



MORGAN AND MORECAMBE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS: TRANSMISSION ASSETS

Environmental Statement

Volume 3, Annex 10.2: Landscape character baseline technical report



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Glossary

Term	Meaning
400 kV grid connection cables	Cables that will connect the proposed onshore substations to the existing National Grid Penwortham substation.
400 kV grid connection cable corridor	The corridor within which the 400 kV grid connection cables will be located.
Environmental Impact Assessment	The process of identifying and assessing the significant effects likely to arise from a project. This requires consideration of the likely changes to the environment, where these arise as a consequence of a project, through comparison with the existing and projected future baseline conditions.
Landfall	The area in which the offshore export cables make landfall (come on shore) and the transitional area between the offshore cabling and the onshore cabling. This term applies to the entire landfall area at Lytham St. Annes between Mean Low Water Springs and the transition joint bays inclusive of all construction works, including the offshore and onshore cable routes, intertidal working area and landfall compound(s).
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is a result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.
Landscape character	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.
Landscape character areas	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.
Landscape character assessment	The process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape and using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscape distinctive. The process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.
Maximum Design Scenario	The realistic worst case scenario, selected on a topic-specific and impact specific basis, from a range of potential parameters for the Transmission Assets.
Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms: Transmission Assets	The offshore and onshore infrastructure connecting the Morgan Offshore Wind Project and the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm to the national grid. This includes the offshore export cables, landfall site, onshore export cables, onshore substations, 400 kV grid connection cables and associated grid connection infrastructure such as circuit breaker compounds. Also referred to in this report as the Transmission Assets, for ease of reading.
Onshore export cables	The cables which would bring electricity from the landfall to the onshore substations.
Onshore export cable corridor	The corridor within which the onshore export cables will be located.

Term	Meaning
Onshore substations	The onshore substations will include a substation for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets and a substation for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. These will each comprise a compound containing the electrical components for transforming the power supplied from the generation assets to 400 kV and to adjust the power quality and power factor, as required to meet the UK Grid Code for supply to the National Grid.
Study area	This is an area which is defined for each environmental topic which includes the Transmission Assets Order Limits as well as potential spatial and temporal considerations of the impacts on relevant receptors. The study area for each topic is intended to cover the area within which an impact can be reasonably expected.
Substation	Part of an electrical transmission and distribution system. Substations transform voltage from high to low, or the reverse by means of electrical transformers.
Transmission Assets	See Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms: Transmission Assets (above).
Transmission Assets Order Limits	The area within which all components of the Transmission Assets will be located, including areas required on a temporary basis during construction and/or decommissioning.
Transmission Assets Order Limits: Onshore	The area within which all components of the Transmission Assets landward of Mean High Water Springs will be located, including areas required on a temporary basis during construction and/or decommissioning (such as construction compounds). Also referred to in this report as the Onshore Order Limits, for ease of reading.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility	A map, usually digitally produced, showing areas of land within which, a development is theoretically visible.

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
ES	Environmental Statement
LCA	Landscape Character Area
NCA	National Character Area
LVIA	Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

Units

Unit	Description
km	Kilometres
kV	Kilovolt
m	Metre

1 Landscape character baseline technical report

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1.1 This document forms Volume 3, Annex 10.2: Landscape character baseline technical report of the Environmental Statement (ES) prepared for the Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms: Transmission Assets (hereafter referred to as the Transmission Assets). The ES presents the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment process for the Transmission Assets.

1.1.1.2 This document provides the landscape character baseline that has informed the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) presented within Volume 3, Chapter 10: Landscape and visual resources of the ES.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Study area

1.2.1.1 The landscape and visual resources study area ('the study area') has been based on appropriate buffers and the findings of an analysis of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility and are described below.

