

# M60/M62/M66 Simister Island Interchange

TR010064

## ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 7.2 LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE AND SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

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**The Infrastructure Planning  
(Applications: Prescribed Forms and  
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BASELINE AND SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT**

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## Appendix 7.2 Landscape and townscape character baseline and sensitivity assessment

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This appendix provides information on the key characteristics of the landscape character areas (LCAs) and townscape character areas (TCAs) considered in the assessment of landscape effects. This appendix also includes an assessment of the sensitivity of each LCA and TCA. Refer to Figure 7.4: Local Landscape and Townscape Character Areas of the Environmental Statement Figures (TR010064/APP/6.2) for locations of landscape character areas and townscape character areas.

### 1.2 Landscape and townscape character baseline

#### Landscape Character baseline

1.2.1 The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment provides a county-level character assessment of the landscape within the metropolitan county of Greater Manchester. It divides the area into a series of landscape character types (LCT) and LCAs.

1.2.2 LCTs are typically more uniform units of landscape with a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently throughout the LCT. They provide a spatial framework for landscape character and can occur in more than one geographical location. Their component LCAs are single unique areas, '*which are discrete geographical areas of particular landscape type*', (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2013 (GLVIA3)) and only occur in one distinct geographical location. LCTs often include a number of distinct LCAs.

1.2.3 Typical characteristics are described for LCTs within the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), 2018). However, the characteristics for the individual LCAs have not been described and these have therefore been established through a combination of desk-based study and site work. The key characteristics of the LCAs identified within the assessment area are summarised below.

#### LCA 19: Heaton, Prestwich, Whitefield and Stand Parklands

##### Topography, geology and drainage

- Undulating landform of hills cut by deep, steep-sided wooded valleys ('cloughs'). Plateau-like ridges and terraces are a feature. Elevation ranges between 20m – 50m above ordnance datum (AOD) in valley bottoms to over 100m AOD, for example at Heaton Park and Whitefield Golf Course.
- Brooks drain along slopes into rivers or small reservoirs in valley bottoms. There are numerous small ponds.

- Soils are typically sand or silty loams to clayey loam.

### **Land use and field patterns**

- Mixed farmland, with arable cultivation on gentler slopes and pasture on steeper land, located in between small wooded cloughs.
- Regular, medium to large scale fields enclosed by a mix of hedgerows, often gapped and post and wire fencing. Fields are of post-medieval (e.g. east and west of Philips Park), 19th or 20th century origin.
- Some of the former estate landscapes are now public parks (including parts of Country Parks / Woodland Parks), many of which have golf courses, e.g. Heaton Park (Prestwich), Whitefield/Stand (Bury).

### **Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover**

- Streams, ponds and lakes provide biodiversity value, many locally designated as part of Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) e.g. lakes at Heaton Park (Prestwich) and Philips Park
- Landscape structure provided by broadleaved estate woodland and semi-natural woodland cloughs, also comprising Local Nature Reserves (LNR), e.g. Philips Park.
- Small areas of Ancient Woodland are linked with estate landscapes, while extensive blocks of plantation woodland, planted as structure planting, are found along motorways.

### **Archaeology and cultural heritage**

- 16th to 19th century estates associated with halls and houses, with open parkland, plantation woodland and small lakes, the best preserved of which are Registered Parks and Gardens (Grade II Heaton Park with its Grade I listed hall).
- Conservation Areas at St. Mary's, Prestwich in Bury. Other areas have clusters of Listed Buildings (mainly Grade II and II\*, some Grade I) mainly associated with former halls and houses, some of which are now hotels.

### **Settlement, road pattern and rights of way**

- Traditional farm buildings found along straight to gently winding country lanes, some following ridgelines, and often demarcated by hedgerows.
- Many parts of the landscape are dissected by, or bordering, motorways, e.g. the M60 at Prestwich/Whitefield.
- A network of public footpaths tends to follow country lanes and field boundaries.

