline. In addition, there would be limited hedgerow and tree removal within the Main Site. Refer to Chapter 10 for information regarding vegetation clearance.
- 1.23 The following are the key indicators of landscape change to LCA AM4 during construction:
- The overall duration of the construction activity would be ten years.
 - The majority of the construction would be located within arable fields and would be centred on the newly constructed Parkside Link Road.
 - Construction operations would be highly visible locally, resulting in a temporary change to the landscape character.
 - The construction operations would introduce movement and noise within the landscape, primarily through: piling works; vehicle deliveries; and the operation of plant equipment. This is a large-scale landscape and the baseline includes the occasional movement of agricultural vehicles, however the construction would temporarily impact on tranquillity within LCA AM4.
 - The earthworks would alter the landform within LCA AM4, with localised mounding of excavated material for temporary periods altering the perception of the currently flat

landform.

- Vegetation clearance within the Western Rail Spur would open up the western extent of LCA AM4 and alter the character, albeit the changes due to the future Parkside West development would limit that change.
- Evidence of construction would be partially limited by the movement already in evidence of the periphery of LCA AM4, such as: fast-moving vehicles on the busy M6 motorway; vehicles using the high speed single carriageway of Winwick Lane; and trains passing through the northern and western extents of AM4. Whilst the M6 and railway lines are in cutting/false cutting, the perception of movement created by the noise of trains and vehicles contributes to a reduction in levels of tranquillity within AM4. In addition, views across the surrounding landscape to immediate development horizons would limit change due to the construction operations within the Site.

1.24 Overall, it is considered that the construction of the Scheme would form a dominant or highly prominent landscape element and would result in substantial alteration to LCA AM4's key landscape characteristics. This would comprise a **High** scale of landscape effect. The extent of the construction operations within this large scale and robust landscape context would be perceived as **Extensive**. The construction period would be for a maximum of ten years which is **Medium-term**. The overall magnitude of effect would be **Large**.

1.25 Taking account of all of these considerations, the level of effect due to construction on the landscape character of LCA AM4 would be **Major Adverse** which is **Significant**.

Operational effects

1.26 This assessment considers the potential for the whole of the Proposed Development to impact this LCA and give rise to landscape effects, including that which falls outside LCA AM4, however the key components of the Scheme which fall within AM4 and which will give rise to direct change are:

- The creation of new development pads which would alter existing site levels. Whilst the Main Site is relatively flat, with only limited variation in levels across the whole area, the proposed development pads would be created to form flat areas upon which the large warehouse buildings can be constructed.
- The introduction of buildings within Zones A, B, C and F, all of which would be a maximum of 30 m in height above proposed site levels.
- The north-western half of the proposed rail terminal would be located at the northern extent of LCA AM4 and would include rail gantries up to 25 m in height, above proposed site levels, and the storage of containers on the rail terminal.
- Upgrading of the existing Parkside Road, directly to the north of the newly operational Parkside Link Road.
- Introduction of the Western Rail Spur within the western extent of LCA AM4.

- The creation of enhanced amenity provision within a field located at the very northern extent of LCA AM4, in the land between the Liverpool – Manchester railway line. The amenity area will include the provision of Biodiversity Net Gain mitigation and heritage interpretation.
- Ancillary development components, such as: security fencing; lighting columns, particularly around the rail terminal; internal access roads; and signage.
- The inclusion of open areas of recreation and mitigation, specifically: the southern half of the Winwick Lane corridor, which comprises a 50m wide buffer at the eastern extent of the Main Site, beside Winwick Lane; the western half of the buffer zone around Highfield Moss, which will comprise an open area of grassland and new public access routes; and a narrow belt of planting along the western boundary of the Main Site, adjacent to the M6. The Winwick Lane corridor will include: earth bunding, tree, shrub, hedgerow and grassland creation and a new shared cycleway located directly beside Winwick Lane.
- With reference to the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan on Figure 3.4, the planting of trees, hedgerow and grassland as part of the green infrastructure design for the Scheme.

1.27 For a full description of the Proposed Development, refer to Chapter 3.

1.28 The largest elements within Proposed Development would comprise the 30m high warehouse buildings, twelve of which would fall within LCA AM4, with five located just outside, to the north-east. The rail terminal would form a prominent element at the centre of the Proposed Development, including 25m high rail gantries, however it would benefit from some containment by adjacent warehouse buildings.

1.29 Although multiple buildings are proposed, their uniform appearance and balanced scale would help integrate them into the landscape, albeit there would be some variation in how they would be perceived throughout the landscape.

1.30 The Proposed Development would replace large-scale arable fields with built form, fundamentally altering the character of LCA AM4. Although the western part will be affected by Parkside West, the Proposed Development would further erode its rural qualities.

1.31 This is a large-scale, flat and open landscape which can accommodate a development of this scale and would not involve the loss of extensive areas of woodland or planting, given that it largely comprises arable fields. Where there would be some loss of vegetation, within the Western Rail Spur, this comprises the western extent of LCA AM4 within the former Parkside Colliery and largely consists of self-seeded and scrub vegetation.

1.32 At Year 0 of operation it is considered that the Proposed Development would give rise to a **High** scale of landscape effect as it would form a dominant landscape element and would result in substantial alteration to the area's key landscape characteristics. The overall magnitude of effect would be **Large**.

- 1.33 The extent of the Scheme within this large scale and robust landscape context would be perceived as **Extensive**. The Scheme would be in situ for up to 15 years prior to the establishment of mitigation planting (and consideration of the Year 15 assessment). Therefore the Year 0 landscape effect is considered to be **Medium-term**. Taking account of all of these considerations, the level of effect during operation of the Scheme on the landscape character of LCA AM4 at Year 0 would be **Major Adverse** which is **Significant**.
- 1.34 Mitigation planting proposed on the perimeter of the Main Site and beside the Western Rail Chord would have established by Year 15 and integrated the peripheral areas of the DCO Site into LCA AM4. However, the fundamental change to landscape character would remain. At Year 15 of operation and beyond, the effect is considered to be **Long-term**. The effect is considered to be **Irreversible** due to the landform changes in particular. Mitigation planting would have established to an extent that the Scheme would assimilate further within LCA AM4. Linear belts of planting beside the Scheme, specifically on the boundary with Winwick Lane, would partially limit its visibility within the wider landscape and enhance an existing characteristic of LCA AM4. However, at Year 15 there would remain a **High** scale of effect and an overall **Large** magnitude of effect, resulting in a **Major Adverse** level of effect which is **Significant**.

WIGAN 1A: LOWTON HEATH TO LATELY COMMON

Site Photographs of LCA 1A



Photo 3: A view taken from Viewpoint 3 which is located on the eastern edge of 1A, looking west



Photo 4: A view taken from Viewpoint 8 which is located on the northern edge of 1A, on Newton Road, looking south

Baseline Description

Introduction

- 1.36 LCA 1A is located within Wigan Council's administrative boundary and, as stated within the Introduction section, whilst the Landscape Character Assessment (Wigan Council, 2009) forms the basis of the description within this LVIA, a section has been provided in this appendix which describes any additional landscape character information provided by Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2018).

Key Characteristics

- 1.37 LCA 1A: Lowton Heath to Lately Common and East Lancashire Road Corridor form one LCA which is of Character Type 1: Undulating Enclosed Farmland, which is described as:

'These areas originally covered much more extensive tracts of low lying land to the centre, east

and south of the Borough. They now form broken and fragmented parcels of land of varying size, often enclosed by surrounding development. Mining and extractive industries, together with residential, industrial and commercial use, have increased their fragmentation.

Specific areas of agricultural land have been taken for mining and open-cast extraction and later restored to agriculture. These areas are often characterised by their poor quality reinstatement, thin soils, poor drainage, lost hedgerows and altered ground levels.

There are a large number of ponds within the landscape, frequently identified by their fringes of willow and alder.

The undulating enclosed farmland mainly comprises of grazed pastureland, although cereal crops are frequently found, particularly around the areas of the Haigh and Haydock estates.

The arable areas are subject to high input farming, requiring large amounts of manure or organic fertiliser. The viability of the farming methods is clearly under pressure from the urban fringe and, in some locations, land has been sold or leased for horse grazing or other leisure activities.'