- A 5 km buffer around the outer edge of the onshore substations which would include the area of land to be temporarily and permanently occupied during construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the onshore substations. The substations comprise operational infrastructure up to 15 m high, which has the potential to influence receptors up to 5 km from the Transmission Assets. Beyond 5 km from the Transmission Assets, there is no potential for significant adverse effects to occur.
- A 1 km buffer around the area of land to be temporarily occupied during construction within the landfall, onshore export cable corridor and 400 kV grid connection cable corridor. Relatively low level, temporary infrastructure that has the potential to influence receptors up to 1 km from the Transmission Assets. The 1 km buffer is based on the location of Transmission Assets Order Limits: Onshore, hereafter referred to as Onshore Order Limits as defined in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description of the ES. This includes the area within which all components of the Transmission Assets landward of Mean Low Water Springs will be located, including areas required on a temporary basis during construction and/or decommissioning (such as construction compounds), within which the onshore export cables, onshore substations and 400 kV grid connection cables will be located.

1.2.2 Consultation

- 1.2.2.1 A summary of the key comments raised during consultation activities undertaken to date, specific to landscape character is presented in Table 10.7 of Volume 3, Chapter 10: Landscape and visual resources of the ES.

1.2.3 Sources of Information

- 1.2.3.1 Information on landscape character within the study area was collected through a detailed desktop review of existing studies and datasets. These sources are summarised within **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1: Summary of key desktop sources

Title	Source	Year	Author
A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire	Lancashire County Council	2000	Lancashire County Council
National Character Area Profile	Natural England	2014	National Character Area Profile

1.3 Desk study – baseline characterisation

1.3.1 Overview

- 1.3.1.1 This section provides summary descriptions of landscape character area (LCA) sensitivity zones relevant to the Transmission Assets. These descriptive units provide the structure of this section. The character descriptions are drawn from published assessments and are supported by observations in the field. The extent of the study area has been used to identify those character areas and designated landscapes which have the potential to experience direct and indirect impacts as a result of the Transmission Assets.

1.3.2 National landscape character areas that overlap with the study area

- 1.3.2.1 The English National Character Area (NCA) identified within the study area is Lancashire and Amounderness Plain: NCA 32, shown in **Figure 1.1**, in context with the onshore elements of the Transmission Assets. One NCA covers the whole of the onshore study area.

NCA 32: Lancashire and Amounderness Plain

1.3.2.2 The study area overlaps the central and western part of this NCA to the west of Preston, Natural England (2014a). A summary of this NCA is as follows, with a full description in **Appendix A**:

‘A rich patchwork of pasture, arable fields and drainage ditches, on a relatively flat to gently undulating coastal landscape.

- *Extensive views across the plain, within which small to medium-sized blocks of mixed woodland (wind-sculpted near the coast) provide punctuation and vertical accents.*
- *Urban settlement is concentrated in the planned Victorian coastal resorts (including Blackpool) and inland towns (the largest of which is Preston).*
- *Several long-distance paths cross the NCA, including the Lancashire Coastal Way, the Ribble Way and the Wyre Way, as well as canal towpaths’.*