### **Views and perceptual qualities**

- Extensive views from hill tops and ridges, e.g. north / north-east to Rivington in the West Pennines, south from Heaton Park across Greater Manchester.
- The ridges within the LCA form skylines in views from neighbouring valleys and urban / suburban areas.
- Motorway corridors are audibly and visually dominant in some areas, e.g. Prestwich, reducing the sense of tranquillity in these locations
- A sense of naturalness and tranquillity can be experienced in parkland and woodland areas, often associated with small water bodies, away from settlement and transport corridors.

### **LCA 26: Prettywood, Pilsworth and Unsworth Moss (LCT Mosslands and Lowland Farmland), (\*LCT Reclaimed land / wetlands)**

#### **Topography, geology and drainage**

- Landform generally flat to gently undulating. It rises to over 100m in places including on the edge of Unsworth (Bury) and to between 120m and 165m AOD, e.g. Prettywood (Rochdale). There are some locally distinctive artificial landforms as a result of past mineral extraction and landfill, e.g. Pilsworth.
- Floodplain landscape, often poorly drained, with numerous brooks, occasional small reservoirs and a large number of ponds, flashes and ditches.
- Soil quality is variable; restored agricultural land typically has thin, sandy, poorly drained soils.

#### **Land use and field patterns**

- Network of lowland wetland habitats and open water bodies surrounded by a matrix of mixed farmland (pasture and cereal crops). Some recreational provision including golf courses (e.g. Pike Fold Golf Club).
- Areas of lowland farmland have a pattern of medium to large scale fields, generally defined by gappy hedgerows, with few hedgerow trees. Fields are of post-medieval, 18th, 19th or 20th century origin.

#### **Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover**

- In lowland farmland areas there are small pockets of woodland, either on small steep-sided valleys, along motorway edges or associated with settlement edges.
- Farmland is drained by narrow brooks (e.g. Castle Brook, Whittle Brook), which contribute to the network of wetland habitats within the landscape.

### **Archaeology and cultural heritage**

- A landscape profoundly influenced by its industrial past, which includes surface coal mining, sand and clay extraction, providing a sense of time-depth.

### **Settlement, road pattern and rights of way**

- In lowland farmland areas, settlement comprises small villages along country lanes, and scattered farmhouses. Dense surrounding urban and large scale industrial development provides sharply defined boundaries to the LCA, forming the skyline in some views.
- Parts of the landscape are influenced by large scale industrial and commercial development, e.g. large scale commercial development at Heywood (Rochdale), housing, motorway corridors and railway lines.
- There is also evidence of past mineral and extractive industries.

### **Views and perceptual qualities**

- Views tend to be internal due to the flat or gently undulating, low-lying nature of the land, with surrounding development often forming the backdrop. Overhead lines form prominent vertical elements above the skyline e.g. south of M60 J18.
- Some distant views from more open areas of farmland e.g. from the Pike Fold Golf Course and Prettywood north towards the West Pennines at Knowle Hill, north of Bury.
- Road, motorway corridors and railway lines bisect the landscape, often on raised embankments.
- Motorways are audibly and visually dominant in some areas, reducing tranquillity.
- Areas are often overlooked by surrounding urban and industrial areas, particularly from higher ground.
- There is also evidence of past mineral and extractive industries.
- A network of public footpaths mainly follows tracks and lanes, occasionally crossing fields

## **LCA 27: Simister, Slattocks and Healds Green**

### **Topography, geology and drainage**

- Rolling landscape with elevation ranging between 30 and 250m AOD.
- Landform drained by a network of streams and ponds (of local ecological value) throughout.

### **Land use and field patterns**

- Pastoral land characterised by small and medium sized fields, forming various patterns from rectilinear to distinctive web shaped originating from Parliamentary enclosure.
- Flatter, more fertile floodplain areas give rise to a mix of pasture and arable cultivation.
- Field boundaries comprise often gappy, species-poor hedgerows with occasional established clumps of hedgerow trees. Post and wire fencing replaces hedges in many locations.
- Frequent recreational land uses with sports fields and golf courses located close to the urban edge, e.g. Manchester Golf Course. The manicured lush greens of the courses contrast sharply with areas of semi-improved grazing land.
- The open farmland contrasts strongly with adjoining residential and industrial urban areas.