- 1.38 Of the two areas referred to as forming LCA 1A, the Site falls within Lowton Heath to Lately Common. The Wigan Borough Council Landscape Character provides the following description of LCA 1A:

'These areas form an agricultural landscape buffer to the densely developed residential areas of Golborne and Leigh to the north. Views within the area are limited due to the low-lying and relatively flat nature of the land and due to surrounding development and high hedgerows, particularly to the East Lancashire Road (A580). The East Lancashire Road is visually dominant throughout much of the area, particularly where it runs on embankments. Most of the land is closely associated with the East Lancashire Road and merges into larger areas of similar character to the south within Warrington Borough. The areas are typified by a medium to large-scale field pattern consisting of mainly arable land with poorly maintained remnant hedgerows with few hedgerow trees.

Small deciduous woodlands form backdrops to views within the landscape, mainly to the south at Haydock Park and along the course of Newton Brook. The land is relatively flat and low-lying to the east with more strongly undulating ground to the west. Along the western boundary the land drops steeply into the discrete valleys of Newton Brook to the west and its tributary Millingford Brook to the east. To the east of Golborne's Dale Bridge, Millingford Brook flows through a much more shallow valley profile. Carr Brook and Pennington Brook are located to the east of the area, forming minor stream tributaries to the River Glaze. The latter flow through low-lying areas of marshy ground and rough pasture.

The area is traversed by a large number of footpaths, including part of the Glazebrook Trail.'

- 1.39 The key characteristics of LCA 1A are described as:

'Medium to often large-scale fields, mainly cereal crops.

Lack of hedgerow trees.

Hedgerows between fields often gapped.

Deciduous wooded backdrops to the south and west.

Limited internal views.

The A580 road and its embankments.

Views of residential urban edge to the north.

Mainly flat land particularly to the east associated with Carr Brook and Pennington Brook.

Undulating ground to the west associated with Newton Brook and Millingford Brook.'

Landscape Sensitivity and Change

- 1.40 The sensitivity of the landscape for the LCA is summarised as follows:

'The landscape at Lowton Heath to Lately Common has already illustrated its sensitivity to incremental development such as local housing expansion and golf course construction to the development of industrial and commercial estates and the construction of new roads such as the recently constructed Lowton St Marys by-pass (A579). These developments have all served to divide and fragment the agricultural land, reducing agricultural viability and leaving the area prone to further infill development, particularly to the north of the A580.

Arable land to the south of the A580 has had little need for hedgerows and hedgerow trees and these are consequently in a poor condition. Hedgerows are similarly in decline to the north of the A580 due to the increase in horse grazing, with barbed wire fencing relied upon for functioning field boundaries.

The area is particularly sensitive to views from the A580 and A573 (Warrington Road).'

- 1.41 The Key elements of Landscape Sensitivity and Change identified by the Landscape Character Assessment are:

'Subject to development pressure, further fragmenting the area.

Prone to pressure from the urban fringe, reducing agricultural viability.

Restricted views (mainly from A580).

Continuing loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

Loss of agricultural land to development.

Decline of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

Increase of barbed wire fences.

Increase of marginal land under urban pressure.

Enlargement of field sizes.'

- 1.42 The recommended Landscape and Management objectives are summarised as follows:

'Although much of the area's original small-scale field patterns have been lost, a strong outline of medium to large field boundaries are still present and form a major part of the landscape's character. In order to retain this character, it is imperative to encourage the retention, enhancement and better management of the remaining hedgerows, together with the re-introduction of new hedgerow trees. Mechanical cutting of existing hedgerows should not be at the expense of young hedgerow trees, which farmers should be encouraged to plant. Where possible, new hedgerows should be introduced, preferably along the line of former hedges, but in particular around the perimeter of the area adjacent to new development. Equestrian uses should not be encouraged at the expense of traditional farming and in particular the destructive effects of horses browsing and frequently de-barking trees should be monitored.

Woodlands are scarce in the area although they form a prominent and important part of the landscape character within the adjoining landscape to the south. Woodlands should be seen not only as important visual elements in an otherwise open landscape, but also as important recreational assets. They are also valuable in softening the often stark effects of new development abutting agricultural land, particularly where this has been rendered less viable by development. However, no large scale woodland planting should be undertaken within close proximity to the ecologically important wetlands of the Hey Brook Corridor and the Abram Flashes in Area 4C to the north. Therefore careful consideration of additional woodland planting should be encouraged only where biodiversity issues are fully explored. In particular, woodland 'edge' planting to existing woodland should be carried out using native species. Connectivity of hedgerows to small ponds, woodlands and other habitats should be an objective of both management and any proposed planting.

New development can be seen to have a major impact on the landscape, particularly where structures of mass and high elevations are concerned. The design, siting and size of such structures should therefore be carefully considered through visual impact studies and potential landscape mitigation. Views of new development from the East Lancashire Road (A580) are particularly important in this regard.'

- 1.43 The key objectives for the Management of the Landscape are:

'Restore and enhance remaining field patterns by additional hedgerow planting.

Reintroduce new hedgerow trees.

Encourage the rapid removal of eyesores such as derelict steel barns, tipped materials, refuse etc. particularly when these are easily viewed from major routes.

Conserve and manage remaining hedgerows.

Conserve and manage existing woodlands to encourage habitat diversity.

Consider additional native woodland planting particularly in relation to the urban fringe.

Consider the use of new or enhanced existing native woodland planting to soften and screen new development.

Discourage horse grazing unless hedgerows and hedgerow trees have ensured protection and good management.

Encourage maintenance and enhancement of visually prominent structures in and around the landscape area, such as old cotton mills, etc

Encourage and monitor public access routes through the area, preferably along field boundaries rather than across open fields. Create, where possible, circular routes and ensure adequate waymarking. Use derelict railway lines where possible and link to similar routes outside the Borough.

Discourage development to the south of the A580. Consider any desired development north of the A580 in association with landscape open space and woodland planting.

No large scale woodland planting should be undertaken within close proximity to the ecologically important wetlands of the Hey Brook Corridor.'

Update by the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment

1.44 The following are noted updates provided by the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment:

- LCA 1A is located within LCA 1: South Wigan and Salford Mosslands within the Greater Manchester Assessment, which is a Mosslands and Lowland Farmland Landscape Type. LCA 1 extends east beyond the Wigan boundary into Salford and the Chat Moss area.
- The inclusion of Wigan LCA 1A in this character type and area is a divergence from the Wigan Character Assessment which doesn't focus on mosslands character. Whilst there are areas of Mossland within LCA 1A, including Highfield Moss, the majority comprises large-scale, open arable farmland. LCA 1A therefore remains a reliable source of landscape character assessment.
- LCA 1 is judged to be of Medium landscape sensitivity to commercial/industrial developments. Whilst there are some Low-Medium levels of sensitivity identified in the GM study, there are no areas identified as being of Low sensitivity.
- Overall, whilst the GM study has been appraised and the level of sensitivity to commercial/development has been taken into account. However, the landscape character assessment provided in the Wigan Assessment, for LCA 1A, provides sufficient detail to form the focus of the landscape character assessment in that part of the study area.

Future Baseline

1.45 There are no known likely changes to LCA 1A which would indicate notable change to landscape character.

Susceptibility

- 1.46 Based on a review of the baseline description of LCA 1A and site observations, the following is evident with regards the susceptibility of this LCA to the type of development proposed:
- This is a landscape dominated by generally flat and medium to large-scale pattern of grazed pastureland and arable fields. The larger scale of the landscape indicates a medium level of susceptibility to change.
 - Whilst there is influence from the directly adjacent built up areas such as Golborne and Lane Head, there is a relatively low level of built form within the LCA, indicating a higher level of susceptibility to change.
 - There is minimal settlement within the area with only isolated scattered farmsteads, indicating a lower level of susceptibility to change. However, the LCA provides an agricultural landscape buffer to the densely developed residential areas of Golborne and Leigh to the north, elevating susceptibility.
 - There is a lack of hedgerow trees and woodland, with hedgerows often gappy, increasing the sense of intensified agricultural practices and a location on the fringe of urban areas, reducing susceptibility to change.
 - The presence of the former A580 (East Lancashire Road), in an east-west orientation at the northern extent of the LCA, reduces susceptibility and physically divides the LCA. This indicates a lower level of susceptibility to change within LCA 1A.
- 1.47 Overall, there are some indicators of medium to high susceptibility to change, such as the rural character and the general lack of built form, however the LCA is medium to large in scale, with a dominance of agricultural fields, and it is affected by the presence of nearby built form and some declining condition which detracts from the rural character, in particular the removal and fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The susceptibility of the LCA is therefore considered to be **Low to Medium**.

