

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
MASTERPLANNING
URBAN DESIGN

RANDALL
THORP 
CHARTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Land off Chapel Lane, Widnes

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

January 2023

Prepared for:

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Project/ doc reference	526C
Author	JF
Checker	NJ
Format check	EH
QM Status	checked
Product Status	Issue
Check date	January 2023

W:\526C Chapel Lane LVIA\5 Docs\RT docs\06 LVIA\LVIA\Chapel Lane LVIA FINAL.docx

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Randall Thorp LLP has been commissioned to produce a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany an outline planning application for residential development on land at Chapel Lane, Widnes.
- 1.2. The site comprises 15ha of agricultural land and is situated on the northern edge of Widnes some 2.2km from the town centre. It lies to the north of Upton Grange, between Chapel Lane and Queensbury Way. It is bounded to the north by Alder Brook which defines the district administrative boundary and is marked by mature trees and a hedgerow. The open countryside to the north of the brook lies within Knowsley Council administrative area.
- 1.3. The site location and extent of the LVIA study area is shown on **Figure 1 (Appendix A)**.



- 1.4. The LVIA identifies and assesses the anticipated effects resulting from the development on the character and features of the landscape and on people's views and visual amenity. It describes the assessment methodology; the baseline conditions of the application site and its surroundings; the scheme and the potential effects arising from it; the mitigation measures adopted to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects; and the likely residual effects when the scheme is operational.

2. Methodology

Guidance

- 2.1. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3), Third Edition, 2013; Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 2.2. Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (2019) – Visual Representation of Development Proposals has been followed in respect of Type 1, Annotated Viewpoint Photographs.
- 2.3. Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations has been followed in respect of the assessment of valuing the landscape.

Scoping

- 2.4. The study area, methodology and potential visual and landscape receptors were sent to Halton Borough Council (HBC) on 14th July 2022 and no comments were received.

Approach

- 2.5. The following approach to the assessment was undertaken.

Establishing the Landscape and Visual Baseline

- establish the landscape and visual context of the site, including where appropriate, reference to the built context
- establish the landscape components within the site along with any specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities of the site or views around the site which contribute to landscape character or visual amenity
- identify the landscape receptors (aspects of the landscape including character and physical features) and visual receptors (individuals and/or defined groups of people) which have the potential to be affected by the proposed change
- define the study area
- consider the value attached to the landscape

Describing the Development and Measures incorporated to Mitigate Potential Effects

- describe aspects of the development which have potential to cause landscape/visual effects in the particular context, and the measures incorporated into the scheme to mitigate such effects

Identifying and Describing the Likely Landscape and Visual Effects

- provide an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape in its context, taking in to

account the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to the proposed change and the value attached to the landscape receptor

- provide an assessment of the sensitivity of the identified visual receptors, taking in to account the susceptibility of the visual receptor to the proposed change and the value attached to the particular view
- identify the potential landscape effects of the mitigated proposals (i.e the scheme) at key stages of the scheme: i.e. at completion of the scheme; and at 15 years after the completion of landscape works. This latter stage will be described as the residual landscape effect and will be summarised at the end of the assessment
- identify the potential effects of the scheme on views and visual amenity at the same key stages identified above

Establishing the Landscape and Visual Baseline

- 2.6. Baseline information on the landscape has been gathered through a combination of desk studies and field surveys.

Desk Study

- 2.7. The following documents have been reviewed as part of the desk study:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
- Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan 2014-2037 (DALP) (2022)
- Halton Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Landscape Character Assessment of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough (2007)

- 2.8. In addition, desk studies have included:

- review and analysis of landform, field and settlement patterns using Ordnance Survey mapping and public rights of way (PRoW) mapping
- review of landscape characteristics and landscape grain using aerial photographs
- review of available relevant site-specific technical reports, including ecology, Arboricultural Impact Assessment

- 2.9. Site observation taking in to account the existing terrain, vegetation and intervening development has established the visibility of the proposals.

Field Work

- 2.10. A site survey was carried out by experienced professionals on the 16th May 2022.

- 2.11. The site survey has confirmed the following:

- the visual characteristics of the landscape
- the distribution and management of vegetation which affects site visibility
- the true extent of visibility of the site including the range of views of the site from

publicly accessible locations such as public rights of way (PRoW) and roads in the vicinity

- any evidence to indicate valued views and viewpoints (e.g. viewpoints)

- 2.12. Photographic surveys have been undertaken to record views from readily accessible public viewpoints. A digital SLR camera (Nikon D3300) with a 35mm fixed lens has been used with the camera handheld to obtain normal eye height. Photographs included in the assessment are presented with the intention of aiding the understanding of the descriptive text. Where appropriate, frames have been joined together to create panoramas which are representative of normal forward vision with a horizontal field of view of 120 degrees, and which may be extended up to a maximum of 180 degrees.

Identification of landscape and visual receptors

- 2.13. The landscape receptors which potentially could be affected and have been considered in the assessment are the effects on:
- Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area (Halton Landscape Character Assessment)
 - Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area (Knowsley Landscape Character Assessment)
 - the overall character of the immediate locality
 - landscape features within the site
- 2.14. The LVIA only considers publicly obtained views from public rights of way, public open spaces and roads.
- 2.15. The visual receptors within the site and the immediate area which have been assessed are shown on **Figure 2** and include:
1. Users of PRoW Widnes W/16
 2. Pedestrians and cyclists using Sandy Lane
 3. Users of PRoW Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley)
 4. Users of PRoW Cronton CR/11/1
 5. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Chapel Lane
 6. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Cronton Road
 7. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Mill Lane

Receptors scoped out

- 2.16. The site falls on the northern edge of National Character Area (NCA) Mersey Valley NCA 60. The NCA boundaries are similar to the Regional Landscape Character Area boundaries upon which the Local Landscape Character Assessments are based, although the NCA is broader

scale and generally covers more extensive areas. The identified characteristics of the NCA are inevitably less detailed and as more focused and comprehensive local landscape character assessments are available, it is deemed appropriate to consider the effects of the proposals on the local landscape character areas rather than the NCA.

- 2.17. The views of motorists and pedestrians using Queensbury Way are scoped out as the intervening trees provide screening of the site.
- 2.18. The views from the northern parts of Mill Lane and the public rights of way around Pex Hill Country Park are enclosed by woodland and the proposed development would not affect these views.

Defining the Study Area

- 2.19. The study area, as shown on **Figure 1**, includes the site and the extent of the wider landscape which the proposed development may influence in a significant manner. As the site is well enclosed by existing urban areas to the south and east, there are more publicly accessible open views from the land to the north. As such the study area extends further north into the land which falls within the jurisdiction of Knowsley Council.

Establishing the Value of the Landscape

- 2.20. Landscape value is defined in GLVIA3 (para 5.19) as “*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society*”. Box 5.1 (GLVIA) lists a range of factors that are now generally agreed to help in valuing landscapes.
- 2.21. Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21 ‘Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations’ was published in May 2021. This provides information and guidance to landscape professionals and others who need to make judgments about the value of a landscape (outside national landscape designations) in the context of the UK Town and Country Planning system.
- 2.22. The value of the landscape is established taking in to account the landscape planning designations, the range of factors identified in Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 and advice contained within Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21.

Describing the Development and Measures Incorporated to Mitigate Potential Effects

- 2.23. The assessment is based on the parameter plans submitted as part of the application. Material presented within the Design and Access Statement provide contextual information.

Identifying and Describing the Likely Landscape and Visual Effects

Assumptions and Limitation

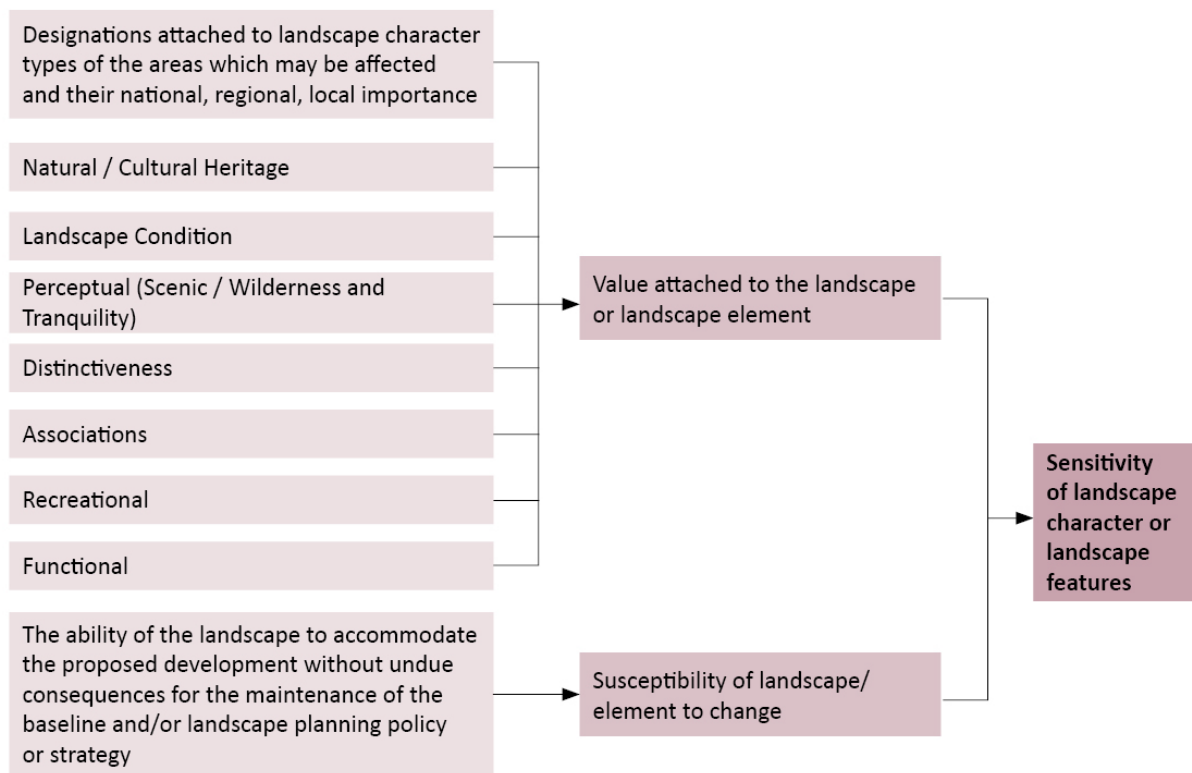
- 2.24. The assessment considers daytime effects. Night-time effects have not been considered because the site is not located within an intrinsically dark landscape (settlement is a feature of the landscape within the study area). It is expected that views include existing sources of

light from other nearby properties and cars and as such any change is expected to be negligible.