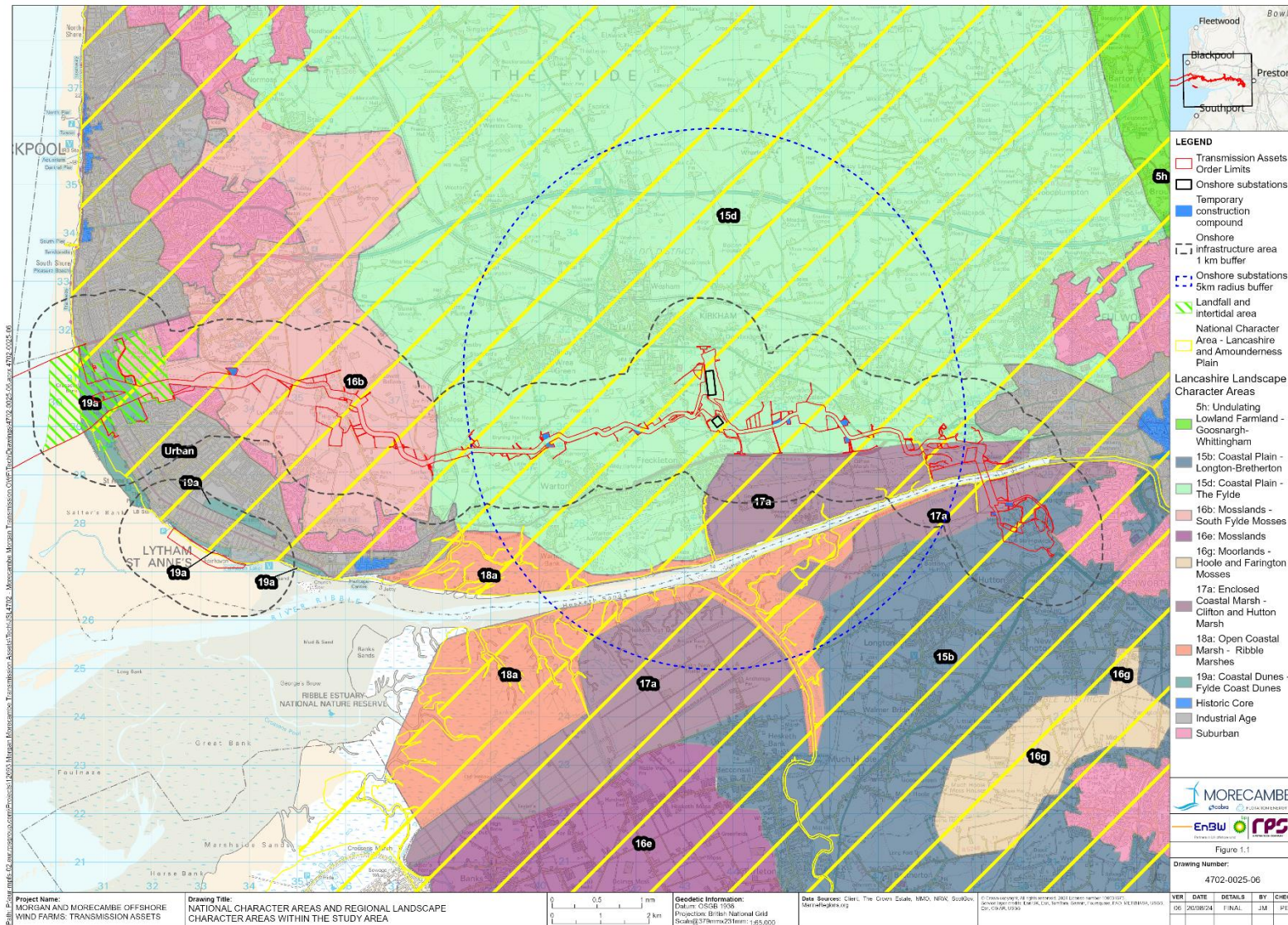


Figure 1.1: National character areas and regional landscape character areas within the study area

1.3.3 Regional landscape character areas that overlap with the study area

1.3.3.1 The Lancashire LCAs (Lancashire County Council, 2000) identified within the study area are shown in **Figure 1.1**, in context with the onshore elements of the Transmission Assets.

1.3.3.2 Listed below are the LCAs which lie within the study area and are therefore scoped into the LVIA. Full descriptions of the LCAs illustrated in **Figure 1.1** are contained within **Appendix A**. Descriptions of LCA's which lie outside of the study area are included for context only.

1.3.3.3 There are two onshore substations: one for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets and one for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets.

1.3.3.4 The LCAs identified within the study area, within the 5 km buffer around the outer edge of the onshore substations are:

- 15b Coastal Plain: Longton to Bretherton;
- 15d Coastal Plain: The Fylde (contains Morgan and Morecambe substation locations);
- 17a Enclosed Coastal Marsh: Clifton and Hutton; and
- 18a Open Coastal Marsh: Ribble Marsh.