Value

- 1.48 Whilst it is likely to be locally valued, there are no notable indicators of a higher level of landscape value and this area doesn't associate with any landscape designations.
- 1.49 Overall, this part of the LCA is judged to be of **Low** landscape value.

Combined judgement of sensitivity

- 1.50 Considering both the Low susceptibility and Low value of LCA 1A, the overall sensitivity of has been assessed as **Low to Medium**.

Construction effects

- 1.51 The majority of the western half of the Proposed Development would be located within LCA 1A and construction operations would therefore be evident here. The following would be the

key construction operations located within LCA 1A:

- site preparation, demolition and clearance;
- earthworks;
- internal highway works;
- construction of the part of the rail terminal; and
- construction of storage and logistics buildings.

1.52 During construction there would be removal of vegetation, however this would be relatively limited in the context of the large size of the Site and most notably comprise a small block of trees within the centre of this part of the Main Site. In addition, there would be some, limited, hedgerow removal within the Main Site. Refer to Chapter 10 for information regarding vegetation clearance.

1.53 The following are the key indicators of landscape change to LCA 1A during construction:

- The overall duration of the construction activity would be ten years.
- The majority of the construction would be located within arable fields.
- Construction operations would be highly visible locally, resulting in a temporary change to the landscape character.
- The construction operations would introduce movement and noise within the landscape, primarily through: piling works; vehicle deliveries; and the operation of plant equipment. While occasional agricultural activity is typical in this medium to large-scale landscape, construction would temporarily reduce tranquillity
- The earthworks would alter the landform within LCA 1A, with localised mounding of excavated material for temporary periods altering the perception of the currently flat landform.

1.54 Evidence of construction would be partially limited by the movement already in evidence of the periphery of LCA 1A, such as: vehicles using the high speed single carriageway of Winwick Lane; and trains passing through the northern and western extents of 1A. Whilst the railway line is in cutting, the perception of movement created by the noise of trains and vehicles in the locality contributes to a reduction in levels of tranquillity within 1A. In addition, views across the surrounding landscape to immediate development horizons would limit change due to the construction operations within the Site.

1.55 Overall, it is considered that the construction of the Scheme would form a highly prominent landscape element and would result in an inconsistency with, LCA 1A's key landscape characteristics. This would comprise a **High** scale of landscape effect. The extent of the construction operations within this large scale and robust landscape context would be perceived as **Limited** as it would be contained within a parcel of land at the very southern

extent of LCA 1A, separated from the main part of the LCA by the Liverpool-Manchester railway line. The construction period would be for a maximum of ten years which is **Medium-term**. The overall magnitude of effect would be **Large**.

- 1.56 Taking account of all of these considerations, the level of effect due to construction on the landscape character of LCA 1A would be **Moderate to Major Adverse** which is **Significant**.

Operational Effects

- 1.57 This assessment considers the potential for the whole of the Proposed Development to impact this LCA and give rise to landscape effects, including that which falls outside LCA 1A, however the key components of the Scheme which fall within 1A and which will give rise to direct change are:
- The creation of new development pads which would alter existing site levels. Whilst the Main Site is relatively flat, with only limited variation in levels across the whole area, the proposed development pads would be created to form flat areas upon which the relatively large warehouse buildings can be constructed.
 - The introduction of buildings within Zones D and E, all of which would be a maximum of 30 m in height above proposed site levels. all of which would be a maximum of 30 m in height above proposed site levels.
 - The south-eastern half of the proposed rail terminal would be located at the northern extent of LCA AM4 and would include rail gantries up to 25 m in height, above proposed site levels, and the storage of containers on the rail terminal.
 - Ancillary development components, such as: security fencing; lighting columns, particularly around the rail terminal; internal access roads; and signage.
 - The inclusion of open areas of recreation and mitigation, specifically: the northern half of the Winwick Lane corridor, which comprises a 30 to 50m wide buffer at the eastern extent of the Main Site, beside Winwick Lane; and the western half of the buffer zone around Highfield Moss, which will comprise an open area of grassland and new public access routes, will be located within LCA 1A. The Winwick Lane corridor will include: earth bunding, tree, shrub, hedgerow and grassland creation and a new shared cycleway located directly beside Winwick Lane.
 - With reference to the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan on Figure 3.4, the planting of trees, hedgerow and grassland as part of the green infrastructure design for the Scheme.
- 1.58 For a full description of the Proposed Development, refer to Chapter 3.
- 1.59 The largest elements within Proposed Development would comprise the 30m high warehouse buildings, five of which would fall within LCA 1A, with twelve located just outside, to the south-west. The rail terminal would form a prominent element at the centre of the Proposed Development, including 24m high rail gantries, however it would benefit from some containment by adjacent warehouse buildings.

- 1.60 Although multiple buildings are proposed, their uniform appearance and balanced scale would help integrate them into the landscape, albeit there would be some variation in how they would be perceived throughout the landscape.
- 1.61 The Proposed Development would fundamentally alter the character of LCA 1A, replacing the medium to large-scale fields with built form and contributing to a loss of the existing character in the creation of a large-scale rail freight terminal, with associated warehousing.
- 1.62 This is a medium to large-scale, flat and open landscape which can accommodate a development of this scale and would not involve the loss of extensive areas of woodland or planting, given that there is a very low level of vegetation cover. This part of LCA 1A is also partly detached from the main body of the LCA, limiting the influence that the Proposed Development would have on the wider LCA.
- 1.63 At Year 0 of operation it is considered that the Proposed Development would give rise to a **High** scale of landscape effect as it would form a dominant landscape element and would result in substantial alteration to the area's key landscape characteristics.
- 1.64 The extent of the Scheme within this large scale and robust landscape context would be perceived as **Limited**. The Scheme would be in situ for up to 15 years prior to the establishment of mitigation planting (and consideration of the Year 15 assessment). Therefore the Year 0 landscape effect is considered to be **Medium-term**. The overall magnitude of effect would be **Large**. Taking account of all of these considerations, the level of effect during operation of the Scheme on the landscape character of LCA 1A at Year 0 would be **Moderate to Major Adverse** which is **Significant**.
- 1.65 Mitigation planting proposed on the perimeter of the Main Site, in particular within the area to the north of the Liverpool – Manchester railway line and along the eastern boundary of the Main Site beside Winwick Lane, would have established by Year 15 and integrated the peripheral areas of the DCO Site into LCA 1A. At Year 15 of operation and beyond, the effect is considered to be **Long-term**. The effect is considered to be **Irreversible** due to the landform changes in particular. Mitigation planting would have established to an extent that the Scheme would assimilate further within LCA 1A. Linear belts of planting beside the Scheme, specifically on the boundary with Winwick Lane, would partially limit its visibility within the wider landscape and enhance an existing characteristic of LCA 1A. At Year 15 the scale of effect would reduce to **Medium** and the overall magnitude of effect would also reduce to **Medium**, such that there would be a **Moderate Adverse** level of effect which is **Not Significant**.
- 1.66 Whilst the southern extent of 1A would fundamentally change in character, i.e. the part of 1A which falls within the Main Site, change would be limited on the majority of 1A due to the effectiveness of woodland planting to the north of the Liverpool-Manchester railway line. The main body of LCA 1A, which is located to the north of the railway line, would be subject to lower indirect effects at Year 15.

WIGAN 6A: HIGHFIELD MOSS**Site Photographs of LCA 6A**

Photo 5: A view taken from Viewpoint 2 which is located on the western edge of 6A, looking east, south-east



Photo 6: A view taken from Viewpoint 20 which is located on the northern edge of 6A, looking south

Baseline Description**Introduction**

- 1.67 LCA 6A is located within Wigan Council's administrative boundary and, as stated within the Introduction section, this LCA is located within Wigan Council's administrative boundary and, whilst the Landscape Character Assessment (Wigan Council, 2009) forms the basis of the description within this LVIA, a section has been provided in this appendix which describes any additional landscape character information provided by Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2018).