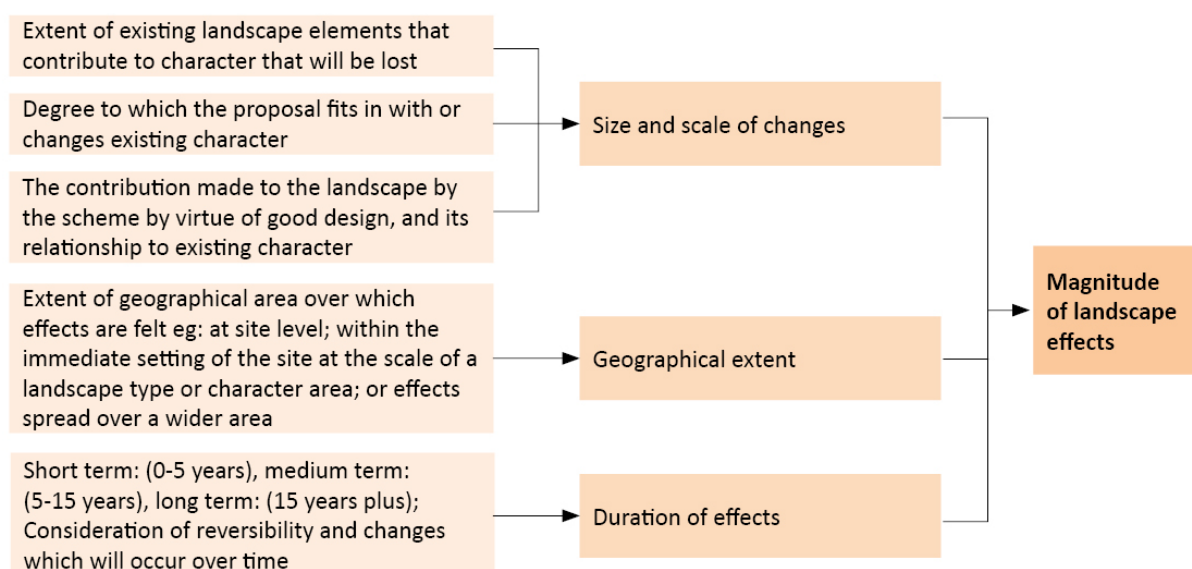
- 2.25. The assessment considers effects at initial completion of development and 15 years post completion i.e. when landscape treatments have matured. For the purposes of this assessment the height of structural planting 15 years post planting is assumed to be at least 8-10m. The 15 year post planting assessment represents the residual effects.
- 2.26. Effects on residential receptors outside of public areas are not included in the assessment as private views are not protected by national planning guidance or planning policy and impacts on living conditions are generally considered through a separate Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA).

Assessing the likely effects

- 2.27. In line with GLVIA3, the assessment is based on consideration of the sensitivity of landscape character, landscape features, and views/viewers to the type of development being proposed and on the magnitude of change likely to occur. The sensitivity and magnitude are then considered together, and conclusions drawn on the potential effects on the landscape or on people's visual amenity.
- 2.28. For each landscape and visual receptor, a wide range of considerations are drawn together as indicated by **Diagrams 1 and 2**.

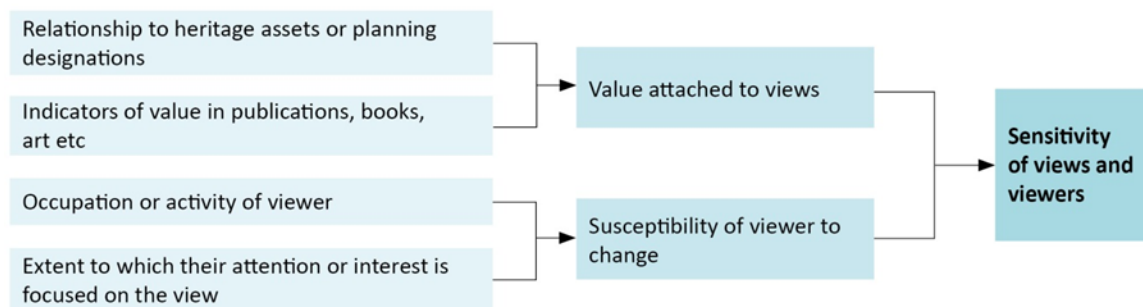
Diagram 1: Considerations contributing to establishing the significance of landscape effects.

A **Overall Judgement in respect of sensitivity:** Combines all of these considerations and is explained in text. It will be described as *High, Medium, Low or Negligible* depending on the combination of circumstances

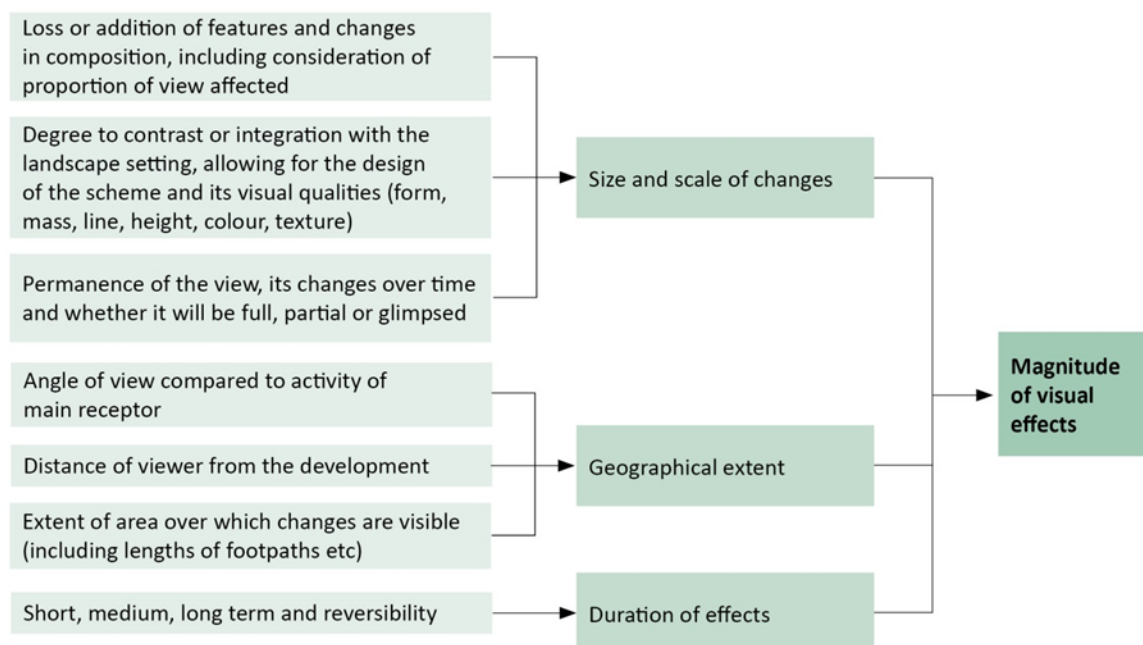


B **Overall judgement in respect of magnitude of landscape effects:** Combines all of these considerations and is explained in text. It will be described as *High, Medium, Low or Negligible* depending on the combination of circumstances

A + B = C **Judgement of effects:** Combines sensitivity and magnitude in a considered way and will be described as *Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, and as Beneficial, Adverse or Neutral* depending on the circumstances

Diagram 2: Considerations contributing to establishing the significance of visual effects.

Overall Judgement in respect of sensitivity: Combines these considerations which are explained in the text. It will be described as *High, Medium or Low* depending on the combination of circumstances



Overall judgement in respect of magnitude of visual effects: combines these considerations which are explained in text. It will be described as *High, Medium, Low or Negligible* depending on the combination of circumstances



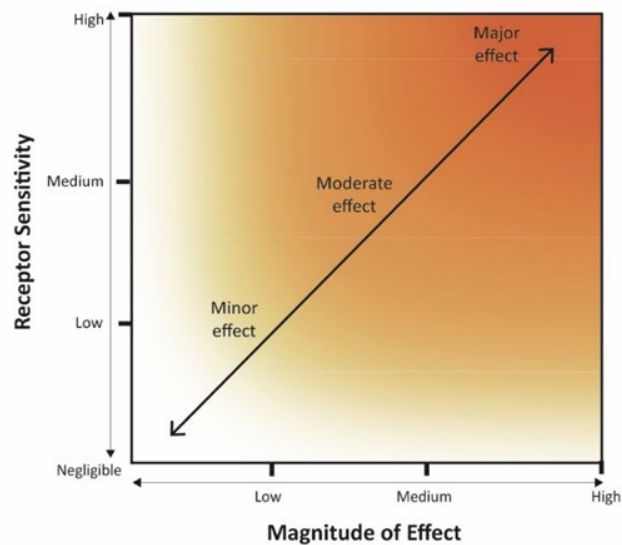
A + B = C

Judgement of effects: Combines sensitivity and magnitude in a considered way taking into account the pleasantness of the existing and resultant view, and will be described as *Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible*, and as either *Beneficial, Adverse or Neutral* depending on the circumstances

- 2.29. The effects of the proposed development on the landscape and visual receptors identified above will be described as being Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible and either Adverse, Beneficial or Neutral. The scale at which the effect will be felt will be identified (i.e. at Site level, within the immediate setting of the site, at the scale of a landscape character type or character area, effects spread over a wider area).

- 2.30. **Diagram 3** below indicates the general relationship between sensitivity and magnitude of change. However, this will not be applied in a prescriptive manner and professional judgement will be used to assess the balance of the effect according to the individual circumstances.

Diagram 3: Indicative guide to relationship between sensitivity and magnitude of change



3. Planning and policy framework

National Planning Policy

3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development for both plan-making and decision-taking (Paragraph 11).

3.2. Of most relevance are:

- Section 12, Achieving Well-Designed Places (paragraphs 126, 130, 131 and 134)
- Section 15, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment (paragraph 174)

National Design Guide

3.3. The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government published the National Design Guide in January 2021. Together with the National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes, the documents '*illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice*'. It encompasses all current best practice thinking in urban design.

3.4. The National Design Guide identifies the components for good design and emphasises that good design should not only pay attention to buildings. Careful attention should also be given to the context for places and buildings, hard and soft landscape, technical infrastructure - transport, utilities and services such as drainage, and social infrastructure - social commercial, leisure uses and activities.

Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan 2014-2037 (DALP) (2022)

3.5. The DALP Policies Map shows the site as a 'Strategic Housing Location' and 'Residential Allocation'. Sandy Lane is shown as a 'Greenway'. The site and land within the study area is not designated in the Local Plan for its landscape value.

3.6. The following policies are considered relevant to the LVIA as they concern the character and appearance of the landscape and provision of open space and green infrastructure:

- CS(R)18: High Quality Design
- CS(R)20: Natural and Historic Environment
- CS(R)21: Green Infrastructure
- RD4: Greenspace Provision for Residential Development
- HE4: Greenspace and Green Infrastructure
- HE5: Trees and Landscaping
- GR1: Design of Development
- GR2: Amenity
- GR3: Boundary Fences and Walls

4. Landscape baseline and sensitivity assessment

Halton Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

- 4.1. Halton Landscape Character Assessment identifies distinctive special features and characteristics of the landscape and divides the borough into broad landscape character types and more detailed landscape character areas.
- 4.2. A landscape character type covers a number of individual landscape character areas which share similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern.
- 4.3. Landscape character areas are individual area within a landscape type. Each character area has a unique sense of place although it shares similar characteristics to other areas within the landscape type.
- 4.4. Open land to the south of Alder Brook, including the site, lies within Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area. The settlement areas are excluded from the Landscape Character Types/Areas and are classified as urban area.
- 4.5. **Figure 1 (Appendix A)** shows the Landscape Character Types/Areas within the vicinity of the site.
- 4.6. **Appendix B** includes relevant extracts from the Halton Landscape Character Assessment.

Floodplain Farmlands Landscape Character Type

- 4.7. A summary of the key characteristics of the Floodplain Farmlands Landscape Character Type is provided below:

- *‘Flat and expansive landform which gently falls towards the River Mersey*
- *Large-scale arable farmland*
- *Hedgerows although present are often fragmented*
- *Open character with few trees or woodland*
- *Urban fringe always visible*
- *Wide views across farmland towards the urban development; Fiddlers Ferry Power Station prominent within views*
- *Roads and overhead power lines prominent within views*
- *Frequent isolated farms and small pockets of housing, industry and commercial developments’*

North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area

- 4.8. The key characteristics of the North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area are

described as:

- *'Flat agricultural landscape falling subtly to the built edges of Widnes*
- *Large scale agricultural landscape with fields enclosed by hedgerows and drainage ditches*
- *Hedgerows are fragmented and often replaced by timber fencing around horse paddocks but are in better condition along the roads*
- *Heathland was a characteristic feature of this area but it has now mostly been replaced by agricultural land*
- *Woodland is sparse and where present is predominately linear, isolated hedgerow trees or in clumps around field ponds*
- *Open character to the landscape created by low woodland cover and large field size*
- *Infrastructure routes such as roads and overhead lines are prominent landscape features. Roads often cross the landscape in straight alignments*
- *Urban fringe elements always visible*
- *Frequent isolated farms, large properties and small commercial units*
- *Fiddlers Ferry power station is prominent feature on the horizon.'*

- 4.9. Many of the key characteristics are relevant to the site and surrounding area. It is a flat landscape which is predominantly used for agriculture, although there are areas of plantation woodland. The character assessment highlights that *'Woodland is sparse'* but this is not the case within the site or its immediate vicinity.
- 4.10. The landscape description states: *'Hydrology does not have a strong influence on this character area. There are numerous field ponds which are discernable in the landscape by surrounding clumps of woodland and trees. Several fields are bordered by drainage ditches which drain the flat land but are not prominent features of the landscape. A few small streams flow through the fields, each typically marked by a sinuous line of scrub vegetation.'* The northern boundary of the site is formed by the vegetated alignment of Alder Brook and there are several field ponds within the site.
- 4.11. The landscape character description notes that the *'Urban edge is prominent in the landscape within the northern fringes of Widnes'*. With regard to views the LCA description states: *'The flat land and sparse woodland allow open views over the agricultural landscape to the urban fringes and infrastructure routes through the area. Hedgerows along the roads channel views and provide some foreshortening of views, however gaps in hedges reveal long channelled views over fields interspersed with large farm buildings or the urban fringe.* It also notes that *'There are no key view points in this landscape character area'*. In relation to the site and its surrounding area, the urban edge is visible from the PRoW which runs through the site, but from more distant views is filtered by intervening trees and hedgerows.
- 4.12. As the landscape character area description states: *'Red brick is predominantly used in the residential buildings and older industrial buildings'*.

- 4.13. The landscape character assessment includes a section on 'Capacity to accommodate change' this states:

'The character of the area is heavily influenced by urban fringe developments and infrastructure routes. There are pockets of agricultural land which retain a more rural character in the northern part of this area. The key characteristics of the landscape are its flat landform; large-scale field pattern enclosed in places by hedgerows or ditches; sparse woodland concentrated around ditches and field ponds; and its open character.'

Any new development along fringes should incorporate appropriate green infrastructure such as pockets of woodland and wooded field ponds to ensure that it reduces the prominence of built form. Built development should ensure that the scattered nature of the farm buildings and individual properties such as Cranshaw Hall is maintained. Where development is considered appropriate it should use materials similar to those currently used and be of an appropriate scale and form to the existing buildings. Ribbon development along the road network could increase built form prominence and weaken character if not carefully sited and combined with appropriate green infrastructure.'

Positive change could reduce the prominence of the urban edge and provide more distinction to the character of the area through new green infrastructure to enhance and restore landscape features and reduce the prominence of roads and buildings in the area.'

- 4.14. The Landscape Guidelines are:

'Landscape features

- *Restore the field boundary hedges to reduce the gaps and strengthen the landscape pattern*
- *Conserve and enhance the mature trees around field ponds and enhance woodland through the area by planting around individual fields, along urban fringes and roads and by expanding existing woodland*
- *Create pockets of woodland on urban fringes using a 'wet woodland' mix of willow, alder, ash and birch along ditches*
- *Conserve pockets of post-medieval fields present in the area*
- *Enhance existing hedgerow field boundaries through planting of new native hedgerow species and by discouraging the use of timber fencing*
- *Enhance hedgerow tree stock through planting new hedgerow trees*
- *Conserve field ponds*
- *Conserve and enhance the diversity of wetland ditches, retaining a mix of open and wooded areas*
- *Enhance and incorporate new green infrastructure along urban fringes*

Built form

- *Create a softer urban edge in new development through planting in gardens, along verges and roads*
- *Ensure advanced planting of copses and trees along roads and urban fringes and*

within any new developments

- *Ensure the use of muted red brick in any new development and ensure it is in keeping with the scale and form of existing buildings*
- *Enhance planting and create new linear woodland belts along urban fringes to soften the edges and filter views of the built form*

Other development/structures in the landscape

- *Create new areas of woodland to reduce the prominence of the infrastructure routes through the character area and in the wider landscape through dense planting along the major road such as the A557 and the M62*
- *Improve accessibility between the urban fringes and countryside through new green infrastructure'*

Landscape Character Assessment of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough (2007)

- 4.15. Land to the north of Alder Brook lies within the Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area.
- 4.16. **Appendix C** includes relevant extracts from the Landscape Character Assessment of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough.
- 4.17. Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area is described as:

'The high ground at Pex Hill is the dominate feature within this area of rolling lowland topography. The lower ground is made up of medium sized fields with few field boundaries and barely any enclosure. Tree cover is restricted to isolated trees, small woodland clumps and tree planting along tracks and the boundaries of dwellings. A mixture of arable and pasture creates a strong texture in the landscape.'

There is a dispersed pattern of farmsteads and residential dwellings some in small clusters linked by a network of narrow rural lanes. The buildings are mainly red brick with pitched grey slate roofs. Tall church spires are prominent in urban areas. The neighbouring urban settlements of Widnes and Liverpool have an impact on the area, with distant views from some locations of industrial installations such as the Fiddlers Ferry power station. The close proximity of the urban fringe to the boundaries of the area also has a negative impact from the pressures this brings to farmland, but generally the prevailing characteristic is rural.'

- 4.18. The Key Summary is as follows:

'Topography - Rolling lowland

Geology - Glacial drift overlying sandstone (Carboniferous and Triassic) and undivided cyclic sedimentary rocks (Carboniferous)

Soil Types - Sandy Clay – well drained

Land Use - *Mainly agricultural arable cropping with some pasture and buffer zones against the urban fringe*

Tree Cover - *Generally deciduous woodland in clumps or as isolated trees following dwelling boundaries, urban fringes or tracks*

Settlement - *Isolated farmsteads and residential dwelling with some in small clusters. Mainly red brick with pitched grey slate roofs.*

Other Distinguishing Features

- *Isolated trees and woodland clumps provide a solid tree line on the sky line in most directions*
- *Landscape is generally well maintained with little intrusion from urban areas*
- *Pex Hill is a dominant feature on the landscape with its profile and deciduous tree planting*
- *Some drainage ditches and field ponds exist along field boundaries but they are not a dominant characteristic across this landscape*
- *Urban fringe settlement visible along boundaries in Widnes and Cronton'*

- 4.19. The characteristics of the landscape to the north of Alder Brook are generally as described above, although the landscape is more enclosed than the description would suggest as there is a block of woodland which lies between Alder Brook and Cronton Road.

Local Landscape Character Context

- 4.20. **Figure 1 (Appendix A)** shows the landscape context.
- 4.21. The study area includes housing areas on the northern edge of Widnes, parts of Cronton to the north and the farmland which separates the settlements. As the site is well enclosed by existing urban areas to the south and east, there are more publicly accessible open views from the land to the north. As such the study area extends further north into the land which falls within the jurisdiction of Knowsley Council.
- 4.22. To the south of the site there are modern residential properties located on Upton Grange, and the cul-de-sacs leading off this route, as well as the residential area of Kennington Park. This housing comprises modern, brick, largely two-storey, detached houses. On the northern side of Old Upton Lane, there are a small number of older properties with large gardens/paddocks, as well as some woodland.
- 4.23. To the east, beyond Queensbury Way, lies the recently constructed Upton Rocks residential area which extends north to Cronton Sixth Form College. This housing area and the college now forms the edge of the Widnes urban area and defines the extent of the gap between Widnes and Cronton.