1.3.3.5 There is one onshore export cable corridor. The LCAs identified within the 1 km buffer of the Onshore Order Limits are:

- 15b Coastal Plain: Longton to Bretherton;
- 15d Coastal Plain: The Fylde;
- 16b Mosslands: South Fylde;
- 17a Enclosed Coastal Marsh: Clifton and Hutton;
- 19a Coastal Dunes: Fylde; and
- Urban Historic Core/Industrial Age/Suburban.

1.4 Summary

1.4.1.1 This annex identifies the landscape character areas that have the potential to be affected by the Transmission Assets. The landscape and visual study area is based on the maximum design scenario set out in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description of the ES.

1.4.1.2 The national LCA and relevant regional LCAs which have the potential to be affected by the Transmission Assets have been identified for the LVIA. The landscape characteristics with potential to be affected by the Transmission Assets have been identified in **section 1.3** of this baseline technical report. Extracts of published assessments for relevant LCAs are reproduced in **Appendix A**.

1.5 References

Lancashire County Council (2000). A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire. (online)
Available: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/152743/strategy.pdf> Accessed August 2023

Natural England (2014a). NCA Profile: 32. Lancashire and Amounderness Plain. (online)
Available:
<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5418383067578368?category=587130> Accessed August 2023

Appendix A: Extracts from published Landscape Character Assessments

Character area/type	Key characteristics
Landscape Character: England	
National (National Character Area Profile, Natural England)	
NCA 32: Lancashire & Amounderness Plain	A rich patchwork of pasture, arable fields and drainage ditches, on a relatively flat to gently undulating coastal landscape. Extensive views across the plain, within which small to medium-sized blocks of mixed woodland (wind-sculpted near the coast) provide punctuation and vertical accents. Thickly blanketed by glacial till, with poorly drained peat-filled hollows that give rise to mosses and meres (now mainly remnants). Medium-sized to large fields form an open, large-scale agricultural landscape. Pasture is more dominant north of the Ribble Estuary, with arable to the south. There is a high density of relict pastoral field ponds on the eastern side of the NCA. Localised areas of intensive market gardening provide seasonally varied colours and textures. A complex network of wide meandering rivers raised drainage ditches and dykes divide and drain the landscape. Along with fragmented relicts of reedbeds and mosses, and historic place names, these provide a reminder of the area's heritage of wetland reclamation. Coastal habitats and large areas of open water are of international importance for their migratory and wintering wildfowl and wading bird populations. Mixed arable and pastoral farmland habitats support a nationally important assemblage of breeding farmland bird species. A complex network of channelised rivers, canals, drainage ditches and dykes supports a nationally important population of water vole. The Fylde coast, which extends from Fleetwood in the north to the mouth of the Ribble Estuary, includes significant urban areas along the coastal strip (such as Blackpool and Fleetwood). Urban settlement is concentrated in the planned Victorian coastal resorts (including Blackpool) and inland towns (the largest of which is Preston). The Ribble Link, Lancaster Canal, and Leeds and Liverpool Canal all cross the NCA. Designed landscapes associated with large houses are locally common in the south, where they provide enclosure in an otherwise open landscape. A rectilinear network of lanes and tracks – usually without fences or hedges – subdivides the landscape, and isolated brick farmsteads occur in rural areas. Tourism is an important contributor to the local economy, with many opportunities for informal recreation – particularly along the Fylde coast. Several long-distance paths cross the NCA, including the Lancashire Coastal Way, the Ribble Way and the Wyre Way, as well as canal towpaths.
Regional (A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire, LCC, 2000)	
5d Undulating Lowland Farmland: Salmesbury – Withnell Fold	An area between the Ribble Valley to the north and the Industrial Foothills to the south. It is underlain by millstone grit and sandstone, but the landscape is influenced by the mantle of glacial till which covers the surface, producing a gently undulating landscape of large lush green pastures divided by low cut hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Dramatic steep sided wooded valleys wind their way through the landscape carrying the River Darwen and its tributaries. Designed landscapes and parkland associated with Samlesbury Hall, Woodfold Hall, Pleasington Old Hall and Hoghton Tower add to the overall woodland cover in this lowland landscape and Witton Country Park provides a countryside resource on the edge of