Key Characteristics

- 1.68 LCA 6A: Highfield Moss is a character area which is of Character Type: Agricultural Moss. The Wigan Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment provides the following description of LCA 6A:

'This is a small mossland of 21.3 ha. located in the extreme southern tip of Wigan Borough. It is a triangular area surrounded by agricultural land and crossed to the north by the Manchester-Liverpool railway line. The land adjacent is slightly higher and peat moss is found in a natural basin. It is surrounded by open ditches.

This mossland has not been reclaimed or farmed, although farming takes place close to its

edges. The construction of the railway line to the north has removed part of the moss, but has in part protected the remaining areas from reclamation.

Small areas of open water are present in the centre, with marsh and carr woodland to the fringe. Although a footpath is present to the northern boundary, the mossland is comparatively undisturbed and rich in wildlife. Views are fairly limited and internal and the moss is relatively hidden from view.'

1.69 The key characteristics of LCA 6A are described as:

- *'Sunken, peat mossland*
- *Wetland, marshland and carr woodland*
- *Comparatively hidden from external view*
- *Relatively undisturbed*
- *Area of wildlife importance'*

Landscape Sensitivity and Change

1.70 The sensitivity of the landscape for the LCA is summarised as follows:

'The mossland is partially enclosed by higher farmland to the south and east and therefore subject to field drainage and potential run-off from herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers. These could all adversely affect the delicate eco-system of the moss and, in turn, its flora and fauna. The mossland is similarly dependant on a stable water table and this again is partly dependent on the surrounding farmland. The somewhat secluded nature of the mossland and its associated woodland has benefited wildlife, but in this respect the area would be sensitive to disturbance. The mossland has remained relatively unchanged although reduced in size following the construction of the railway which now cuts through the northern edge of the moss.

In an agricultural context, the mossland has progressively become a more isolated habitat as surrounding fields have been enlarged and hedgerows lost as more intensive farming is practised.'

1.71 The Key elements of Landscape Sensitivity and Change identified by the Landscape Character Assessment are:

- *'Sensitive to changes in water table*
- *Sensitive to run-off from farm herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers*
- *Sensitive to disturbance*
- *Construction of railway*

- *Intensification of farming practices'*

1.72 The recommended Landscape and Management objectives are summarised as follows:

'Highfield Moss is a highly prized, rare and valuable habitat. It is also very small and extremely vulnerable to outside influences with its continued existence to date only achieved through sympathetic and enlightened management of surrounding farmland. Maintaining the mossland water table is essential and dependant on surrounding farmland field drainage. The mossland could also be adversely affected by fertilizer and pesticide runoff from the adjoining fields. As a Site of Special Scientific Interest the mossland is carefully managed to conserve a balance of its acid grasslands, wet heaths, carr woodland and open water.'

1.73 The key objectives for the Management of the Landscape are:

- *'Landscape objectives should be to continue the ongoing site management together with the helpful relationship with the adjoining farmers.'*
- *Establishment of linking hedgerows with associated ditches as wildlife corridors should be considered.*
- *Site management should be primarily for habitat and wildlife conservation.'*

Update by the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment

1.74 The following are noted updates provided by the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment:

- LCA 6A is named LCA 1: South Wigan and Salford Mosslands within the Greater Manchester Assessment, which is a Mosslands and Lowland Farmland Landscape Type. LCA 1 extends east beyond the Wigan boundary into Salford and the Chat Moss area.
- The inclusion of Wigan LCA 6A in this Greater Manchester character type and area aligns with the character description within LCA 6A, which is focused on mossland landscape character.
- LCA 1 is judged to be of Medium landscape sensitivity to commercial/industrial developments. Whilst there are some Low-Medium levels of sensitivity identified in the GM study, there are no areas identified as being of Low sensitivity.
- Overall, whilst the GM study has been appraised and the level of sensitivity to commercial/development has been taken into account. However, it remains that the landscape character assessment provided in the Wigan Assessment, for LCA 6A, provides sufficient detail to form the focus of the landscape character assessment in that part of the study area.

Future Baseline

1.75 There are no known likely changes to LCA 1A which would indicate notable change to landscape character.

Susceptibility

- 1.76 Based on a review of the baseline description of LCA 6A and site observations, the following is evident with regards the susceptibility of this LCA to the type of development proposed:
- This character area is very small in scale and, in that sense, of a higher level of susceptibility to change by development in adjacent LCAs.
 - There are peripheral influences on the LCA which reduce the level of susceptibility to change, including: the presence of woodland and a footpath on the edge of the LCA; the Liverpool-Manchester railway line; and nearby settlement such as within Lane Head and Golborne.
 - Overall, the mossland is comparatively undisturbed and rich in wildlife, indicating a higher level of susceptibility to change.
- 1.77 Overall, there are mainly indicators of medium to high susceptibility to change, such as the rare mossland character and the lack of built form, however the LCA is affected by the presence of nearby built form which detracts from the rural character. The susceptibility of the LCA is therefore considered to be **Medium to High**.

Value

- 1.78 In landscape terms, there are no notable indicators of a higher level of landscape value and this area doesn't associate with any landscape designations. However, the status of the mossland in ecological terms as a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) is recognised and the scarcity of this type of landscape within the region elevates the level of landscape value.
- 1.79 Overall, this part of the LCA is judged to be of **Medium** landscape value.

Combined Judgement of Sensitivity

- 1.80 Considering both the Medium to High susceptibility and Medium value of LCA 6A, the overall sensitivity of has been assessed as **Medium to High**.

Construction Effects

- 1.81 There would be minimal direct change within LCA 6A due to the construction of the Proposed Development. LCA 6A coincides with SSSI status and therefore it would be protected from direct change during construction, with a protection buffer zone placed around it.
- 1.82 The following would be the key construction operations evident at close range, adjacent to LCA 6A:
- site preparation, demolition and clearance;
 - earthworks;
 - internal highway works;

- construction of the rail terminal; and
- construction of storage and logistics buildings.

1.83 There would be no direct vegetation removal within LCA 6A as part of the construction works.

1.84 The following are the key indicators of landscape change to LCA 6A during construction:

- The overall duration of the construction activity would be ten years.
- The majority of the construction would be located within adjacent arable fields and therefore there would be no direct change to LCA 6A.
- The construction operations would be highly visible from LCA 6A and therefore would give rise to a localised change to landscape character for the duration of the works.
- The construction operations would introduce movement and noise within the adjacent landscape, primarily through: piling works; vehicle deliveries; and the operation of plant equipment. This is a small-scale landscape and the baseline includes the occasional movement of agricultural vehicles in adjacent LCAs and the passing of trains, however the construction would temporarily impact on tranquillity within LCA 6A.

1.85 Whilst there would be no direct change to LCA 6A, there would be a notable increase in the perception of movement and built form nearby, the construction of the Proposed Development would contribute to a reduction in levels of tranquillity within 6A. Overall, it is considered that the construction of the Scheme would form a form a reasonably conspicuous landscape element and alteration to LCA 6A's key landscape characteristics. This would comprise a **Medium** scale of landscape effect. The extent of the construction operations within this large scale and robust landscape context would be perceived as **Limited** as the construction work would be located outside the LCA. The construction period would be for a maximum of ten years which is **Medium-term**. The overall magnitude of effect would be **Medium**.

1.86 Taking account of all of these considerations, the level of effect due to construction on the landscape character of LCA 1A would be **Moderate to Major Adverse** which is **Significant**.

Operational Effects

1.87 At Year 0, views of the Scheme would be filtered by intervening vegetation located on field boundaries within the northern extent of the adjacent LCAs. The low position of the Scheme in relation to this slightly more elevated LCA would retain views from across the landscape towards higher ground further south. There would be glimpsed views of the Scheme, however these would be from a limited extent of the LCA and there would be no fundamental change to the characteristics of LCA 1D.

1.88 As stated within the construction assessment, there would be no direct physical change to LCA 6A as it is located directly to the north of the Main Site. Key components of the Scheme which would give rise to landscape change are:

- The introduction of relatively large warehouse buildings, all of which would be a maximum of 30 m in height above proposed site levels.
- The creation of the proposed rail terminal, which would be partly screened by adjacent buildings, aside from the northern half. The terminal would include rail gantries up to 24 m in height, above proposed site levels, and the storage of containers on the rail terminal.
- Ancillary development components, such as: security fencing; lighting columns, particularly around the rail terminal; internal access roads; and signage.
- The inclusion of mitigation areas, most notably the buffer zone around Highfield Moss, which will comprise an open area of grassland and new public access routes, will be located within LCA 1A. Refer to the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan on Figure 3.4.