- 4.24. A single row of houses extends along the eastern side of Chapel Lane and these comprise a variety of house types, of different ages and finishes.
- 4.25. Similarly the houses on the southern edge of Cronton, which overlook Cronton Road, are variable in style with some traditional housing and newer properties, as well as single and two-storey housing.
- 4.26. The agricultural land between the settlements includes both pastoral and arable land uses. Field sizes are variable with some large scale fields which appear to have been the result of the amalgamation of several fields and which, in some cases, are subdivided with electric/wire fencing. There are also small scale fields divided by fragmented hedgerows. There is vegetation growing alongside the streams which flow through the areas and around the numerous field ponds. Plantation woodland in geometric blocks, as well as trees along the settlement edge, are frequent. Although there is vegetation along the urban edge, the fringe areas are a noticeable characteristic of the landscape.
- 4.27. Chapel Lane connects northwards from Widnes to Cronton. This is a minor road bordered by housing, mainly on its eastern side, with street lighting and a highway footpath on one side.
- 4.28. Cronton Road/A5080 runs on an east to west alignment, on the southern edge of Cronton. Where the main road passes through the settlement it is overlooked by houses, largely to the north, and there are highway footpaths on both sides and street lighting.
- 4.29. Cronton Road connects the Queensbury Way via a roundabout. Queensbury Way runs southwards from the roundabout, providing access to the Upton Rocks area of housing.
- 4.30. Sandy Lane is a minor country lane which is now closed off to traffic, providing pedestrian and cycle connections from Old Upton Lane, northwards to Cronton.
- 4.31. The landform is largely flat with a very gradual slope from higher land to the north-east, to lower areas to the south-west. Generally, the ground levels range between around 40m AOD and 25mAOD, but there is a localised high point at Pex Hill where the levels rise to 67m.
- 4.32. Pex Hill is a country park, nature reserve and forms part of the Mersey Forest. It consists of stunted oak woodland surrounded by heathland, with exposed sandstone faces which are the remnants of former quarrying activity. There are a number of public footpaths at Pex Hill, but views southwards from this higher land are generally enclosed by vegetation.
- 4.33. There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) running through the farmland and linking through the housing areas to the north of Widnes.
- 4.34. **Figure 2 (Appendix A)** shows the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the vicinity of the site.
- 4.35. PRoW W/16 links from Chapel Lane, eastwards through the site to Sandy Lane. This route is described further in relation to the site description.

- 4.36. PRoW W/12 runs through the Upton Rocks housing area, crossing Queensbury Way to run through woodland. The footpath crosses Alder Brook and into land within the jurisdiction of Knowsley Council. For the purposes of this report, this section of the PRoW is referred to as W/12 extension, as Knowsley do not show the path on their definitive map. The route is shown on OS mapping to run diagonally through the field but the signposted route, and the walked route, is around the edge of the field to link to Cronon Road.
- 4.37. PRoW CR/11/1 links from Chapel Lane, westwards through fields, towards Lodge Lane.
- 4.38. The visual character of the footpaths with views of the site is explained further within the following section.

Description of the Site and its immediate surroundings

- 4.39. **Figure 3 (Appendix A)** shows the site within its immediate setting and the site photographs locations.
- 4.40. **Figures 4 and 5 (Appendix A)** include photographs of the site.
- 4.41. The site extends to approximately 15 ha and comprises agricultural land and the yard and buildings associated with Rose Farm.
- 4.42. The northern boundary of the site is defined by a hedgerow with trees and a watercourse, Alder Brook, which also defines the district administrative boundary. A mature coniferous tree belt at its western end provides visual separation between the site and housing on Chapel Lane to the north.
- 4.43. To the east of the site, there is woodland providing separation from Queensbury Way and the housing within Upton Rocks. This woodland includes some mature Oak trees along the boundary with the site but is otherwise a young plantation.
- 4.44. To the south-east of the site, there are houses located on Old Upton Lane which are set within large plots. These gardens/paddocks back onto the site boundary, along with a block of woodland located near to Sandy Lane. This woodland is listed in the National Priority Habitat Inventory (but is not identified as being of local natural conservation importance). The site boundary adjoining the garden of the large property located at the intersection between Old Upton Lane and Sandy Lane is defined by a post and rail fence, but otherwise the boundary comprises a hedgerow with trees. The western part of the southern boundary abuts the rear gardens of houses located on Upton Grange, Telford Close and Chilwell Close.
- 4.45. The western parts of the site include the yard, barns and other buildings at Rose Farm. **Photograph A (Figure 4, Appendix A)** shows the view of the yard looking south-west. Some large trees separate the yard from the bungalows on Chapel Lane which are located to the west of the site boundary. The northern part of the western boundary abuts Chapel Lane and is bounded by a well established native hedgerow.

- 4.46. The site is transected by Sandy Lane an adopted country lane which is now closed to traffic and is used as an amenity foot/cycle path.
- 4.47. PRow W/16 runs through the site, on an east west alignment, connecting Chapel Lane to Sandy Lane. At its western end the PRow enters the site via a kissing gate, before running along the northern side of a large barn. The route passes the farm yard and enters the large central field. The PRow runs along the northern side of a fragmented hedgerow with intermittent trees and a drainage ditch. A post and wire fence separates the PRow from the wider field. At its eastern end, the route passes a block of woodland before linking to Sandy Lane.
- 4.48. For ease of reference the fields within the site have been numbered as Field Parcel 1 to 4 on **Figure 3 (Appendix A)**.
- 4.49. Field Parcel 1 is a small rectangular shaped field which is defined to the north by Alder Brook and a belt of trees, to the east by a fragmented hedgerow, to the south largely by a barn and to the west by the hedgerow running along Chapel Lane.
- 4.50. **Photograph B (Figure 4, Appendix A)** is the view across Field Parcel 2 looking east. The back of houses located on Upton Grange/Telford Close can be seen along the southern boundary. There is a field pond within the central part of this parcel which is surrounded by trees. There is a further pond on the southern boundary which lies partially within the site and partially within the garden of an adjoining property.
- 4.51. **Photograph C (Figure 5, Appendix A)** is the view looking south-west across Field Parcel 3. The field is sub-divided with electric fencing. Alder Brook and the hedgerow with trees, which runs along the northern boundary, can be seen. There are long views across the field with trees growing alongside PRow W/16 visible in the distance.
- 4.52. **Photograph D (Figure 5, Appendix A)** is the view from the northern boundary of the site looking south across Field Parcel 4. Mature oak trees enclose the site to the east and the woodland located to the south of the site is visible in the distance. The existing house located on Old Upton Lane is prominent in the view.
- 4.53. The topography of the site is reasonably flat with a gentle slope from east to west. The highest parts of the site lie at around 38m AOD with the lower levels near to Chapel Lane at 31mAOD.
- 4.54. An Arboricultural Assessment has been undertaken by Urban Green. The assessment notes that *'Tree cover comprises mainly of high-quality individual trees and moderate quality natural colonisation woodland'*. It notes that *'The trees along the boundary of the site are visually important in terms of their contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Trees internal to the site provide less visual amenity but are still quality specimens which should be retained'*. The description below should be read alongside the findings of the assessment. The implications of the development upon the existing trees will be discussed

further when considering the assessment of effects on features within the site.

- 4.55. The vegetation growing along the northern boundary around Alder Brook historically would have formed a hedgerow boundary but has been left unmanaged. At its western end there is a linear groups of Leyland cypress, as well as a row of aspen and some Scots pine which provide good visual screening. At the eastern end, the vegetation is more fragmented and includes hawthorn, goat willow, sycamore and some individual oak trees. This boundary vegetation is generally of moderate quality with some poorer quality groups of ash, hawthorn and goat willow.
- 4.56. The western boundary with Chapel Lane is delineated by an intact native hedgerow which is well managed and trimmed to a height of around 2m.
- 4.57. Within the areas around the farm there are some mature individual trees and tree groups including oak, weeping willow, horse chestnut, fruit trees and Norway spruce. These are high and moderate quality trees. Tree T3, a mature pedunculate oak, is protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- 4.58. There is vegetation growing between PRow W/16 and the ditch. The western section is more fragmented as a boundary and comprises some early mature groups of oak, sycamore, field maple and cherry as well as some high quality pedunculate oak trees. The eastern section is a more intact hawthorn hedgerow with sycamore and elder and some ash and oak trees. This vegetation is of high to moderate quality.
- 4.59. There is a hawthorn hedgerow growing alongside the eastern side of Sandy Lane and several early mature oak trees located along its western side.
- 4.60. The eastern site boundary comprises an unmanaged hawthorn hedgerow with evenly spaced maturing oak trees of high quality. To the east of this field boundary, there is naturally colonised, mixed species woodland which mainly comprises pioneer species and which is of moderate quality.

Summary of Landscape Receptors

- 4.61. Taking into account the published character assessments and baseline landscape context as described above, the following landscape receptors are considered:
- Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area (Halton Landscape Character Assessment)
 - Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area (Knowsley Landscape Character Assessment)
 - the overall character of the immediate locality
 - landscape features within the site

Landscape value

- 4.62. This section sets out the value of the landscape within the study area using the guidelines of GLVIA3 Box 5.1, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations and Diagram 1 included within the Methodology above.
- 4.63. The site is not a designated landscape area and would not meet the criteria of ‘Valued Landscape’ in terms of NPPF (paragraph 174a).