### **Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover**

- Open landscape with sparse woodland cover generally limited to isolated plantation woodland. A grouped areas of ancient woodland remain north of Middleton.
- Established clumps of hawthorn and dog rose line some of the field boundaries and highways, with some incorporating mature broadleaved trees.

### **Archaeology and cultural heritage**

- The Trans-Pennine railway, dismantled railway routes and canals serve as a reminder of the area's industrial past.
- Birch Village Conservation Area. Grade II Listed Buildings sparsely scattered throughout.

### **Settlement, road pattern and rights of way**

- Generally, a dispersed pattern of scattered farmsteads and individual dwellings constructed of locally sourced gritstone. Occasional small settlements are linked by local roads and winding country lanes.
- In some areas settlement takes the form of 20th century ribbon development strung along roads.
- Some industrial development and distribution parks are also located close to major roads, e.g. Birch Industrial Park.
- A network of major road and rail routes, including the M62, and A627(M) motorways, form dominant features with extensive cuttings, embankments, bridges and junctions.



- Numerous rights of way and cycle routes permeate the landscape, linking to the surrounding urban areas.

### **Views and perceptual qualities**

- Views within the floodplains are typically restricted by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and development, creating a more enclosed landscape with pockets of seclusion and relative tranquillity.
- Transport corridors and pylon lines are very apparent, with the lack of tree cover.

## **TCA Prestwich, Whitefield, Radcliffe and Unsworth Residential**

### **Topography, geology and drainage**

- Landform ranges between 80m and 110m AOD with very gradual changes between levels.
- Waterbodies include the River Roch, River Irwell which define the northern edge of the TCA, and also the local Parr Brook which weaves through Unsworth.
- The underlying solid geology is carboniferous sandstones of the Millstone Grit and the Pennine Coal Measures of Greater Manchester.

### **Land use and development pattern**

- Settlement pattern is dominated by mixture of Victorian terraces and post-war suburban estates.
- The post war- suburban estates are the dominant housing type, although there is a wide variety of styles and sizes.
- Industrial and commercial buildings are clustered together and noticeable for the difference in scale and usually the modern building style.

### **Archaeology and cultural heritage**

- Buildings often use a local material palette of red brick and Millstone Grit.
- The area contains three conservation areas and numerous listed buildings that are mostly concentrated within the conservation areas. The Grade I listed Church of All Saints, Stand and the Parish Church of St Mary are notable heritage features.
- Local landmarks include the Whitefield Methodist Church, Church of All Saints in Stand and the Greater Manchester Police, Sedgley Park Training Centre.

### **Road pattern, recreational space and rights of way**

- Residential housing creates a notably dense pattern of residential streets linking to the surrounding complex major road network. The major road network, including A58 Bury New Road and the M60 and M66 have heavily influenced the development pattern.
- Open spaces include Thatch leach park and Fusiliers Meadow, playing fields, gardens, civic spaces, cemeteries, churchyards and occasional golf courses.

### **Views and perceptual qualities**

- Views within urban areas are generally limited by the density of surrounding development, creating a more enclosed landscape with more open areas provided by public open spaces.
- High levels of disturbance from major transport routes, including the A56 Bury New Road, Metrolink, M60 and M66 numbering.

### 1.3 Landscape and townscape sensitivity assessment

1.3.1 Table 1.1 provides an assessment of LCA and TCA sensitivity by identifying the key characteristics of value within each LCA and TCA and the susceptibility of each LCA and TCA to the type of change that would occur due to the Scheme.