1.89 For a full description of the Proposed Development, refer to Chapter 3.

1.90 The largest elements within Proposed Development which would be evident from LCA 6A would comprise the 30m high warehouse buildings, in particular buildings within Zones C, D and E, which would be located closest to LCA 6A. The rail terminal would also form a prominent element at the centre of the Proposed Development, including 24m high rail gantries, however it would benefit from some containment by adjacent warehouse buildings.

1.91 Although multiple buildings are proposed, their uniform appearance and balanced scale would help integrate them into the landscape, albeit there would be some variation in how they would be perceived throughout the landscape.

1.92 By replacing adjacent medium to large-scale fields with built form, the Proposed Development would diminish the existing character of LCA 6A. This is a small scale landscape which would be influenced by large-scale built form on the horizon to the south of LCA 6A.

1.93 At Year 0 of operation it is considered that the Proposed Development would give rise to a **Medium to High** scale of landscape effect as it would form a dominant landscape element as a backdrop to LCA 6A and would result in notable alteration to the area's key landscape characteristics.

1.94 The extent of the Scheme within this large scale and robust landscape context would be perceived as **Limited**, given its position outside the LCA. The Scheme would be in situ for up to 15 years prior to the establishment of mitigation planting in areas adjacent to LCA 6A (and consideration of the Year 15 assessment). Therefore the Year 0 landscape effect is considered to be **Medium-term**. The overall magnitude of effect would be **Medium to Large**. Taking account of all of these considerations, the level of effect during operation of the Scheme on the landscape character of LCA 1A at Year 0 would be **Moderate to Major Adverse** which is **Significant**.

1.95 At Year 15 of operation and beyond, the effect is considered to be **Long-term**. The effect is considered to be **Irreversible** due to the landform changes in particular. Mitigation planting within the Proposed Development would be unlikely to alter the perception of the tall

warehouse buildings, altering the backdrop to the LCA, and therefore at Year 15 there would remain a **Medium to High** scale of effect, an overall **Medium to Large** magnitude of effect and a **Moderate to Major Adverse** level of effect which is **Significant**.

ST HELENS SS1: NEWTON LE WILLOWS

Site Photographs of LCA SS1



Photo 7: A view taken from Viewpoint 17, close to Newton Lake



Photo 8: A view taken from Viewpoint 25, located on Vulcan Park Way, Newton-le-Willows

Baseline Description

Key Characteristics

- 1.96 LCA SS1: Newton le Willows is a character area which is of Character Type: Separate Settlement. The Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens provides the following description of LCA SS1:

'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.'

Positive Landscape 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 Landscape 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.'*

Landscape Sensitivity

1.97 Overall Landscape Sensitivity is judged in the LCA to be Medium to High:

- The Strength of Typical Character is judged to be *'Strong – Very strong local character with historic core and spines, declining towards the edge of the settlement.'*
- The Condition/Intactness is judged to be *'Moderate - Moderate The historic areas are still very much intact although some encroachment of modern elements.'*
- The Aesthetic Character is judged to be *'Moderate to Strong - Strong sense of setting and core to settlement.'*

Landscape Strategy

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

- 1.99 The St Helens Council Landscape Character Assessment identifies the following Management Issues and Opportunities for this LCA:

'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.'

- 1.100 The following recommendations are made with regards to woodlands:

'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.'

- 1.101 The LCA makes the following recommendations on the 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 preventing 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 Newton.'

Future Baseline

- 1.102 Whilst this is predominantly an urban area, in which there is frequent change to the built form due to new developments, there are no known proposed developments within LCA SS1 which would indicate any notable future change to character.

Susceptibility

1.103 Based on a review of the baseline description of LCA SS1 and site observations, the following is evident with regards the susceptibility of this LCA to the type of development proposed:

- This is predominantly an urban area, which indicates a lower level of susceptibility to change.
- Site observations indicate that there are limited opportunities out to adjacent character areas, such as those which the majority of the Proposed Development are located within, limiting susceptibility to change in adjacent character areas.

1.104 Overall, there are some indicators of higher susceptibility to change, however the susceptibility of the LCA is considered to be **Low**.

Value

1.105 This area of the LCA doesn't associate with any landscape designations. Overall, this part of the LCA is of **Low** landscape value.

Combined judgement of sensitivity

1.106 Considering both the susceptibility and value of LCA SS1, the overall sensitivity of has been assessed as **Low**.

Construction effects

1.107 The construction of the main part of the Proposed Development would have minimal influence on LCA SS1 and would result in a **Negligible** scale and magnitude of landscape effect on LCA SS1 which comprises a **Negligible** level of effect and which is **Not Significant**.

Operational effects

1.108 The operational phase of the main part of the Proposed Development, at both Years 0 and 15, would have minimal influence on LCA SS1 and would result in a **Negligible** scale and magnitude of landscape effect on LCA SS1 which comprises a **Negligible** level of effect and which is **Not Significant**.

WARRINGTON AREA 1C: WINWICK, CULCHETH, GLAZEBROOK AND RIXTON**Site Photographs of LCA 1C**

Photo 9: A view taken from Viewpoint 9, located within the north-western extent of the LCT, looking west across



Photo 10: A view taken from Viewpoint 23, located within the southern extent of the LCA, looking north-west

Baseline Description**Key Characteristics**

1.110 The Warrington Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment provides the following description of LCA 1C: Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton:

'These areas typify undulating enclosed farmland with a medium to large-scale field pattern. The area stretches in an arc from the River Mersey in the south, through Glazebrook to Culcheth in the north and finally wrapping around Winwick in the west.

The agriculture predominantly consists of arable fields, intensely cropped, with poorly maintained remnant hedgerows with few hedgerow trees. Small deciduous woodlands form backdrops to views within the landscape.

Areas of heavy clay soils have necessitated comprehensive land drainage systems although these are not always effective, leading to ephemeral areas of standing water in low areas at times of heavy rainfall. Other areas of lighter soils, particularly those just east of the village of Winwick, around Southworth, are better drained and heavily cultivated.'

1.111 The Key Characteristics of Area 1C are:

- *'Sweeping views to the north and east from the areas of Culcheth and Glazebrook*
- *Sweeping views to the south from the Winwick area*
- *Medium to often large-scale mainly arable fields*
- *Lack of hedgerow trees*
- *Hedgerows between fields often fragmented*
- *Deciduous wooded backdrops*
- *Rixton Clay Pits*
- *Rixton Landfill Site'*

Landscape Sensitivity

1.112 The sensitivity of the landscape of Area 1C is summarised as follows:

'The Glazebrook, Culcheth and Winwick areas form a large tract of land with a similar character. The largely open countryside, dominated by arable crops, leads to long wide vistas. Although the land is gently undulating, any vertical structure or building stands out in the landscape as a dominant element. Views are also unrestricted by the scarcity of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, often suggesting a 'prairie like' simple landscape of waving crops or ploughed fields in winter. They are therefore generally visually sensitive to development.

Current visually intrusive elements to this landscape are the landfill sites within and adjoining these areas at Rixton, Butchersfield next to the River Mersey and at Silver Lane, Risley. These are huge, single mounds breaking through the surrounding gently undulating landscape and standing out incongruously as major features. The mounding associated with the sand extraction site at Kenyon is more subtly integrated into the landscape following a much lower and undulating profile.

Woodlands in the Glazebrook, Culcheth and Winwick areas tend to be the exception in the landscape and are generally on a small scale and isolated. Where woodlands are present, particularly in the Glazebury and north Culcheth areas, they help to create backdrops and form a more interesting landscape, breaking down long, uninterrupted views.'

1.113 The Key elements of Landscape Change identified by the Landscape Character Assessment for Area 1C are:

- *'The imposition of landfill sites*
- *The past impact of roads and railways*
- *The past impact of pylons and power lines*

- *The enlargement of field sizes*
- *Substantial reduction in hedgerows and hedgerow trees*
- *Decline in management of remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees*
- *Constant improvement of soil fertility for arable crops by drainage and fertilisers*
- *Pressure for horse grazing*
- *Changes from farmland to fishing and golfing facilities*
- *Disused railway lines*
- *Former Second World War munitions storage bunkers*
- *Clay extraction and restoration'*

1.114 The recommended Management and Landscape Objectives relevant to the Site for Area 1C are:

'Although much of the area's original small-scale field patterns have been lost, a strong framework of medium to large field boundaries is still present and forms a major part of the landscape's character. In order to retain this character, it is imperative to encourage the retention, enhancement and better management of the remaining hedgerows, together with the re-introduction of new hedgerow trees.