Table 1: Landscape value of the Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area

Criteria for value	Observations/comments	Value
Designations attached to the landscape	There are no national, regional or local landscape quality designations.	Local Landscape Value
Natural heritage	Woodland to the north of Old Upton Lane is listed in the National Priority Habitat Inventory (but is not identified as being of local natural conservation importance). Woodland, hedgerows and ponds provide habitat value.	Medium
Cultural heritage	No heritage designations.	Low
Landscape condition	Large scale agricultural landscape with fields enclosed by hedgerows and drainage ditches. The hedgerows are often fragmented and have frequently been replaced by fencing. Woodland blocks provide some enclosure but the landscape is flat and there are some open and long views. Roads often cross the landscape in straight alignments and the urban fringe elements are always visible.	Medium
Perceptual (Scenic)	The scenic quality of the landscape is varied. The urban edge is often visible, undermining the rural characteristics. There are some enclosed views where woodland is present. The flat landform allows some longer views across the fields where vegetation is more sparse. There are limited vantage points in which to view the landscape.	Low-medium
Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquility)	Whilst primarily an agricultural landscape, there are urban influences and no dark skies. The landscape within the study area is not considered to be wilderness or tranquil.	Low
Distinctiveness	The landscape does not include uncommon characteristics or distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic. It does not include rare or unusual features. There are few key features which contribute to a strong sense of place.	Low
Associations	There is no evidence of any association with artists, writers or historical events.	Low
Recreational	There are a number of PROWs and footpaths/cycleway which provide opportunities for informal recreation.	Medium
Functional	The rural land within the study area functions primarily as agricultural land and has limited ecological value/natural function, whereas the woodland is considered to function to a greater extent.	Medium
Value of the Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area		Overall value: Low-medium

Table 2: Landscape value of the Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area

Criteria for value	Observations/comments	Value
Designations attached to the landscape	There are no national, regional or local landscape quality designations.	Local Landscape Value
Natural heritage	Pex Hill is a Nature Reserve. Woodland, hedgerows and ponds provide habitat value.	Medium
Cultural heritage	There are a limited number of Listed Buildings. The northern parts of Cronton include a conservation area.	Medium
Landscape condition	The landscape includes farmland, urban areas and main transport routes, as well as woodland which provides enclosure. Some drainage ditches and field ponds exist along field boundaries but they are not a dominant characteristic across this landscape. Pex Hill is a dominant feature on the landscape with its profile and deciduous tree planting.	Low-medium
Perceptual (Scenic)	Isolated trees and woodland clumps provide a solid tree line on the sky line in most directions and enclose long distance views. Aside from Pex Hill, which is a vantage point, the landscape is reasonably flat. Urban fringe settlement visible along boundaries in Widnes and Cronton.	Low-medium
Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquility)	Whilst primarily an agricultural landscape, there are urban influences and no dark skies. The landscape within the study area is not considered to be wilderness or tranquil.	Low
Distinctiveness	The landscape does not include uncommon characteristics or distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic. It does not include rare or unusual features.	Low-
Associations	There is no evidence of any association with artists, writers or historical events.	Low
Recreational	Pex Hill is a Country Park and includes a number of PRoW and informal footpaths.	Medium
Functional	Agricultural landscape and settlement with limited functional value. Woodland has greater ecological/natural function.	Medium
Value of the Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area		Overall value: Low-medium

Table 3: Landscape value of the immediate locality

Criteria for value	Observations/comments	Value
Designations attached to the landscape	There are no national, regional or local landscape quality designations.	Local Landscape Value
Natural heritage	Woodland to the north of Old Upton Lane is listed in the National Priority Habitat Inventory (but is not identified as being of local natural conservation importance). Woodland, hedgerows and ponds provide habitat value.	Medium
Cultural heritage	There are a limited number of Listed Buildings including one located to the western side of Chapel Lane.	Low
Landscape condition	The land use is mixed with areas of residential development to the south, Rose Farm and houses to the west on Chapel Lane,	Low-medium

Criteria for value	Observations/comments	Value
	as well as farmland. To the east is woodland, beyond which are the housing areas of Upton Rocks. The landscape has an edge of settlement character and includes some detracting elements. The field sizes within the site are large and hedgerows sparse or fragmented. However there are some well-established woodlands and individual trees within the landscape which provide structure and the landscape is generally well maintained.	
Perceptual (Scenic)	There are open views across the fields within the site. The views are mid-range and generally enclosed by the woodlands or filtered by the fragmented hedgerows which divide the landscape. The urban edge is a noticeable feature of the views.	Low-medium
Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquility)	The landscape is not considered to be wild or tranquil due to its proximity to the urban edge.	Low
Distinctiveness	The immediate locality does not contain particular characteristic features which are considered particularly important examples. It does not include rare or unusual features.	Low
Associations	There is no evidence of any association with artists, writers or historical events.	Low
Recreational	PRoW W/16 crosses the site and Sandy Lane provides pedestrian and cycle access. PRoW W/12 lies to the east of the site.	Medium
Functional	Settlement edge and agricultural landscape with limited functional value. Does not perform a valuable function.	Medium
Value of the landscape character of the immediate locality		Overall value: Low-medium

Table 4: Landscape value of the features within the site

Criteria for value	Observations/comments	Value
Designations attached to the landscape	There are no national, regional or local landscape quality designations. Trees protected by TPO.	Local
Natural heritage	No designated wildlife sites within the site. Woodland, hedgerows and ponds provide habitat value.	Medium
Cultural heritage	No heritage assets.	Low
Landscape condition	The landscape within the site is reasonably well maintained and includes some mature vegetation. The hedgerows are somewhat fragmented, although the hedgerows running along Chapel Lane and to the east of Sandy Lane are trimmed and in good condition. There are some good quality, mature trees, particularly growing alongside the route of PRoW W/16 and along the eastern boundary of the site with the adjacent woodland. One of the trees near to the entrance is protected by TPO.	Medium
Perceptual (Scenic)	There are mid-range, open views across the fields within the	Low-medium

Criteria for value	Observations/comments	Value
	site which are enclosed and divided by the hedgerows and woodlands. The urban edge is a noticeable feature of the views.	
Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquility)	The landscape is not considered to be wild or tranquil due to the development. Greater perceived tranquility away from the urban edge.	Low-medium
Distinctiveness	The site does not contain a particular character or features which are considered particularly important examples.	Low
Associations	There is no evidence of any association with artists, writers or historical events.	Low
Recreational	The site is used for informal recreation with PRoW W/16 crossing it.	Medium
Functional	Agricultural landscape with limited functional value. Does not perform a valuable function.	Medium
Value of the landscape features within the site		Overall value: Low-medium

Susceptibility to change

Susceptibility to change of the Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area

- 4.64. The Landscape character assessment states with regard to 'Capacity to accommodate change': *'The character of the area is heavily influenced by urban fringe developments and infrastructure routes. There are pockets of agricultural land which retain a more rural character in the northern part of this area. The key characteristics of the landscape are its flat landform; large-scale field pattern enclosed in places by hedgerows or ditches; sparse woodland concentrated around ditches and field ponds; and its open character'*. Whilst the urban fringe is evident there is more vegetation within the study area than the landscape character area description would suggest. There is a sense of openness although only partial intervisibility with surrounding areas partly due to the enclosure provided by this vegetation. The site is set into an indent on the urban fringe of Widnes. Its connection with the urban area and the enclosure provided by the tree cover, moderates its susceptibility to the type of development proposed. The scale and type of the development is appropriate to that of the surrounding area. It is therefore considered that the susceptibility to change is **Low-medium**.

Susceptibility to change of the Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area

- 4.65. The Landscape Character Area includes rural areas, urban fringe and areas of settlement, which predominantly comprises residential development. It is generally a low lying landscape with some woodland enclosure. The urban fringe nature of the landscape, its larger field size, the enclosure provided by vegetation and the nature of the proposed development combine to moderate the susceptibility of the LCA to the type of development proposed. It is therefore considered that the susceptibility to change is **Low-medium**.

Susceptibility to change of the landscape character within the immediate locality

- 4.66. The immediate locality includes urban areas which mainly comprise modern housing. The woodland, mature trees and hedgerows provide a good level of enclosure which compartmentalises the landscape. Whilst there are some longer views across the fields within the site, the intervisibility with the surrounding areas is minimal. The type of development proposed would be in keeping with the surrounding proposed land uses. It is therefore considered that the susceptibility to change is **Low-medium**.

Susceptibility to change of the landscape features

- 4.67. The existing woodland, trees and hedgerows are generally located around the perimeter of the site or along the PRoW and ditch which run through the centre. There are some mature trees which would be susceptible to change and a tree protected by a TPO. The peripheral location of the hedgerows and trees allow potential for their retention within the type of development proposed. It is therefore considered that the susceptibility to change is **Low-medium**.

Sensitivity of the landscape

- 4.68. Taking into account value and susceptibility as set out above the following table summarises the sensitivity of the landscape.

Table 5: Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape receptor	Value of the Landscape	Susceptibility to Change	Resulting Sensitivity
Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area	Low-medium	Low-medium	Low-medium
Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area	Low-medium	Low-medium	Low-medium
The landscape character of the immediate locality	Low-medium	Low-medium	Low-medium
Landscape features within the site	Low-medium	Low-medium	Low-medium

5. Visual baseline and sensitivity of visual receptors

Visual receptors and views of the site

- 5.1. **Figure 2 (Appendix A)** illustrates the locations of the photographs taken from the public viewpoints surrounding the site.
 - 5.2. **Figures 6 to 18** include the photographs which are taken from publicly accessible viewpoints along PRow's and roads.
 - 5.3. Observations made during the site visit identified views towards the site from the following publicly accessible viewpoints:
 1. Users of PRow Widnes W/16
 2. Pedestrians and cyclists using Sandy Lane
 3. Users of PRow Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley)
 4. Users of PRow Cronton CR/11/1
 5. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Chapel Lane
 6. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Cronton Road
 7. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Mill Lane
 - 5.4. Views from these locations are representative of the likely views of the proposals from public rights of way, roads and public open spaces.
- 1. Existing views from PRow Widnes W/16 (Photographs 1.1 - 1.7)**
- 5.5. PRow W/16 runs through the site, on an east-west alignment, connecting Chapel Lane to Sandy Lane. At its western end the PRow enters the site via a kissing gate and there are views eastwards across Field Parcel 1. The bungalows located to the west of Rose Farm and some of the farm buildings are visible to the south. The trees located along the northern boundary provide partial enclosure to the north (**Photograph 1.1**). The route runs along the northern side of a large barn and passes the farmyard (**Photograph 1.2**).
 - 5.6. The route enters the large central field and runs along the northern side of a fragmented hedgerow with intermittent trees and a drainage ditch. A post and wire fence separates the PRow from the wider field, which is bounded to the north by Alder Brook. Looking north, there are mid-range views across Field Parcel 3, with the trees and fragmented hedgerow growing alongside Alder Brook filtering the longer views (**Photograph 1.3**). Looking west, the gaps in the hedgerow growing alongside the brook allow some longer views to the housing on the fringes of Cronton (**Photograph 1.4**). Views to the east are enclosed by the block of woodland which separates the site from the housing within Upton Rocks (**Photograph 1.5**).
 - 5.7. Views southwards are partially screened and filtered by the hedgerow which runs to the south of the route. Where there are gaps, there are views across Field Parcel 2 with the

housing located on Upton Grange/Telford Close partially visible beyond **(Photograph 1.6)**.

- 5.8. At its eastern end, the route passes a block of woodland before linking to Sandy Lane. The views are partially enclosed but there are some longer views westwards, in which houses located on Chapel Lane can be seen in the distance **(Photograph 1.7)**.