**Table 1.1 Landscape and townscape sensitivity tables**

Landscape/townscape receptor	Value and characteristics	Susceptibility and characteristics	Sensitivity and justification
<p>LCA 19: Heaton, Prestwich, Whitefield and Stand Parklands</p>	<p>Value: High</p> <p>Grade II listed Heaton Park Registered Park and Garden, including the Grade I listed Heaton Hall. The surrounding mature parkland woodland has limited the influence of the nearby motorway network. The setting of Heaton Park Registered Park and Garden is highly susceptible to large-scale development of this type.</p> <p>Fully located within green belt. The aim of green belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Openness of the green belt would have a high susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>Some of the former estate landscapes are now public parks (including parts of Country Parks / Woodland Parks), many of which have golf courses, e.g. Heaton Park (Prestwich), Whitefield/Stand (Bury). Parks and recreational spaces are highly susceptible to large-scale development of this type.</p> <p>Ecological features e.g. SBIs, LNRs, Ancient Woodland, distinctive landscape features e.g. woodland, water courses and ponds provide ecological value and would be difficult to replace. These features are highly susceptible to large-scale development of this type.</p> <p>A landscape that is traversed by the M60 although its influence is limited by linear belts of trees within the highway corridor, broadleaved estate woodland and semi-natural woodland cloughs. Woodland and landscape features would have a medium susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>Variable sense of enclosure and with some intervisibility with adjacent landscapes and would have a medium susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>Sense of openness and tranquility would be susceptible to development in places.</p>	<p>Susceptibility: Medium</p> <p>A landscape that has limited ability to accommodate the types of change resulting from the Scheme without incurring substantial loss.</p>	<p>Sensitivity: High</p> <p>High sensitivity reflects the national recognition of Heaton Park Registered Park and Garden, listed buildings and conservation areas, country parks and ancient woodland within the LCA. High sensitivity also reflects the contribution valued features to local landscape quality and sense of place, and also the limited ability to accommodate the Scheme due to the susceptibility those features described above to the development. The Order Limits adjoin the boundary with Heaton Park along a short section in the vicinity of the M60.</p>
<p>LCA 26: Prettywood, Pilsworth and Unsworth Moss</p>	<p>Value: Medium</p> <p>Fully located within green belt. The aim of green belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Therefore, openness of the green belt would have a high susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>Partially located within the locally designated Special Landscape Area (SLA) (Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997) Policy EN9/1). The policy's primary aim is to protect and enhance the character of areas where the landscape is of high quality and help safeguard the pleasant environment of the area. The SLA is already influenced by the adjacent M62, M66 and industrial development resulting in a medium susceptibility to large scale-development.</p> <p>Low lying and enclosed landscape with little intervisibility with adjacent landscapes. Adjacent urban development, and major roads and rail routes adversely influence rural characteristics resulting in a moderate susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>Some distinctive landscape features (e.g. woodland, wetlands, flashes) provide ecological value and would be difficult to replace if affected.</p> <p>A strong sense of time-depth from its industrial past, although listed buildings are limited.</p> <p>Many discordant features, including the M60, M66 and M62 motorways, industrial and commercial development and pylons are discordant features. Presence of landfills and mining extraction.</p> <p>Low sense of tranquility and remoteness would be more accommodating of development.</p>	<p>Susceptibility: Low</p> <p>A landscape that is more tolerant of the type of change resulting from the Scheme and has some ability to accommodate the types of change resulting from the Scheme without undue harm.</p>	<p>Sensitivity: Medium</p> <p>Medium sensitivity reflects that there is no national recognition of these landscapes, with the exception of heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas, designated sites including Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, SBIs and LNRs, within the study area. Medium sensitivity also reflects the ability to accommodate the nature of the Scheme to some extent due to presence of the existing motorway network and other existing development within the landscape.</p> <p>The SLA is located entirely within LCA 26: Prettywood, Pilsworth and Unsworth Moss. The policy notes that it is a landscape of high quality, and the policy is designed to help safeguard the pleasant environment of the area. However, over time, the SLA has been influenced by expanding adjacent industrial development including the Heywood Distribution Park, Birch Industrial Park</p>