Character area/type	Key characteristics
	Blackburn. It is also influenced by infrastructure (major road and rail routes), industrial works, the airfield at Samlesbury and built development on the edges of Preston.
5h Undulating Lowland Farmland: Goosnargh - Whittingham	The undulating lowland farmland on the north east fringes of Preston forms a transitional landscape between the upland landscape of the Bowland Fells to the north east and the agricultural Amounderness Plain to the west. It is an historically interesting area on the fringe of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, now National Landscape. The landform gently descends from 150m at the moorland fringe of Beacon Fell to the 30m contour (approximately) which defines the edge of the sandstone agricultural plain of the Fylde. However, this is not a clear boundary and the visual transition from one to the other occurs across a broad area between the M6 and main Preston to Lancaster railway line. As a result of this gradual transition, it demonstrates characteristics of both the Fylde and the Bowland fringes. It is a pastoral landscape which is relatively open and intensively farmed with much hedgerow loss and few trees or woodlands although hedgerows along the network of lanes are important landscape features. There are often clear views over the plain below. The area is under pressure from built development as a result of its proximity to Preston. Vernacular buildings are of local stone, although a number of incongruous materials are seen throughout the area. The area is rich in evidence for Roman occupation.
5k Undulating Lowland Farmland: Cuerden to Euxton	The rural character of this landscape is largely obscured by built development which has taken place since the late 1970s. Motorways and motorway junctions dominate the north sector. The principal landscape feature is Cuerden Valley Park, based upon the woodland and valley of the river Lostock. The park is managed for nature conservation and recreational use and is an important local resource. Pockets of farmland and vernacular buildings survive as a reminder of earlier land use and settlement pattern.
11a Valley Floodplain: Lower Ribble Valley	The open flat and fertile plain of the lower Ribble is a pastoral, tranquil landscape containing the meandering course of the river. Its extent is defined by the steep wooded bluffs and terraces which enclose the floodplain. Lush green fields of semi-improved pasture are grazed by sheep and cattle. The large regular fields are defined by gappy hedgerows, supplemented by sections of post and wire, wooden fencing or stone walls. This array of materials and styles conveys a lack of visual unity despite the natural beauty of the landscape. Mature floodplain trees are notable features in this character area; ash and oak stand in the floodplain, their silhouettes striking against the open landscape. There is little settlement within the floodplain itself, but a number of large farms and country halls are positioned along the edges of the floodplain. Settlements, such as Ribchester, Great Mitton, West Bradford, Grindleton and Sawley, are also sited on the adjacent river terraces, their extremities sometimes extending onto the floodplain. There are a number of historic crossing points which coincide with these settlements where old stone bridges are important historic features of the floodplain.
15b Coastal Plain: Longton to Bretherton	The Longton landscape character area lies close to the south-western urban fringes of Preston. The proximity to a large urban centre has influenced landscape character. The network of minor lanes is dominated by dense ribbon development and the A59(T), now a dual carriageway links the former villages of Hutton, Longton, Walmer Bridge and Much Hoole. Red brick is the dominant built material in these areas. The agricultural landscape is influenced by urban fringe elements such as schools, colleges, nurseries, glass houses, hotels, horse paddocks, communication masts and electricity pylons; the network of hedgerows and hedgerow oaks is gradually being eroded by these uses. The village of Bretherton has remained separate and therefore displays a more traditional character; a former windmill lies on its western edge.