2. Existing views from Sandy Lane **(Photographs 2.1 - 2.5)**

- 5.9. From its intersection with Old Upton Lane, Sandy Lane tracks north passing a large residential property to the east and woodland to the west **(Photograph 2.1)**.
- 5.10. To the north of the woodland, the lane passes alongside the site and views become more open. There is no hedgerow on the western side of the lane and there are mid-range views across Field Parcel 3 when looking north-west **(Photograph 2.2)**. Views to the east are largely enclosed by the hedgerow which runs alongside the eastern side of the route. At the northern boundary with Alder Brook, there are views southwards across Field Parcel 3 which lies to the west of the lane and there is a glimpsed view into Field Parcel 4 over a gate **(Photograph 2.3)**.
- 5.11. The views from the sections of Sandy Lane which lie to the north of the site, are filtered by the vegetation growing alongside the route. Looking south, the hedgerow and trees which line Alder Brook further filter views of the site **(Photograph 2.4)**. Further north the lane passes a block of woodland and the views of the western part of the site are screened. Looking east, the woodland which lies to the east of the site encloses the longer distance views **(Photograph 2.5)**.

3. Existing views from PRoW Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley) **(Photographs 3.1 - 3.3)**

- 5.12. PRoW Widnes W/12 runs from Queensbury Road through woodland and views are generally enclosed. As the route passes alongside the site, there are some filtered views of the north-eastern part of Field Parcel 4 **(Photograph 3.1)**.
- 5.13. The route crosses Alder Brook via a bridge and there are open views northwards across the farmland. Looking in a south-westerly direction, towards the site, there are filtered views of the north-eastern corner of Field Parcel 4 **(Photograph 3.2)**.
- 5.14. The land to the north of Alder Brook is within Knowsley Council jurisdiction. The OS mapping shows the PRoW running northwards across the field but the walked route is around the perimeter. The route is not recorded on Knowsley definitive map so has been referred to as PRoW W/12 extension for the purposes of this report. Looking in a south-westerly direction from the northern parts of the footpath, there are open views across farmland with the woodland located to the east of the site and trees located to the west enclosing the distant views. The north-eastern part of Field Parcel 4 is partially visible where there is a gap in the boundary vegetation **(Photograph 3.3)**.

4. Existing views from PRow Cronton CR/11/1 (**Photograph 4.1**)

- 5.15. PRow CR/11/1 crosses fields to the west of the site. Houses located on Chapel Lane are partially visible behind intervening vegetation. The grassland within the site is screened by the existing trees located along the site's northern boundary and by the hedgerow running through the farmland to the south of the route (**Photograph 4.1**).

5. Existing views from Chapel Lane (**Photographs 5.1 – 5.4**)

- 5.16. To the south of the site, Chapel Lane is enclosed on both sides by houses and views are enclosed. At the access to Rose Farm, there is a glimpsed view into Field Parcel 1. Looking in a north-westerly direction, the trees along the northern boundary provide enclosure (**Photograph 5.1**).
- 5.17. As the road passes the site, the hedgerow growing along the western boundary encloses views, obscuring views of the site (**Photograph 5.2**).
- 5.18. To the north of the site, intervening housing and vegetation generally screens any views of the grassland within the site. The views have an urban fringe character as a result of the residential land uses along the road (**Photographs 5.3 and 5.4**).

6. Existing views from Cronton Road (**Photographs 6.1 – 6.5**)

- 5.19. Travelling in an easterly direction from the intersection with Chapel Lane, the route is initially enclosed with buildings. There is a section where there is no built form located on the southern side of the road, and the fields extend up to the roadside. A hedgerow generally filters views southwards from these western parts of the route, although there is a glimpsed view across the farmland at the field access. The houses located on Chapel Lane are visible at the edge of the field and some of the trees which grow along the northern site boundary can be seen (**Photograph 6.1**).
- 5.20. Housing located on the southern side of Cronton Road and the existing block of woodland which lies to the west of Sandy Lane, enclose views southwards from the central part of the route.
- 5.21. There is no existing housing or intact hedgerow growing on the southern side of the section of the route between Sandy Lane and the roundabout with Queensbury Road. As such there are long, peripheral views across the farmland with woodland terminating the views (**Photographs 6.2 – 6.4**). The western parts of the site lie around 350m away from the route and the fields are not visible due to the layering of intervening vegetation located along Sandy Lane and along Alder Brook.
- 5.22. Travelling eastwards, there are peripheral views in a south-westerly direction in which the vegetation located along the northern boundary of Field Parcel 4 can be seen in the distance. The house located to the south of Field Parcel 4 is discernible and in some views the grassland within the north-eastern corner of the site is partially visible (**Photographs 6.2 and 6.4**).

7. Existing views from Mill Lane (Photograph 7.1)

- 5.23. Mill Lane is a minor road located to the north of Cronton Road. It climbs eastwards towards Pex Hill and from the slightly elevated position there are some long views southwards. The views are similar to those from the eastern sections of Cronton Road, but are glimpsed as a roadside hedgerow provides filtering of the views. Views southwards are peripheral to the direction of travel. The house located to the south of Field Parcel 4 is just discernible in the distance (Photograph 7.1).

Summary

- 5.24. The site is most clearly visible from PRow W/16 which passes through the site and from Sandy Lane which runs alongside it.
- 5.25. Existing built form and vegetation enclose the site to the south, east and parts of the western boundary and this limits the visibility of the site from public viewpoints within these areas.
- 5.26. There is a fleeting view into the site from a short section of Chapel Lane which generally has an urban character, due to the presence of housing along the majority of its route.
- 5.27. In views from the north the site is partially screened by intervening buildings and vegetation. A layering of vegetation provided by the hedgerows and trees growing alongside Sandy Lane and along Alder Brook filters public views of the western parts of the site. The eastern parts of the site are generally more visible from the north, due to the sparser vegetation along the northern boundary of this part of the site and the lack of hedgerows growing alongside the eastern parts of Cronton Road. The site is partially visible from PRow W/12 extension, from Cronton Road and from Mill Lane.
- 5.28. The flat landscape and presence of woodland, trees and hedgerows limits the visibility of the site.
- 5.29. Overall, the relatively flat landscape and presence of built form, woodland, trees and hedgerows limits the visibility of the site and there are comparatively few visual receptors. The visual envelope extends northwards but is otherwise well contained.

Value and sensitivity of views

- 5.30. As set out within **Diagram 2** of the Methodology and in GLVIA3 the sensitivity of views and viewers derives from a combination of the value to be attached to the view (as indicated by planning designations, relationships to heritage assets, association with art etc.) and the susceptibility of the viewer to change indicated by their occupation or activity and extent to which their attention is focused on the view.
- 5.31. The landscape is not designated for its scenic quality and does not have any known associations with art. It is considered to be an ordinary landscape which is locally valued.
- 5.32. The susceptibility of a viewer to change in the landscape will vary according to their location and occupation or activity. **Table 6** below, sets out the sensitivity of the visual receptors.

Table 6: Visual sensitivity

Visual Receptor Type	Value of the View	Susceptibility to Change	Resulting Sensitivity
Pedestrians using PRowWs 1. Users of PRow Widnes W/16 2. Pedestrians and cyclists using Sandy Lane 3. Users of PRow Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley) 4. Users of PRow Cronton CR/11/1	Medium Local value attached to the views. Some longer views to the wider landscape and views of open land in the context of the existing settlement edge. The views have low heritage value and cultural associations. It is a pleasant but unremarkable landscape.	High The landscape setting is likely to be valued by those engaged in informal recreation.	Medium-high
Motorists and cyclists using local roads 5. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Chapel Lane 6. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Cronton Road 7. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Mill Lane	Medium Local value attached to the views. Some longer views to the wider landscape and views of open land in the context of the existing settlement edge. The views have moderate heritage value and cultural associations. It is a pleasant but unremarkable landscape.	Low Motorists and cyclist primarily using the routes for access to local amenities rather than focusing on the views. Taking in to account their speed of travel, there would be fleeting views.	Low-medium-

6. Scheme proposals and mitigation

6.1. The proposals are shown on the following plans:

- Parameters Masterplan 022-009-P004 Rev F (Escape)
- Landscape Strategy Masterplan 526B-19A (Randall Thorp)

6.2. The planning application is as follows:

“Outline planning application (with all matters other than access reserved) (to be determined by Halton Borough Council only) for the development of up to 350 dwellings, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure works. Full details for site access arrangements via a new junction on Chapel Lane (to be determined by Knowsley Borough Council only) and emergency access via Sandy Lane (to be determined by Halton Borough Council).”

6.3. The development would comprise mainly 2 storey housing with some 2.5 storey dwellings to create key marker buildings. The illustrative layout and DAS provide details of the proposed house types and building materials which reflect the existing surrounding housing in terms of scale and appearance. Within the areas which interface with the farmland to the north, the density of the development would be reduced and the height of the buildings would be restricted to 2 storeys. The development would be outward facing to sensitive edges and houses would overlook open spaces for natural surveillance.

6.4. The overarching landscape design principles are set out on the Landscape Strategy Masterplan and set out in the DAS. The following key principles are included:

- Existing features including Alder Brook, the drainage ditch which runs alongside PRow W/16 and the field ponds would be conserved and enhanced.
- Existing vegetation including field boundaries, linear tree belts, vegetation along Alder Brook and PRow W/16, as well as the group of trees surrounding the ponds would be substantially retained. Tree losses are set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- Provision of landscape buffers and green infrastructure around these existing features to allow adequate set-back distances and to accommodate suitable Root Protection Areas (RPAs).
- Provision of open space around the existing retained ponds and throughout the proposed development to allow for the incorporation of new waterbodies for sustainable urban drainage.
- Provision of green corridors along the route of PRow W/16 and Sandy Lane to create a softer urban edge and protect the visual amenity of the routes. The existing

hedgerow field boundary running adjacent to PRow W/16 would be enhanced with the provision of new hedgerow planting using native species.

- Four landscape character areas are proposed within the residential areas of the site to create a logical change in character through the development. The character areas are designed to integrate the development into the surrounding area, and to enhance legibility and sense of place throughout the scheme.
- The field boundary along the northern boundary with Alder Brook would be restored and enhanced to include new hedgerow trees, to reduce the gaps and to strengthen the landscape pattern. The woodland edge would have a naturalistic feel with native tree and hedgerow species. Tree planting within the north-eastern corner of the site would integrate well the existing woodland to the east of the site and would filter views of the built form.
- Provision of an arrival open space at the site entrance off Chapel Lane which allows for the retention of the existing roadside hedgerow and which would be planted with species rich grassland and framed by native tree planting.
- Provision of pedestrian routes to connect from PRow W/16 and Sandy Lane, running through the open spaces and landscape buffers to improve the recreational value and permeability of the landscape.
- All planting would be native and locally appropriate to enhance biodiversity.
- Provision of a softer urban edge through planting in gardens, along verges and alongside the internal roads.