The area's woodlands should be seen not only as important visual elements in an otherwise open landscape, but also as important recreational assets. The careful consideration of additional and woodland extension plantings should therefore be encouraged.

New development can be seen to have a major impact on the landscape, particularly where structures of mass and high elevations are concerned. The siting and size of such structures should therefore be carefully considered through visual impact studies and potential landscape mitigation.

The existing landfill sites currently form artificial dome or whaleback shaped profiles in the landscape. Flatter, lower and more undulating profiles appear to blend more sympathetically with the existing landscape. Elevations should be as low as feasibly possible, if necessary taking a greater area of land to minimise their visual impact. Restoration landscape schemes for such areas should not only consider wildlife and 'amenity space' but should also look to retain the land for productive use. Timber and biomass fuel production should be considered.'

1.115 The Key points to consider for Management of the Landscape are:

- *'Restore and enhance remaining field patterns by additional hedgerow planting*
- *Reintroduce hedgerow trees*

- *Conserve and manage existing woodlands to encourage habitat diversity*
- *Conserve and manage remaining hedgerows*
- *Consider additional native woodland planting*
- *Consider the use of native planting to soften and screen new development*
- *Investigate an extension of Culcheth Linear Park to the south, following the old railway line towards Glazebrook'*

Future Baseline

1.116 There are no known likely changes to LCA 1C which would indicate notable change to landscape character.

Susceptibility

1.117 Based on a review of the baseline description of LCA 1C and site observations, the following is evident with regards the susceptibility of this LCA to the type of development proposed:

- This is a landscape dominated by flat, medium to often large-scale arable fields. The large-scale of the landscape indicates a medium level of susceptibility to change.
- There is built form throughout, including the settlements of Winwick, Croft and Culcheth, however outside these settlements, there is minimal settlement within the area which abuts the Site, indicating a medium level of susceptibility to change.
- Similar to LCA AM4, it is largely an open and rural LCA, however the overriding horizontal composition enables panoramic views across the surrounding landscape to horizons which comprise occasional woodland blocks and some built form. Large scale infrastructure is present such as the M6 and M62 motorways. Railway lines and pylons are also prominent signs of infrastructure in the landscape. This indicates a lower level of susceptibility to change.

1.118 Overall, there are some indicators of medium to high susceptibility to change, such as the rural character and the relative low of built form outside the main settlements of Winwick, Croft and Culcheth. However the LCA is medium to large in scale, with a dominance of arable fields, and it is affected by some declining condition which detracts from the rural character, in particular the removal and fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The susceptibility of the LCA is therefore considered to be **Medium**.

Value

1.119 Whilst it is likely to be locally valued, there are no notable indicators of a higher level of landscape value and this area doesn't associate with any landscape designations.

1.120 Overall, this part of the LCA is judged to be of **Low** landscape value.

Combined judgement of sensitivity

- 1.121 Considering both the Low susceptibility and Low value of LCA 1C, the overall sensitivity of has been assessed as **Medium**.

Construction Effects

- 1.122 There would be minimal direct change within LCA 1C due to the construction of the Proposed Development. However, the following would be the key construction operations evident at close range, adjacent to LCA 1C:

- site preparation, demolition and clearance;
- earthworks;
- internal highway works;
- construction of the rail terminal; and
- construction of storage and logistics buildings.

- 1.123 There would be no direct vegetation removal within LCA 1C as part of the construction works.

- 1.124 The following are the key indicators of landscape change to LCA 1C during construction:

- The overall duration of the construction activity would be ten years.
- The majority of the construction would be located within adjacent arable fields and therefore there would be no direct change to LCA 6A.
- The construction operations would be highly visible from LCA 1C and therefore would give rise to a localised change to landscape character for the duration of the works.
- The construction operations would introduce movement and noise within the adjacent landscape, primarily through: piling works; vehicle deliveries; and the operation of plant equipment. This is a large to medium-scale landscape and the baseline includes the occasional movement of agricultural vehicles in adjacent LCAs and the passing of trains and vehicles, however the construction would temporarily impact on tranquillity within LCA 1C.

- 1.125 Whilst there would be no direct change to LCA 1C, there would be a notable increase in the perception of movement and built form nearby, the construction of the Proposed Development would contribute to a reduction in levels of tranquillity within 1C. Overall, it is considered that the construction of the Scheme would form a form a conspicuous landscape element and alteration to LCA 1C's key landscape characteristics. This would comprise a **Medium to High** scale of landscape effect. The extent of the construction operations within this large scale and robust landscape context would be perceived as **Extensive**. The construction period would be for a maximum of ten years which is **Medium-term**. The overall magnitude of effect would be **Medium to Large**.

- 1.126 Taking account of all of these considerations, the level of effect due to construction on the

landscape character of LCA 1C would be **Moderate to Major Adverse** which is **Significant**.

Operational Effects

- 1.127 As stated within the construction assessment, there would be no direct physical change to LCA 6A as it is located directly to the north of the Main Site. Key components of the Scheme which would give rise to landscape change are:
- The introduction of relatively large warehouse buildings, all of which would be a maximum of 30 m in height above proposed site levels.
 - The creation of the proposed rail terminal, which would be partly screened by adjacent buildings. The terminal would include rail gantries up to 24 m in height, above proposed site levels, and the storage of containers on the rail terminal.
 - Ancillary development components, such as: security fencing; lighting columns, particularly around the rail terminal; internal access roads; and signage.
 - The inclusion of mitigation areas will be located within the adjacent LCA 1A, including: the Winwick Lane corridor, which will comprise an open area of grassland and new public access routes; and areas of planting on field bound. Refer to the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan on Figure 3.4.
- 1.128 For a full description of the Proposed Development, refer to Chapter 3.
- 1.129 At Year 0, the main influence of the Proposed Development on 1C, which is an LCA located directly adjacent to the eastern, southern and south-western boundaries of the Proposed Development, would be the 30 m high warehouse buildings. Whilst they would be partly filtered by intervening vegetation located on field boundaries, the ZTV on Figure 10.4.1 illustrates that there would be reasonably extensive visibility of the buildings from the open areas of farmland at the western and central extents of LCA 1C, specifically: to the north of Winwick; the north-west of Croft; and the west of Culcheth. Whilst this comprises reasonably extensive coverage due to the large-scale of buildings proposed, it is the case that large parts of LCA 1C would not be subject to any notable influence of the Proposed Development.
- 1.130 Buildings within Zones A, B, C, D and E would be located in closest proximity to LCA 1C and would have the greatest influence. The rail terminal would also form a prominent element at the centre of the Proposed Development, including 24m high rail gantries, however it would benefit from some containment by adjacent warehouse buildings.
- 1.131 Although multiple buildings are proposed, their uniform appearance and balanced scale would help integrate them into the landscape, albeit there would be some variation in how they would be perceived throughout the landscape.
- 1.132 The Proposed Development would influence the character of LCA 1C, replacing the adjacent medium to large-scale fields with built form. The Proposed Development would contribute to a loss of the existing character within 1C due to the creation of a large-scale rail freight terminal, with associated warehousing. This is a medium to large-scale landscape which would be influenced by large-scale built form on the horizon to the south of LCA 1C.

