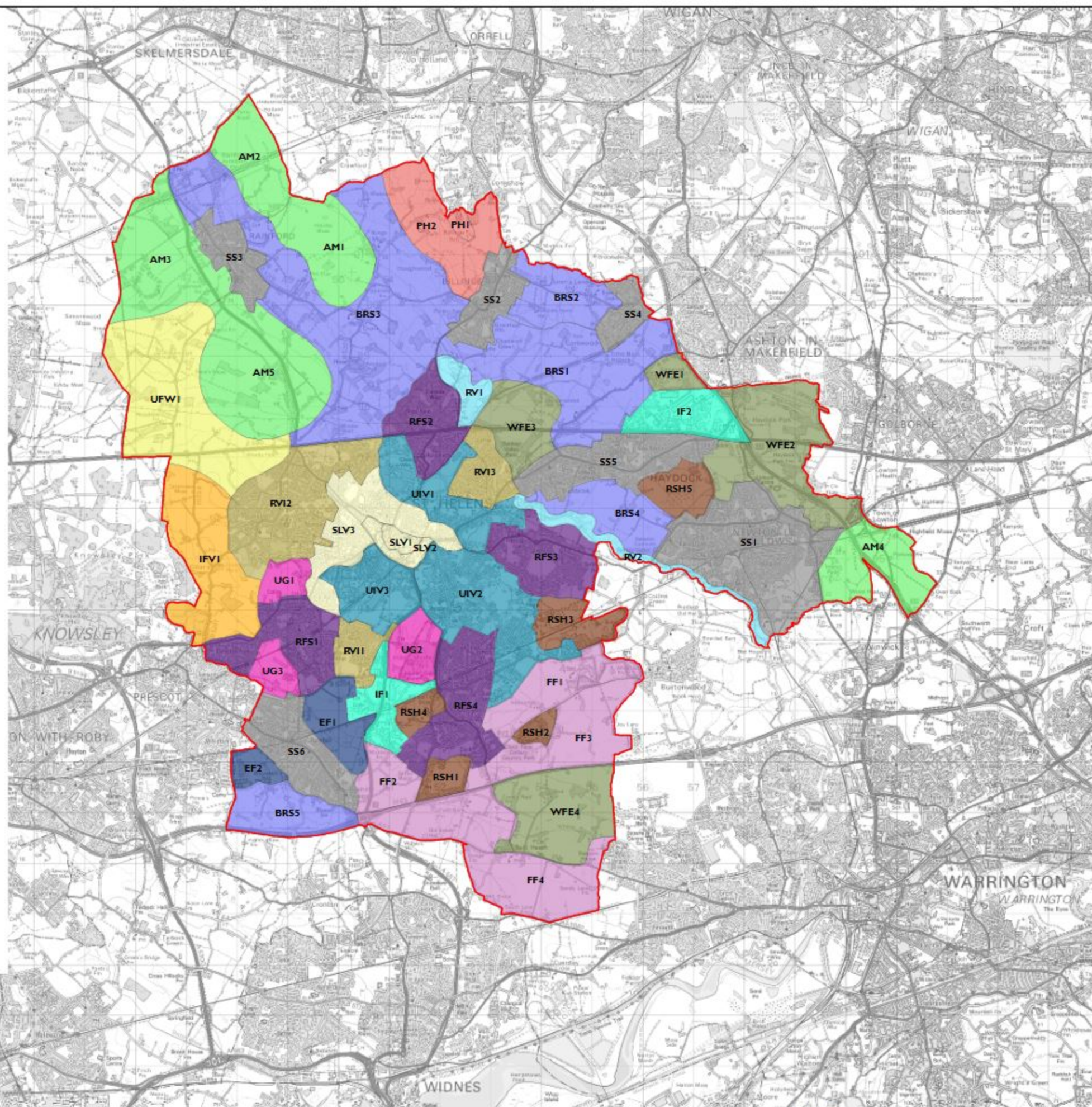


Landscape Character Areas

PH1 Billinge Hill Summit
 PH2 Billinge Hill Slopes
 AM1 Holiday Moss
 AM2 Holland Moss
 AM3 Simmonswood Moss
 AM4 Highfield Moss
 AM5 Reeds Moss
 BR51 Arch Lane Slopes
 BR52 Weathercock Slopes
 BR53 Rainford Slopes
 BR54 Sankey Slopes
 BR55 Rainhill Slopes
 RV1 Carr Mill Dam
 RV2 Sankey Valley
 WFE1 Garswood Park
 WFE2 Haydock Park
 WFE3 Old Garswood Park
 WFE4 Bold Hall
 EF1 Elton Head Hall Farm
 EF2 Blundell's Hill
 FF1 Sutton Fringe
 FF2 Sutton Manor Fringe
 FF3 Clock Face Farming
 FF4 Bold Heath
 UFW1 Agricultural Mossborough
 IFV1 Agricultural Eccleston
 RSH1 Sutton Manor
 RSH2 Clock Face
 RSH3 Sutton Moss
 RSH4 Lea Green
 RSH5 Lyme and Wood Pit
 IF1 Link Road
 IF2 Haydock Industrial Estate
 SS1 Newton-le-Willows
 SS2 Billinge
 SS3 Rainford
 SS4 Garswood
 SS5 Haydock
 SS6 Rainhill
 SLV1 St Helens Historic Core
 SLV2 St Helens Retail Ring
 SLV3 St Helens Terraces
 UG1 Big Dam
 UG2 Sherdley Park
 UG3 Rainhill Golf Course
 RFS1 Grange Park
 RFS2 Mossbank
 RFS3 Derbyshire Hill / Parr
 RFS4 Sutton
 UIV1 Gerards Bridge
 UIV2 Sutton Brook
 UIV3 Ravenhead
 RV11 Thatto Heath
 RV12 Eccleston
 RV13 Laffak



ST HELENS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Types and Areas

St Helens District Boundary

Landscape Character Types

- Prominent Hill (PH)
- Agricultural Moss (AM)
- Broad Rural Slopes (BRS)
- River Valley (RV)
- Wooded Former Estate (WFE)
- Edge Farmland (EF)
- Floodplain Farmland (FF)
- Undulating Farmland with Woodland (UFW)
- Intimate Farmed Valley (IFV)
- Raised Spoil Heap (RSH)
- Industrial Fringe (IF)
- Separate Settlement (SS)
- Settled Lowlying Valley (SLV)
- Urban Greenspace (UG)
- Raised Fringe Settlement (RFS)
- Urban Industrial Valley (UIV)
- Residential Valley Infill (RVI)

Figure 8

Rainhill Slopes (3 BRS 5)



Area Description