7. Landscape Effects

- 7.1. As set out in **Diagram 1** of the methodology, the significance of effect is a combined judgement of the sensitivity and the magnitude of change.
- 7.2. The sensitivity is a combined judgement of the value and the susceptibility and has been set out in **Table 5**, section 4 above.

Magnitude of Effect

- 7.3. The magnitude of effect is a combined judgement of geographic extent, duration and the size/scale of effect. The magnitude of effect for the landscape receptors is explained below.

Geographical extent of effects

- 7.4. All effects on landscape receptors would be experienced at site level and within the local area.

Duration of effects

- 7.5. Upon completion, the effects on all landscape receptors would be medium term and temporary, whilst landscape proposals mature.
- 7.6. Upon maturity of proposed planting, the effects on all landscape receptors would be long term and permanent.

Size and scale of effect on the Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area

- 7.7. The site is well-enclosed to the south and west by existing residential development. It is low-lying and discreet in the landscape, although it would be readily seen from the footpaths which pass through and alongside the site.
- 7.8. Proposed residential development would not be inconsistent with the overriding character of the area as there is association and connectivity with existing residential development. With the existing development edge of Widnes extending along the southern and western boundaries, the proposed development would be well connected and assimilated with the adjacent settlement, without forming a spur that projects into the countryside.
- 7.9. The proposed development would result in the loss of agricultural land and a small amount of existing vegetation, although the majority of the existing vegetation is peripheral and can be retained within the green infrastructure. The introduction of the proposed houses, highway network and associated green infrastructure would constitute a change in character upon the site itself, however the contained nature of the site, avoiding any obvious extensions/spurs into the rural landscape, is considered to help the development's assimilation into this part of the LCA, moderating levels of adverse landscape effect.

- 7.10. There is opportunity to manage the existing trees and hedgerows within the site and introduce native planting, hedgerows and new ponds to reinforce the existing landscape character. This would be in keeping with the recommendations of the landscape character assessment which states. *'Any new development along fringes should incorporate appropriate green infrastructure such as pockets of woodland and wooded field ponds to ensure that it reduces the prominence of built form.'*
- 7.11. The development provides opportunities for new footpath links and new areas of open space increasing the recreational value of the site. The proposed planting of a large number of flowering, fruiting and berrying native plants would increase the biodiversity of the site. Overall, there would be an increase in landscape features.
- 7.12. The size and scale of effect on the Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area upon completion as a result of the proposals would be **medium adverse**.
- 7.13. Taking into account the maturity of the proposed landscape proposals, the size and scale of effect on the Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area at Year 15 would be **low adverse**.

Size and scale of effect on the Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area

- 7.14. The landscape character area would not be directly affected by the proposed development which is located entirely within the adjacent landscape character area. There would be filtered views of the proposals from a limited number of public locations within the landscape character area. The presence of existing woodland largely screens the existing housing on the edge of Widnes and would serve to filter views of the proposed housing.
- 7.15. Landscape proposals along the northern edge of the proposed development would endeavor to further filter views of the new development from areas to the north in line with the aspirations set out in the LCA which states: *'Positive change could reduce the prominence of the urban edge and provide more distinction to the character of the area through new green infrastructure to enhance and restore landscape features and reduce the prominence of roads and buildings in the area.'*
- 7.16. The character of the village of Cronton would not be affected by the proposals and it would continue to be surrounded by areas of open farmland.
- 7.17. The size and scale of effect on the Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area upon completion as a result of the proposals would be **low adverse-negligible**.
- 7.18. Taking into account the maturity of the proposed landscape buffer along the northern boundary of the development, the size and scale of effect on the Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area at Year 15 would be **negligible**.

Size and scale of effect on the landscape character within the immediate locality

- 7.19. The completed development would result in the loss of agricultural land resulting in some localised loss of openness and longer views. There would be changes to the visual qualities of the immediate area, but the proposals are broadly consistent with the surrounding context.
- 7.20. The proposed residential development would be in keeping with the existing residential land uses along the urban edges.
- 7.21. The proposals allow for the retention of existing characteristic features including the majority of the existing site boundary vegetation which would ensure visual containment and softening of the development. There would be the introduction of natural elements such as trees, hedgerows, ponds and wildflower grassland which are broadly consistent with the area, and which would enhance biodiversity.
- 7.22. The size and scale of effect on the landscape character within the immediate locality upon completion as a result of the proposals would be **medium adverse**.
- 7.23. The size and scale of effect on the landscape character within the immediate locality upon maturity of the proposals would be **low adverse**.

Size and scale of effect on the landscape features within the site

- 7.24. Proposals would ensure that with the exception of the existing open land/arable/pastoral fields within the site, the landscape features therein, which include boundary hedgerows, trees, the open ditch watercourse and ponds, would be substantially retained. There would be the removal of some hedgerows to allow access.
- 7.25. Proposals include improvements to existing natural features, such as the open ditch, and the creation of new features such as a wetland habitat, tree planting, a community orchard and sections of new hedgerow, resulting in improved landscape structure which more than compensates for the losses.
- 7.26. The effect of proposed landscape works would be limited at Year 1 due to the juvenile nature of any planting works but upon maturity there would be benefits to the visual amenity and biodiversity.
- 7.27. Upon completion the size and scale of effect on the landscape features would be **low beneficial-negligible**, taking into account the balance of the minor loss of vegetation with the benefits of the proposed planting.
- 7.28. Upon maturity of the proposals, taking into account effective management of the proposed landscape, the size and scale of effect on the landscape features would be **low beneficial**.

Table 7: Summary of magnitude on landscape receptors

Receptor	Magnitude upon completion	Magnitude upon maturity of landscape
Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area	Medium adverse Local/medium term/temporary	Low adverse Local/long term/permanent
Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area	Low adverse-negligible Local/medium term/temporary	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
The landscape character of the immediate locality	Medium adverse Local/medium term/temporary	Low adverse Local/long term/permanent
Landscape features within the site	Low beneficial-negligible Local/medium term/temporary	Low beneficial Local/long term/permanent

Landscape effects

- 7.29. **Table 8** below provides a summary of the landscape effects upon completion and 15 years post completion when the proposed landscape has matured. This post completion assessment represents the residual effects.
- 7.30. The assessment of significance of landscape effects is based on the sensitivity of the landscape receptor (**Table 5**) and the magnitude of effect (**Table 7**).

Table 8: Summary of effects on landscape receptors

Receptor	Sensitivity (Table 5)	Magnitude (Table 7)	Resulting effect
Upon completion			
Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area	Low-medium	Medium adverse	Moderate - minor adverse Local/medium term/temporary
Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area	Low-medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse Local/medium term/temporary
The landscape character of the immediate locality	Low-medium	Medium adverse	Moderate - minor adverse Local/medium term/temporary
Landscape features within the site	Low-medium	Low beneficial	Minor beneficial Local/medium term/temporary
Upon maturity (residual effect)			
Floodplain Farmland Landscape Character Type, North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area	Low-medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse Local/long term/permanent
Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area	Low-medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
The landscape character of the immediate locality	Low-medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse Local/long term/permanent
Landscape features within the site	Low-medium	Low beneficial	Minor beneficial Local/long term/permanent

8. Visual effects

- 8.1. As set out in **Diagram 2** of the methodology, the significance of effect on visual receptors is a combined judgement of the sensitivity and the magnitude of change.
- 8.2. The visual sensitivity is a combined judgement of the value and the susceptibility and has been set out in **Table 6**, section 5 above.

Magnitude of Effect

- 8.3. The magnitude of effect is a combined judgement of geographic extent, duration and the size/scale of effect. The magnitude of effect for the visual receptors is explained below.

Geographical extent of effects

- 8.4. All effects on landscape receptors would be experienced at site level and within the local area as there are no longer distance views of the site.

Duration of effects

- 8.5. Upon completion, the effects on all visual receptors would be medium term and temporary, whilst landscape proposals mature.
- 8.6. Upon maturity of proposed planting, the effects on all visual receptors would be long term and permanent.

1. Size and scale of change to views from PRow Widnes W/16 (Photographs 1.1 - 1.7)

- 8.7. At its western end there would be open views, in a north-easterly direction, across an area of open space with the fronts of proposed housing in the middle distance. From the western end of the route, more development would be visible and the views would be more enclosed than those existing. However, the existing views do include the bungalows located to the west of Rose Farm and are enclosed by a barn to the south.
- 8.8. The central part of the route would run within a landscape corridor, with the retained ditch and hedgerow to the south. Looking north there would be open views across Brook Green, and as the route progresses further east, views of the fronts of proposed housing set behind a landscape buffer. Looking west, proposed housing would be seen in closer proximity than the filtered views of the existing housing on the fringes of Cronton. Views southwards would be partially screened and filtered by the hedgerow which runs to the south of the route. Where there are gaps, there would be views of the fronts of proposed housing seen in closer proximity than those on Upton Grange/Telford Close.
- 8.9. Upon completion there would be some loss of open views and more visible built form. The size and scale of the change to views from PRow Widnes W/16 upon completion would be **medium-high adverse**.

- 8.10. Upon maturity of the proposed landscape the improved hedgerow to the south of the route would be more effective at filtering views of proposed housing and the planting within the buffers would have matured to help assimilate the proposals into the landscape. The size and scale of change to views from PRow Widnes W/16 upon maturity of planting would be **medium adverse**.