- 1.133 At Year 0 of operation it is considered that the Proposed Development would give rise to a **Medium to High** scale of landscape effect as it would form a dominant landscape element as a backdrop to LCA 1C and would result in notable alteration to the area's key landscape characteristics.
- 1.134 The extent of the Scheme within this large scale and robust landscape context would be perceived as **Limited**, given its position outside the LCA. The Scheme would be in situ for up to 15 years prior to the establishment of mitigation planting (and consideration of the Year 15 assessment). Therefore the Year 0 landscape effect is considered to be **Medium-term**. The overall magnitude of effect would be **Medium to Large**.
- 1.135 Taking account of all of these considerations, the level of effect during operation of the Scheme on the landscape character of LCA 1C at Year 0 would be **Moderate to Major Adverse** which is **Significant**.
- 1.136 Mitigation planting proposed on the perimeter of the Main Site, in particular along the eastern boundary of the Main Site beside Winwick Lane, would have established by Year 15 and integrated the Proposed Development from the perspective of LCA 1C. In addition, following preliminary landscape and visual studies, mitigation planting has been proposed within LCA 1C on field boundaries to the east of Winwick Lane, and to the west of Croft, Lane End and Kenyon. This will enhance field pattern through the introduction of additional, linear belts of native woodland planting, and would be in compliance with the recommended Management and Landscape Objectives for Area 1C which includes the following recommendations:

"...it is imperative to encourage the retention, enhancement and better management of the remaining hedgerows, together with the re-introduction of new hedgerow trees."

"The careful consideration of additional and woodland extension plantings should therefore be encouraged."

- 1.137 At Year 15 of operation and beyond, the effect is considered to be **Long-term**. The effect is considered to be **Irreversible** due to the landform changes in particular. Mitigation planting within the Main Site would be unlikely to alter the perception of the tall warehouse buildings and therefore at Year 15, however planting within LCA 1C, to the east of Winwick Lane, would enhance field boundaries and minimise the visibility of the Proposed Development from within LCA 1C, therefore reducing the scale of effect to **Medium**, the magnitude of effect to **Medium** and the overall effect to **Moderate Adverse** level of effect which is **Not Significant**.

ST HELENS AREA WFE2: HAYDOCK PARK

Site Photographs of LCA WFE2



Photo 11: A view taken from Viewpoint 17, located within the south-eastern extent of the LCT, looking south-east on a footpath connecting Willow Park, Newton-Le-Willows with Castle Hill

Baseline Description

Key Characteristics

- 1.138 The Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens provides the following description of Character Type 5: Wooded Former Estate, which LCA WFE2: Haydock Park, is part of:

'Number of character areas of varying size across the Borough, where the frequency and size of mature woodland groups associated with former estate landscapes is a principal feature. The preponderance of mature woodland creates a partially enclosed landscape which is draped over the agricultural landscape;

The woodland appears in a variety of forms, typically of mature deciduous woodland belts enclosing areas of farmland, but in addition remnants of tree avenues, lines and belts and single mature specimen trees within field are present. The changing character of the mature woodland creates a sense of grandeur and maturity to the landscape;

The strength of the former estates are reinforced by the presence of landscape features including prominent estate houses and building of similar construction and often in blonde sandstone quarried locally, stone walls and decorative entrance pillars;

Landform varies over the character type but is typically of a rolling undulating landform where the experience changes from being enclosed by adjacent topography to open wide views over the surrounding landscape only partially interrupted by the presence of woodland;

In many instance the underlying larger agricultural landscape has medium to large scale fields and associated with mature blocks of woodland creates a large scale landscape;

Obvious aesthetic qualities to the landscapes, the place often form areas of interest for recreation.'

- 1.139 The Key Characteristics of LCA WFE2 are:

- *'The topography of this area is of a generally flat open landscape with strong horizontal composition, subtly rising in elevation from the course of the Newton Brook to the south east at 25m AOD up to 50 metres at the urban edge with Ashton-in-Makerfield;*
- *Park landscape covering an extensive area to the extreme east of St Helens Borough, although highly fragmented and divided by the location of the M6 running north to south and the A580 running east to west often at elevation. In addition the character area has a complex indented boundary defined to the east by the location of the Council boundary and to the north, west and south by a varied and indented predominantly urban edge;*
- *The predominant landuse of the area is arable farmland cultivated within a largescale geometric regular field system. Hedged field boundaries vary in condition and where neglected they emphasise the sense of openness and scale of the landscape;*
- *Mature woodland blocks, shelterbelts and plantations interrupt the field pattern to create an interesting spatial sequence and partially enclose several of the fields;*
- *To the north the character area is defined by layout of the Haydock Race Course, for which the grassed white-fenced course sits relatively unobtrusively within the large scale open park landscape. Associated development to the racecourse including the entrance buildings, entrance road and parking is identifiable with the racecourse and defined by regular formal ornamental planting of conifers to the entrance area, although the white stands extend above the tree crown;*
- *Within the mature landscape structure a number of small dams and lakes /ponds and associated riparian woodland are found along the narrow valley to Newton Brook and tributaries which flows southwards and is dammed at intervals to form the Dean Dam and Newton Lake;*
- *There are remnants of former estate structures such as walls and ornamental gate features;*
- *The large grade separated elevated road junction of the M6 and A580 separate and divide the character area, dominating the experience of the landscape and detracting from the rural qualities of the area;*
- *Within the area there is minimal settlement with buildings related to the functions of Haydock Park or a scatter of farm steading. The proximity and visual prominence of the surrounding settled edges imposes an urban character on the landscape.'*

Positive Landscape Features:

- *'Flat large scale agricultural landscape.*
- *Large scale open parkland landscape with strong woodland structure creating interplay of open to enclosed space.'*

Negative Landscape Features

- *‘Encroachment of further urban elements and some unsympathetic buildings and landscape features associated with racecourse.*
- *Loss of hedgerows and field boundaries in some locations.*
- *Physical, visual and audible influence of the M6 and A580 within the area, fragmenting landscape character area.’*

Landscape Sensitivity

1.140 Overall Landscape Sensitivity is judged in the LCA to be Medium to High:

- The Strength of Typical Character is judged to be *‘Moderate – overriding flat landscape with large scale agricultural field pattern and interplay of mature woodland blocks.’*
- The Condition/Intactness is judged to be *‘Moderate – landscape fragmented by large scale development of communications infrastructure.’*
- The Aesthetic Character is judged to be *‘Moderate - Strong. Woodland block retain strong character although influenced by infrastructure and visible urban edges.’*

Future Baseline

1.141 Whilst this is a partly urbanised area, in which there is change to the built form due to new developments, there are no known proposed developments within LCA WFE2 which would indicate any notable future change to character.

Susceptibility

1.142 Based on a review of the baseline description of LCA WFE2 and site observations, the following is evident with regards the susceptibility of this LCA to the type of development proposed:

- This is an LCA within the Wooded Former Estate character type, however there is an acknowledged openness within this area which suggests that it does not fully reflect the key characteristics of a wooded parkland landscape which is reasonably enclosed. This suggests a medium level of susceptibility to change.
- This is a highly fragmented and divided LCA, due to the M6 running north to south and the A580 running east to west often at elevation. This indicates a lower level of susceptibility to change.
- To the north, the LCA is defined by layout of the Haydock Race Course, a parkland estate, which indicates a higher level of susceptibility.

1.143 Overall, there are some indicators of higher susceptibility to change, however the susceptibility of the LCA is considered to be **Medium**.

Value

- 1.144 This area of the LCA doesn't associate with any landscape designations. Overall, this part of the LCA is of **Low** landscape value.

Combined judgement of sensitivity

- 1.145 Considering both the susceptibility and value of LCA WFE2, the overall sensitivity of has been assessed as **Medium**.

Construction effects

- 1.146 The construction of the main part of the Proposed Development would have minimal influence on LCA SS1 and would result in a **Negligible** scale and magnitude of landscape effect on LCA WFE2 which comprises a **Negligible** level of effect and which is **Not Significant**.

Operational effects

- 1.147 The operational phase of the main part of the Proposed Development, at both Years 0 and 15, would have minimal influence on LCA SS1 and would result in a **Negligible** scale and magnitude of landscape effect on LCA WFE2 which comprises a **Negligible** level of effect and which is **Not Significant**.