- the area lies on gently undulating slopes with southern aspect which runs down from the adjacent broad summit of Blundell's Hill at 78m AOD to the flatter landscape which extends up to and is defined by the prominent embankments to the M62;
- the area is predominantly arable farmland with medium to large scale irregular fields overlaying the slope and highlighting the fall of the contours. The field boundaries are mostly drainage ditches with degraded hedgerows with some remnant mature trees, which give a degraded character to the landscape. In many cases the hedgerows have been lost;
- a golf course is located on the slopes within the area and creates a contrast in character by the smooth uniform green of the fairways and associated planting to the rural character of the fields;
- 'water pits' are a distinctive landscape feature located within depressions in the fields and are generally associated with small blocks of mature deciduous woodland;
- the M62 and a line of pylons cross the area to the south and are both dominant visual features. The embankments of the M62 create an unnatural defined hard edge to the character area. The frequent movement and noise of traffic along the motorway imposes a strong urban character on the rural landscape;
- area limited number of small residences and a farm steading is located off the B road which runs between Rainhill and Whiston. The historic urban edge of Rainhill is visually prominent on the ridgeline to the north. In particular the historic skyline with a prominent church tower is a distinct visual horizon in views from along the M62;
- views from the upper elevated slopes to Rainhill are across the M62 embankments to the floodplains of the Mersey which progressively flatten out to the highly developed Mersey Valley. The large cooling towers at Fiddlers Ferry Power Station are prominent features on the distant skyline.

Landscape Analysis

Positive Features

Rural landscape character with pattern of 'natural' water pool features.

Broad slopes and ridgeline acts as an important visual horizon and setting to Rainhill.