2. Size and scale of change to views from Sandy Lane (Photographs 2.1 - 2.5)

- 8.11. From its intersection with Old Upton Lane, Sandy Lane tracks north passing a large residential property to the east and woodland to the west. The proposals would be partially visible in the distance from this section of the route, beyond the garden of the neighbouring property, although the surrounding vegetation provides some enclosure.
- 8.12. To the north of the woodland, the lane passes alongside the site and there would be views of the fronts of proposed housing looking westwards. Views to the east are largely enclosed by the hedgerow which runs alongside the eastern side of the route but there are likely to be views of rooftops. At the northern boundary with Alder Brook, there are views southwards and housing either side of the route would be visible, set back behind a landscape buffer.
- 8.13. The views from the sections of Sandy Lane which lie to the north of the site, are filtered by the vegetation growing alongside the route. Looking south, the hedgerow and trees which line Alder Brook would significantly filter views of the proposed housing. Further north, the lane passes a block of woodland and views of the proposals within the western part of the site would be screened.
- 8.14. Upon completion there would be the loss of some longer views across farmland as the route passes the site and housing would be seen beyond the landscape buffers. From other sections of the route, the change to the views would be moderated by the distance and by the intervening vegetation which would filter the views of the development. The size and scale of the change to views from Sandy Lane upon completion would be **medium adverse**.
- 8.15. Upon maturity of the proposed landscape the views of the housing would be filtered by the mature hedgerows which run alongside the route, limiting the visibility of the proposed housing to that of roofs. There would be the loss of some longer views but the rural character of the route would, to some extent, be retained. The size and scale of change to views from Sandy Lane upon maturity of planting would be **low-medium adverse**.

3. Size and scale of change to views from PRow Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley) (Photographs 3.1 - 3.3)

- 8.16. PRow Widnes W/12 runs from Queensbury Road through woodland and views are generally enclosed with no views of the proposed development.
- 8.17. As the route passes alongside the site, there would be some mid-range views of the fronts of housing located within the eastern part of the site, seen beyond landscape buffers and filtered by intervening vegetation.

- 8.18. Looking in a south-westerly direction from the northern parts of the footpath, there are open views across farmland enclosed by the distant woodland. The proposed housing within the eastern part of the site would be partially visible in the distance where there are gaps in the boundary vegetation, although the views would be heavily filtered.
- 8.19. Upon completion there would be some filtered views of the proposals from the section which passes alongside the site and some distant views, substantially filtered by existing trees. The size and scale of the change to views from PRow Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley) upon completion would be **low adverse-negligible**.
- 8.20. Upon maturity of the proposed landscape the views of the proposed development would be barely discernible. The size and scale of change to views from PRow Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley) upon maturity of planting would be **negligible**.

4. Size and scale of change to views from PRow Cronton CR/11/1 (Photograph 4.1)

- 8.21. PRow CR/11/1 crosses fields to the west of the site. The houses located on Chapel Lane and intervening vegetation would substantially screen views of the development. Any glimpsed views of roofs would be heavily filtered and seen in the context of existing roofs.
- 8.22. Upon completion the proposals would be substantially screened. The size and scale of the change to views from PRow Cronton CR/11/1 upon completion would be **negligible**.
- 8.23. Upon maturity of the proposed landscape the size and scale of change to views from PRow Cronton CR/11/1 would be **negligible**.

5. Size and scale of change to views from Chapel Lane (Photographs 5.1 – 5.4)

- 8.24. To the south of the site, Chapel Lane is enclosed on both sides by houses and views are enclosed. At the access to the proposed development there would be a glimpsed view into the development, and housing would be seen beyond the open space at the frontage. Proposed housing would be seen in the context of existing housing located along the route.
- 8.25. As the road passes the proposed development, the hedgerow growing along the western boundary would soften views of proposed housing.
- 8.26. To the north of the site, intervening housing and vegetation would generally screen any views of the proposed development.
- 8.27. Upon completion the views from Chapel Lane would marginally change with the addition of housing but housing is part of the existing character of the route. The landscape buffer at the entrance would retain a glimpsed open view. The size and scale of the change to views from Chapel Lane upon completion would be **low adverse**.
- 8.28. Upon maturity of the proposed landscape the development would integrate well with the surrounding housing and landscape proposals at the frontage would provide an attractive open space. The size and scale of change to views from Chapel Lane upon maturity of

planting would be **negligible**.

6. Size and scale of change to views from Cronton Road (Photographs 6.1 – 6.5)

- 8.29. Views southwards from the western parts of the route are generally enclosed by housing or filtered by roadside hedgerows. There is a glimpsed view across the farmland at the field access, and the houses proposed within the western part of the site would fleetingly be seen in the context of existing housing.
- 8.30. Housing located on the southern side of Cronton Road and the existing block of woodland which lies to the west of Sandy Lane, enclose views southwards from the central part of the route and would screen any views of the proposals.
- 8.31. Views southwards from the section of the route between Sandy Lane and the roundabout with Queensbury Road are open across farmland. There would be some glimpsed views of housing located within the eastern parts of the site which lie around 350m away from the route. The views of housing would be heavily filtered by existing trees and seen in the context of the existing property located to the south of the site.
- 8.32. Upon completion there would be some barely discernible changes to distant views and no loss of the existing long views. The size and scale of the change to views from Cronton Road upon completion would be **low adverse-negligible**.
- 8.33. Upon maturity of the proposed landscape any distant views of rooftops would largely be screened. The size and scale of change to views from Cronton Road upon maturity of planting would be **negligible**.

7. Size and scale of change to views from Mill Lane (Photograph 7.1)

- 8.34. The views from Mill Lane would be similar to those from the eastern sections of Cronton Road, but are glimpsed as a roadside hedgerow provides filtering of the views. Views southwards would be peripheral to the direction of travel and include the existing houses located to the south of the site. The proposed development would be barely discernible, is distant from the route and would be heavily filtered by intervening vegetation.
- 8.35. The size and scale of the change to views from Mill Lane upon completion would be **negligible**.
- 8.36. Upon maturity of the proposed landscape the proposals would be entirely screened. The size and scale of change to views from Mill Lane upon maturity of planting would be **negligible**.

Table 9: Summary of magnitude of effects on visual receptors

Receptor	Magnitude upon completion	Magnitude upon maturity of landscape
1. Users of PRoW Widnes W/16	Medium-high adverse Local/medium term/temporary	Medium adverse Local/long term/permanent
2. Pedestrians and cyclists using Sandy Lane	Medium adverse Local/medium term/temporary	Low-medium adverse Local/long term/permanent
3. Users of PRoW Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley)	Low adverse-negligible Local/medium term/temporary	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
4. Users of PRoW Cronton CR/11/1	Negligible Local/medium term/temporary	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
5. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Chapel Lane	Low adverse Local/medium term/temporary	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
6. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Cronton Road	Low adverse-negligible Local/medium term/temporary	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
7. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Mill Lane	Negligible Local/medium term/temporary	Negligible Local/long term/permanent

Significance of visual effects

- 8.37. **Table 10** below provides a summary of the visual effects upon completion and 15 years post completion when the proposed landscape has matured. This post completion assessment represents the residual effects.
- 8.38. The assessment of significance of visual effects is based on the sensitivity of the visual receptors (**Table 6**) and the magnitude of effect (**Table 9**).

Table 10: Summary of visual effects

Visual Receptor Type	Sensitivity (Table 6)	Magnitude (Table 9)	Resulting Significance of Effect
Upon completion			
1. Users of PRoW Widnes W/16	Medium-high	Medium-high adverse	Moderate-major adverse Local/medium term/temporary
2. Pedestrians and cyclists using Sandy Lane	Medium-high	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse Local/medium term/temporary
3. Users of PRoW Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley)	Medium-high	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse Local/medium term/temporary
4. Users of PRoW Cronton CR/11/1	Medium-high	Negligible	Negligible Local/medium term/temporary

Visual Receptor Type	Sensitivity (Table 6)	Magnitude (Table 9)	Resulting Significance of Effect
Upon completion			
5. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Chapel Lane	Low-medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse Local/medium term/temporary
6. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Cronton Road	Low-medium	Low adverse-negligible	Minor adverse-negligible Local/medium term/temporary
7. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Mill Lane	Low-medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/medium term/temporary
Upon maturity (residual effect)			
1. Users of PRow Widnes W/16	Medium-high	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse Local/long term/permanent
2. Pedestrians and cyclists using Sandy Lane	Medium-high	Low-medium adverse	Minor-Moderate adverse Local/long term/permanent
3. Users of PRow Widnes W/12 and W/12 extension (Knowsley)	Medium-high	Negligible	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
4. Users of PRow Cronton CR/11/1	Medium-high	Negligible	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
5. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Chapel Lane	Low-medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
6. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Cronton Road	Low-medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/long term/permanent
7. Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using Mill Lane	Low-medium	Negligible	Negligible Local/long term/permanent

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. This report identifies and assesses the anticipated effects on the character and features of the landscape and on people's views and visual amenity, as a result of the proposed development on land at Chapel Lane, Widnes

Planning policy

- 9.2. The site is not a designated landscape area and would not meet the criteria of 'Valued Landscape' in terms of NPPF.
- 9.3. The DALP Policies Map shows the site as a 'Strategic Housing Location' and 'Residential Allocation'.

Landscape effects

- 9.4. Residual effects on the North Widnes Farmland Landscape Character Area within which the site lies would be **minor adverse, local, long term, permanent**.
- 9.5. There would be **negligible residual effects** upon the Lancashire Coal Measures, Cronton and Pex Hill Landscape Character Area, located to the north.
- 9.6. There would be **minor adverse, local, long term, permanent residual effects** on the landscape character within the immediate locality upon maturity of the proposals.
- 9.7. There would be **minor beneficial, local, long term, permanent residual effects** on the landscape features within the site due to the green infrastructure proposed and management of the landscape.
- 9.8. Potential landscape effects would be confined to the site itself and the immediate local area.

Visual effects

- 9.9. The site is enclosed by existing housing to the south, partially enclosed to the west and separated from the housing areas of Upton Rocks by woodland. The visual envelope is limited to a local area and there are a small number of visual receptors.
- 9.10. Views of the proposed development would be experienced from the PRoW W/16 which runs through the site. There would be the loss of some longer views from the route and the views would be partially enclosed by proposed housing, although the majority of the route would be set within a green corridor. Upon maturity of the planting within the green corridors the views of housing would be softened resulting in **moderate adverse long-term, permanent residual visual effects**.
- 9.11. The views from Sandy Lane are partially enclosed, but there would be some loss of longer

views and views of housing within the western part of the site. Upon maturity of the proposed landscape within the buffers and alongside the route, views of the housing would be substantially filtered resulting in **minor-moderate adverse, long-term and permanent visual effects**.

- 9.12. Residual effects on the views from other roads and footpaths within the vicinity would be **negligible**.

Conclusion

- 9.13. The LVIA is based on the Parameters Masterplan, Illustrative Masterplan and Landscape Strategy Masterplan. Provided that the landscape proposals meet the required standards and are maintained and managed in accordance with any agreed management plan, there would be no landscape or visual reason why the proposals would not be acceptable.

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