Landscape/townscape receptor	Value and characteristics	Susceptibility and characteristics	Sensitivity and justification
			and the Viridor Pilsworth South Landfill. The motorway corridor also has an influence on the special qualities of the SLA.
LCA 27: Simister, Slattocks and Healds Green	<p>Value: Medium</p> <p>Mostly located within green belt. The aim of green belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Therefore, openness of the green belt would have a high susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>Generally lower lying and enclosed landscape with little intervisibility with adjacent landscapes. Adjacent urban development, and major roads adversely influence rural characteristics resulting in a moderate susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>Open and flat, predominantly pastoral landscape with few distinctive landscape features. Woodland cover is sparse.</p> <p>A limited sense of time-depth and listed buildings are few.</p> <p>Many discordant features, including the M62 motorway and pylons are discordant features.</p>	<p>Susceptibility: Medium</p> <p>A landscape that is more tolerant of the type of change resulting from the Scheme and has some ability to accommodate the types of change resulting from the Scheme without undue harm.</p> <p>Occasional pockets of tranquility away from development and motorway corridors, otherwise a low sense of tranquility and would be more accommodating of development.</p>	<p>Sensitivity: Medium</p> <p>Medium sensitivity reflects that there is no national recognition of these landscapes, with the exception of heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas, designated sites including Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, SBIs and LNRs, within the study area. Medium sensitivity also reflects the ability to accommodate the nature of the Scheme to some extent due to presence of the existing motorway network and other existing development within the landscape. The motorway corridor also has an influence on the special qualities of the SLA.</p>
TCA Prestwich, Whitefield, Radcliffe and Unsworth Residential	<p>Value: Medium</p> <p>Generally lower lying and enclosed townscape with intervisibility with adjacent landscapes only between edges of character areas.</p> <p>The adjacent major road network adversely influences townscape characteristics resulting in a moderate susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>A dense, homogenous area of development dominated by 20th century residential housing estates and a limited sense of place resulting in a moderate susceptibility to large-scale development.</p> <p>Cultural assets are few and their influence is limited by the density of modern development. Grade listed building are mostly located within the three conservation areas resulting in a limited sense of time-depth.</p> <p>Many discordant features, including the M60, M66 A56 Bury New Road and lines of pylons.</p> <p>High levels of disturbance from major transport routes, including the M60 and M66.</p>	<p>Susceptibility: Low</p> <p>A landscape that is more tolerant of the type of change resulting from the Scheme and has some ability to accommodate the types of change resulting from the Scheme without undue harm.</p> <p>The townscape has a low sense of tranquility and would be more accommodating of development.</p>	<p>Sensitivity: Low</p> <p>Townscape characteristics are of medium value with ability to accommodate the type of change as the existing motorway already has an influence on the TCA. More highly valued features including Conservation Areas, public open spaces and townscape pattern would be unaffected.</p>

## Acronyms and initialisms

Acronym	Term
AOD	Above ordnance datum
GMCA	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LNR	Local Nature Reserves
SBI	Sites of Biological Importance
SLA	Special Landscape Area
TCA	Townscape Character Area

## Glossary

Term	Definition
Characteristics	Elements or combination of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character. DMRB LA 107
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. European Landscape Convention 2000
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. GLVIA3
Landscape character area	Single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of particular landscape type. GLVIA3
LCTs - Landscape Character Types	Distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. These are generic in nature, in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share similar characteristics
Landscape receptors	Defined aspect of the landscape resource that potentially could be affected by the Scheme. GLVIA3
Landscape sensitivity	Applied to specific landscape receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific development and the value related to the receptor LVIA: Landscape and Visual Assessment. GLVIA3
Sensitivity	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development, and the value related to the receptor. GLVIA3

Term	Definition
Susceptibility	The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specified development without negative consequences. GLVIA3
Townscape	The landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and between buildings and open spaces. GLVIA3
Tranquil areas	Places which are sufficiently away from visual or noise intrusion of development or traffic to be considered unspoilt by urban influences
Value	Relative value or importance of a landscape's quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquility, or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues. GLVIA3

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