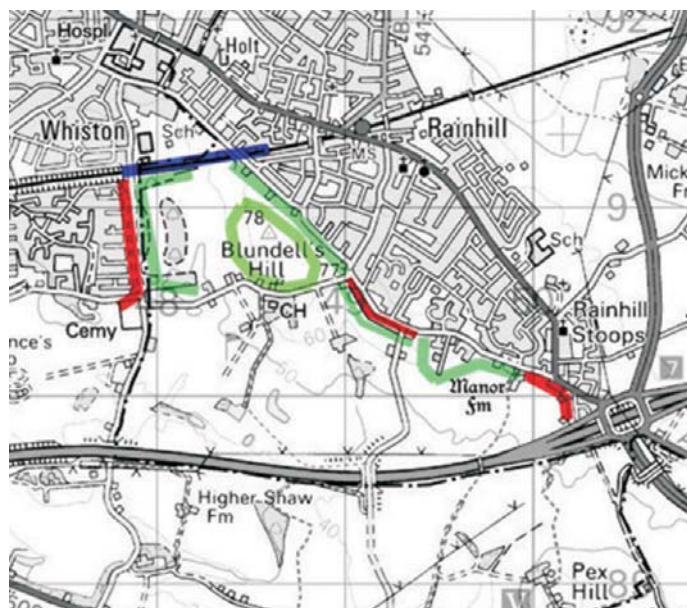
Negative Features

Visually prominent urban elements including pylon lines in landscape to south.

Strong visual and physical influence of motorway corridor with unnatural embankments, noise, continuous movement and associate visual clutter of signage, including partial upgrading of rural road which cross motorway.

Degraded and loss of hedgerows and tree structure.

Developed Edge Analysis



■ RESIDENTIAL ■ VEGETATIVE ■ LANDFORM
■ INDUSTRIAL ■ RETAIL ■ TRANSPORT

The area is rural with a partially developed edge to at Rainford. This is a robust edge as the mature historic developed edge runs along the upper break of slope to the ridgeline and the steep gradient creates a natural constraint to development. Overall the edge has been assessed as **Strong**.

Landscape Evaluation

Landscape Sensitivity	Medium
Strength of Typical Character	Moderate – rural character of field and woodland groups and landscape pattern degraded.
Condition / Intactness	Moderate – strong influence of surrounding urban features in particular the motorway corridor.
Aesthetic Character	Moderate – historic visual horizon and natural patterns of tree groups but strong influence of infrastructure developments to south.

Visual Sensitivity	Medium to High
General Visibility	Medium - High – limited visibility from landscape to north, but strong intervisibility with flat landscape to south partially screen by motorway embankments.
Population	Medium - High - limited visibility by scatter of dwellings within character area and along the north settled edge. High visibility for short distance from elevated stretch of busy M62.
Mitigation Potential	Medium - opportunity to reinforce existing agricultural patterns where appropriate.

Landscape Strategy

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

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Moderate	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of Character				

Landscape Management Issues & Opportunities

Important to conserve the existing relatively undeveloped upper slopes to retain important visual horizon and setting to historic skyline of Rainhill. Opportunity to enhance and strengthen existing landscape structure to reduce physical and visual presence of linear road corridor.

Water holes and associate planting should be retained and managed appropriately as interesting landscape feature.

Woodland Recommendations

The degraded mature shelterbelts and hedgerows should be restored and enhanced with mixed broadleaf trees. Inappropriate siting of woodland planting running along the verges of the M62 and reinforcing the strength of this corridor should be avoided. Reinforcement of adjacent landscape character should help to soften the prominence of this unnatural hard edge in the landscape.

The urban edge along the Rainhill ridge should be strengthened by the enhancement of mixed broadleaf woodland and shelterbelts, with due cognisance of maintaining the clarity of the historic skylines in views to the south.

In addition small 'wet' woodland pockets that are associated with distinctive water pits should be conserved and enhanced with the planting of Willow, Alder and Ash.

Judgement about Potential to Accommodate Development

This area is generally unsuitable for development as this would further weaken the landscape character and reduce the clarity of the rural landscape as a setting of the historic skyline of Rainhill. The existing mature historic urban edge of Rainhill should pose a constraint to further development.