ST HELENS AREA RSH5: LYME AND WOOD PIT**Site Photographs of LCA RSH5**

Photo 12: A view taken from Viewpoint 13, located on the highest ground within the LCA, looking east across the neighbouring Newton-le-Willows

Baseline Description**Key Characteristics**

- 1.148 The Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens provides the following description of Character Type 10: Raised Spoil Heap, which LCA RSH5: Lyme and Wood Pit, is part of:

‘Former spoil heaps with pronounced small scale ‘hillock’ character providing strong contrast of form with the adjacent flatter local landscape. In places the reprofiled landform has created a variety of elevated forms from gently sloping to a more unnatural straight line and upper summit profile;

Typically the spoil heaps are recently reclaimed with extensive woodland planting, which gives a raw immature character. The woodland design varies according to the context of the spoil heap from more formal planting adjacent to urban edges, to a more relaxed informal character closer to the rural landscapes;

Differential colour and texture of spoil material visible often unnaturally black and grey with a rough stony texture can give rough character which appears degraded and neglected reinforced by a lack of formal edges to paths and sections of erosion through misuse by motorbikes;

Often used for recreation with close proximity to existing residential areas and containing a network of footpaths which typically provide views from the side slope and summit tops, giving unique wide panoramic views to the surrounding landscapes;

The elevation and proximity of the spoil heaps contribute to a physical and visual setting to the southern edge of St Helens and create a varied visual horizon and series of orientation features between St Helens and the flatter landscape extending down to the Mersey River.’

- 1.149 The Key Characteristics of LCA RSH5 are:

- *‘This is a former spoil heap that sits adjacent to residential as well as agricultural areas.*

The spoil heap is under restoration and thus the landscape is in a state of flux and retains a character of industry and reclamation;

- *The spoil head is currently relatively elevated in high in comparison to the scale of dwellings in the surrounding residential areas and provides an unnatural dark-grey profile and visual horizon in many views;*
- *Leachate material running down the spoil heap, the lagoons and the surrounding security fencing give a strong industrial degraded character to the area;*
- *It physically and visually separates the settlement areas of Haydock to the north and Newton le Willows to the south;*
- *There are some minimal areas of scrub and woodland planting as well as some areas of new woodland planting, which until the planting starts to mature and thicken, retains a raw character to the woodland.'*

Positive Landscape Features:

- *'Creates elevated physical and visual setting to adjacent residential areas, although currently of degraded character.*
- *Restoration underway to create areas of 'green' space.*
- *Industrial heritage and local value.'*

Negative Landscape Features

- *'With immaturity of restoration, site still has disturbed degraded character.*
- *Forms abrupt hard edge to some residential areas.*
- *Currently due to on-going restoration, site acts as visual and physical barrier within wider landscape.'*

Landscape Sensitivity

1.150 Overall Landscape Sensitivity is judged in the LCA to be Low:

- *The Strength of Typical Character is judged to be 'Weak – restoration in early stages and spoil heap in state of flux.'*
- *The Condition/Intactness is judged to be 'Poor - the area is in a state of transition between industrial spoil heap and 'green' hill.'*
- *The Aesthetic Character is judged to be 'Weak - Degraded, neglected character.'*

Future Baseline

1.151 There are no known proposed developments within LCA RSH5 which would indicate any notable future change to character.

Susceptibility

1.152 Based on a review of the baseline description of LCA RSH5 and site observations, the following is evident with regards the susceptibility of this LCA to the type of development proposed:

- This is an LCA comprises former spoil heaps with pronounced small scale 'hillock' character providing strong contrast of form with the adjacent flatter local landscape. This indicates a medium level of susceptibility change.
- Site observations indicate that the elevation of the landscape allows for strong influence on its character by the surrounding urban areas, indicating a lower level of susceptibility to change.
- The area comprises extensive woodland planting, albeit which is relatively young in the most part, which gives a raw immature character and indicates a medium level of susceptibility to change.

1.153 Overall, there are some indicators of higher susceptibility to change, however the susceptibility of the LCA is considered to be **Low to Medium**.

Value

1.154 This area of the LCA doesn't associate with any landscape designations. Overall, this part of the LCA is of **Low** landscape value.

Combined judgement of sensitivity

1.155 Considering both the susceptibility and value of LCA RSH5, the overall sensitivity of has been assessed as **Low to Medium**.

Construction effects

1.156 The construction of the main part of the Proposed Development would have minimal influence on LCA RSH5 and would result in a **Negligible** scale and magnitude of landscape effect on LCA RSH5 which comprises a **Negligible** level of effect and which is **Not Significant**.

Operational effects

1.157 The operational phase of the main part of the Proposed Development, at both Years 0 and 15, would have minimal influence on LCA RSH5 and would result in a **Negligible** scale and magnitude of landscape effect on LCA RSH5 which comprises a **Negligible** level of effect and which is **Not Significant**.

WARRINGTON AREA 2B: HOLCROFT AND GLAZEBROOK MOSS

Site Photographs of LCA 2B



Photo 13: A view taken from Viewpoint 10, located within the highest elevation within LCA 2B, looking west

Baseline Description

Key Characteristics

1.158 The Warrington Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment provides the following description of LCA 2B: Holcroft and Glazebrook Moss:

'Holcroft and Glazebrook Moss form a continuous area of mossland separated from Risley and Rixton Mosses to the south-west by a narrow causeway known as Old Hall Lane, situated on slightly higher land between Milverton Farm and New Hall Farm.

Their landscape character is similar to that of the adjacent Rixton Moss, although field sizes become larger from south to north with fewer dividing ditches. Arable crops appear more extensive and less varied. The impression of 'isolation' within the area is less marked with views tending more towards the east and the Pennines.

The edges of this mossland are indistinct, visually feathering into bordering areas.

The landfill site at Silver Lane is a dominant and alien feature in an otherwise flat landscape. The site is currently active, although completed sections are now 'over soiled' and planted with mainly native woodland species..'

1.159 The Key Characteristics of Area 2B are:

- *"Level" basin form to mossland areas*
- *Expansive views towards the Pennines*
- *General absence of hedgerow and hedgerow trees*
- *Predominantly expansive arable farmland*

- Visually dominant elevated sections of a disused railway
- Visually dominant landfill site at Silver Lane
- Open and exposed.'

Landscape Sensitivity

1.160 The sensitivity of the landscape of Area 2B is summarised as follows:

'The landscape sensitivity of the area is very similar to that of the adjoining Rixton, Woolston and Risley Mosses. The function of the arable land is totally dependent upon drainage and water level management, with potential problems of 'wind blow' erosion to exposed soils in dry, windy weather.

As with all mosslands, buildings are located around the mossland fringes, where firmer foundations can be more easily achieved. Large fields of mainly grain crops predominate with very few public footpaths. The scale and openness of the landscape does not appear welcoming to recreational use, although views out of the area towards the Pennines are extremely attractive. The flatness of the landscape is very prone to the impact of large scale mounding and it is therefore unfortunate that the mosslands have been selected for landfill, as evidenced by the very large site at Silver Lane, Risley.'

Future Baseline

1.161 There are no known likely changes to LCA 2B which would indicate notable change to landscape character.

Susceptibility

1.162 Based on a review of the baseline description of LCA 2B and site observations, the following is evident with regards the susceptibility of this LCA to the type of development proposed:

- This is an LCA comprises former landfill with pronounced small scale 'hillock' character providing strong contrast of form with the adjacent flatter local landscape. This indicates a medium level of susceptibility change.
- Whilst there are longer range views towards the Pennine Hill, site observations indicate that the elevation of the landscape allows for strong influence on its character by the surrounding urban areas and motorways, indicating a lower level of susceptibility to change.
- The area comprises mosslands which enforce the open character on higher elevations in particular and indicates a medium level of susceptibility to change.

1.163 Overall, there are some indicators of higher susceptibility to change, however the susceptibility of the LCA is considered to be **Low to Medium**.

1.164 Overall, there are some indicators of medium to high susceptibility to change. However the LCA is medium to large in scale, with a dominance of arable fields, and it is affected by some

declining condition which detracts from the rural character, in particular the removal and fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The susceptibility of the LCA is therefore considered to be **Medium**.

Value

- 1.165 This area of the LCA doesn't associate with any landscape designations. Overall, this part of the LCA is of **Low** landscape value.

Combined judgement of sensitivity

- 1.166 Considering both the susceptibility and value of LCA 2B, the overall sensitivity of has been assessed as **Low to Medium**.

Construction effects

- 1.167 The construction of the main part of the Proposed Development would have minimal influence on LCA 2B and would result in a **Negligible** scale and magnitude of landscape effect on LCA 2B which comprises a **Negligible** level of effect and which is **Not Significant**.

Operational effects

- 1.168 The operational phase of the main part of the Proposed Development, at both Years 0 and 15, would have minimal influence on LCA RSH5 and would result in a **Negligible** scale and magnitude of landscape effect on LCA 2B which comprises a **Negligible** level of effect and which is **Not Significant**.