Character area/type	Key characteristics
15d Coastal Plain: The Fylde	<p>The gently undulating farmland of the Fylde occurs between Blackpool to the west and Preston and the M6 corridor to the east. It has been formed of boulder clay deposits which lie on soft Triassic sandstones and mudstones and is naturally poorly drained. Field ponds are a particularly characteristic feature of this area and provide important wildlife habitats. The predominant land use is dairy farming on improved pasture and lowland sheep farming with a small amount of arable on the freer draining soils. Red brick nineteenth century two storey farmsteads with slate roofs and red brick barns are dominant built features of this landscape character area; occasional windmills also reflect the historic importance of the area for corn milling. Other features of the area are the brine fields around Stalmine which have been reclaimed by ICI and form a rare and distinctive land use. Field size is large and field boundaries are low clipped hawthorn, although hedgerow loss is extensive. Blocks of woodland are characteristic, frequently planted for shelter and/or shooting and views of the Bowland fells are frequent between the blocks. There are many man-made elements; electricity pylons, communication masts and road traffic are all highly visible in the flat landscape. In addition, views of Blackpool Tower, the Pleasure Beach rides and industry outside Blackpool are visible on a clear day.</p>
16b Mosslands: South Fylde	<p>Lytham Moss, on the east edges of Lytham St Annes and Blackpool, is influenced by the proximity of these urban areas. It is typical of a mossland landscape in its underlying geology, landform, drainage and land use. The rows pylons which run from east to west across the landscape to Blackpool dominate the horizon however trees in small copses and shelterbelts are more pleasing vertical elements and help provide a backdrop and sense of scale in the landscape. Just north of Lytham, Lytham Hall is an important and established landscape feature as the 18th century landscaped grounds contain many trees. The proximity of Blackpool and Lytham is influential and the presence of golf courses, camp sites, new built development and industry erode the rural and tranquil character usually associated with this landscape type. Marton Mere, located two miles to the east of Blackpool, is a SSSI which provides an attractive habitat for water birds and 35 species are known to use the mere as a breeding site.</p>
16e Mosslands: Tarleton Mosses	<p>This distinctive area of reclaimed moss, located to the north east of Southport, is distinguished by its dense settlement and abundance of glass houses. It is defined to the north by the more recently enclosed Ribble estuary coastal plain and to the south by the A565(T). It is a highly productive area of market gardening; greenhouses indicate intensive market gardening and exploitation of the rich peat deposits. Built development is dominated by modern bungalows which have extended along banked roads between the older settlements of Tarleton, Banks and Becconsall. These older settlements are located on low ridges and contain evidence of a long-settled history. Further from the smallholdings and green houses are arable fields separated by ditches and fences. Shelter belts are important to local wildlife, as are the roadside hedges, which contain views from the narrow roads into the flat surrounding landscape.</p>
16g Mosslands: Hoole and Farington Mosses	<p>This small area of mossland is almost entirely fringed by settlements lying on the higher ground above the moss. The town of Leyland lies to the east, whilst to the north are a series of expanded villages running from Farington in the east to Much Hoole in the west. The small village of Bretherton lies on a ridge of higher ground to the south west. The moss is largely cultivated and is drained into the Carr and Wynott Brooks which feed into the River Douglas. However there is a pocket of moss with remnant bog vegetation at Much Hoole Moss, which is a Biological Heritage Site. The Liverpool to Preston railway</p>

Character area/type	Key characteristics
	crosses the moss and straight lanes penetrate into it from the edges, with associated farms and modern brick houses. A number of footpaths associated with boundary ditches link these lanes and properties.
17a Enclosed Coastal Marsh: Clifton and Hutton	Reclaimed and relatively recently enclosed marsh, located to the west of Preston, separated from the unenclosed salt marshes of the Ribble Estuary by sea dykes. Large geometric pastoral and arable fields are drained by numerous parallel ditches which produce a regimented, productive landscape. Fields are bounded by low clipped thorn hedgerows and tree cover is restricted to narrow linear plantations which function as shelter belts. There is a feeling of isolation with straight dead-end tracks ending at isolated farmhouses which are constructed from a mixture of materials, but red brick is the most common. Where seas defences allow some inundation, and where agricultural practices are not intensive, areas of wet marsh exist alongside intensive agriculture, for example at Newton, Freckleton and Lea Marsh which are attractive to birdlife. The grasslands are of international importance for feeding wild geese and swans. A large landfill site is located at Clifton Marsh.
18a Open Coastal Marsh: Ribble Marsh	An extensive and expanding area of unenclosed coastal marsh occurs in the sheltered estuary of the River Ribble, most of which is protected and managed as a National Nature Reserve. This area is characterised by a fine green sward stretching out to sea. Its amorphous, natural form provides a dramatic contrast to the regular enclosures of the adjacent Hesketh Marsh and the urban form of the Warton Aerodrome. Urban buildings are never far away and provide a backdrop to views. A large number of visiting birds are encouraged by the standing water. Large numbers of waders and wildfowl are attracted to the marshes, adjacent mudflats and estuary.
19a Coastal Dunes: Fylde	The Coastal Dunes occur between the sea and farmland or urban land which lies inland. The dunes are open and exposed with sea views and dominant skies. They comprise small remnants of a once extensive system in a narrow discontinuous band sandwiched between the built coastal development and the sea wall or promenade. Their extent is determined and substantially reduced by the surrounding Victorian streets, car parks, tourist accommodation and golf courses. The vegetation is dominated by semi-natural grassland which is sometimes grazed. Access is by a winding, undulating network of minor paths or from the seafront promenades. Modern buildings and car parks, set within the dunes, are often linked to tourism development and are incongruous elements against the wild scenery.
Suburban	This urban landscape type includes a wide variety of architectural styles and layouts. The majority of urban areas are characterised by a spacious pattern of street, low buildings, garages and gardens, although there are also examples of high-rise tower block estates, with communal amenity grassland and extensive parking. Early suburban housing (1930-40) is typically semi-detached, built of brick and arranged in crescents and wide streets with large front and rear gardens. This type of older suburban housing often forms ribbon development along principal urban routes, with access to more recent housing estates behind. 1950s to 60s estates tend to have predominantly straight streets with some cul-de-sacs and with gardens and garages. Since the 1970s, housing development has been concentrated in relatively dense estates with cul-de-sac layouts, curved streets, small gardens and garages and are often a mixture of many different styles, frequently pastiches of old styles. The use of many different materials, usually not of local origin and standardised architectural detailing of particular styles has resulted in a loss of regional identity; the same house designs recur across the whole country.

Character area/type	Key characteristics
Industrial Age Urban	<p>The planned development typical of Victorian and Edwardian residential areas is characterised by a unity of architectural character, with small red brick or stone-built terraces in working class districts and larger brick or stone semi-detached villas in broad, tree-lined streets in areas dominated by middle class residents. The street pattern is rectilinear, on a regular grid. Prominent stone public buildings, built by wealthy patrons, large public parks, promenades and urban squares are landmarks in central districts. This period left a legacy of attractive urban areas, with a formal character. Within this urban landscape type, squares, parks and to a certain degree, urban cemeteries, contribute significantly to the quality of life enjoyed by residents and workers. Many sites retain elements of their original design and planting; for some, however, neglect, vandalism and inadequate management has created a rather utilitarian appearance.</p>
Historic Core	<p>Today the Historic Urban Core is typically a relatively small, characterful area at the heart of Lancashire's larger settlements. A historic church and marketplace are often sited at the central convergence point of the principal radial routes. Most Historic Urban Cores have a denser urban fabric than other parts of the town, with tall red brick or stone buildings and angular streets. There is a general lack of open space and vegetation, although market squares do survive in some towns. In some cases the historic core appears as an isolated island within later development. This may result from the demolition and re-planning of town centres, or from the fusion of isolated small towns by expansion of one or both settlements. Often the historic core is only visibly represented by the street pattern and property boundaries. Apart from churches and castles the earliest visible fabric are rare 16th and 17th century buildings, but typically the oldest buildings of the historic core are 18th or 19th century. Overall, the most enduring feature of the Historic Urban Cores is the organic, winding arrangement of streets and alleys and the distinctive character of historic public buildings.</p>