



## Landscape and Visual Appraisal Baseline

Land at Stakehill  
Rochdale  
Greater Manchester

For: Russell LDP

Ref: M3284-LVA-20.07-01-V5





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## 1.0 Introduction

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- 1.1 Barnes Walker Ltd has prepared this Landscape and Visual Baseline on behalf of Russell LDP. The site provides the opportunity to extend the existing Stakehill Industrial Estate and as such, forms a potential allocated site within the draft Greater Manchester Strategic Framework (GMSF).
- 1.2 This Landscape and Visual Baseline has been undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute. It establishes the nature of the site and the surrounding landscape, describes relevant planning policy, confirms any relevant landscape character assessments, acknowledges any heritage assets and ascertains landscape values before confirming the key visual receptors.
- 1.3 It also provides an overview of the potential landscape and visual effects associated with extending the existing Stakehill Industrial Estate.
- 1.4 In order to prepare this document, a desk top study and a subsequent site based survey and assessment exercise were undertaken.
- 1.5 Anticipated landscape effects are the effects which may be generated by the proposed development on the landscape resource, which include its physical features, character, fabric and the quality of the landscape. These could include direct, physical effects upon landscape elements, such as the loss of trees and/or tangible effects to an existing landscape character.
- 1.6 Visual effects are the predicted changes to existing views and the associated effect of those changes on the relevant visual receptors. Typically, the various visual receptor groups may comprise the residents of properties, the users of Public Rights of Way, the users of recreational facilities, pedestrians, and users of a variety of forms of transport such as road users or rail passengers.

## 1.0 Introduction

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- 1.7 This Landscape and Visual Baseline has been undertaken with reference to, and using aspects of, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition 2013), by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 1.8 The location and context of the site is described by Figure 1.

1.0 Introduction



Fig 1 Aerial Photograph - Site Location

## 2.0 Planning Policy

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### National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) document has replaced the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's). The NPPF distils the content of these documents into a single comprehensive and concise document and now represents relevant planning policy at a national level.
- 2.2 Sections 2 and 3 of the NPPF (2019) sets out the underlying principles of sustainable development that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. It sets out 3no. over-arching economic, social and environmental objectives to achieve sustainable development. The environmental objective is considered to be relevant to the potential landscape and visual effects associated with the development proposals.
- 2.3 The following sections are considered to be of relevance and contain further detail to inform how those principles are to be delivered:
- NPPF Section 12: Achieving well-designed places;
  - NPPF Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land
  - NPPF Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment;
  - NPPF Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

### Local Planning Policy

#### Rochdale Core Strategy

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2.4 The following Core Strategy Policies have been identified as being of relevance to landscape matters – to avoid including the entire policy text, relevant extracts of the various policies have been set out below:

2.5 SO1 – Delivering a More Prosperous Economy

2.6 E4 – Managing the Release of Land to Meet Future Employment Needs

The release and development of additional employment land outside existing employment zones or sites currently in employment use will be allowed or included within a subsequent Allocations Development Plan Document if:

e. The development of employment uses on the site does not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of local residents; and

g. The site can accommodate development without an unacceptable impact on landscape, biodiversity or wider green infrastructure value.

In considering proposals or identifying sites for development the following sequential approach will be applied:

1. Brownfield sites within the urban area; then

2. Greenfield sites within the urban area; then

3. Protected Open Land; and then

4. Green Belt.

2.7 SO3 – Improving Design, Image and Quality of Place

2.8 Policy P2 – Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage

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1. We will protect and enhance the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. We will do this by:

- a. Requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the borough, e.g. river valleys and the Pennine landscape;
- b. Requiring new development to take opportunities to protect and open up important views of hills and valleys which are part of the borough's unique character;

2. We will protect the borough's heritage by:

- a. Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and nonstatutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:

- vi. The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.

### 2.9 Policy P3 – Improving Design of New Development

We will require all new developments, including associated landscaping, regardless of location in the borough, to adhere to high standards of design. The following design principles should be adhered to wherever relevant:

- Enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general;



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- Minimise impact upon the environment;
- Reduce the monotony and visual impact of car parking areas by using substantial and well integrated landscaping.

All developments should have regard to the principles outlined in the following documents (or equivalent documents which replace them), which set out in detail the Council's design expectations for new development:

- Urban Design Guides SPDs, September 2007

### 2.10 SO4 – Promoting a Greener Environment

### 2.11 Policy G4 – Protecting Green Belt Land

We will continue to protect from development the following areas of Green Belt:

- South of the borough: the urban fringe countryside in the south where its primary role will be to prevent neighbouring towns from merging (i.e. land between the towns of Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood and between those and towns outside the borough);

Development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed not to be inappropriate by national planning policies unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

We will encourage the continued operation of major developed sites in the Green Belt and support limited infilling and redevelopment where this maintains beneficial uses and does not harm the Green Belt.

### 2.12 Policy G6 – Enhancing Green Infrastructure

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We will sustain and enhance a green network to support growth and regeneration in the borough and provide a high quality environment that meets the needs of our community and visitors to the borough. We will protect and improve green spaces and water bodies and ensure that their value to sustainable development and regeneration is maximised. Our priorities are to improve opportunities for recreation in urban areas and the countryside, improve opportunities for healthy lifestyles, and to help manage and respond to environmental risks such as flooding and the impacts of climate change. We will also ensure that the network supports the sustainable growth of the Greater Manchester city region and links with a wider Greater Manchester strategic green infrastructure network.

We will protect, improve and create green infrastructure to help deliver strategic sustainable development priorities and meet local needs in the following locations:

7. Countryside around towns where the focus will be on reclaiming derelict land, woodland planting and improvement, creating and improving paths and cycle networks to link town and country, promoting access to nature, improving flood risk management and maintaining a strong green belt.

We will expect development proposals and other proposals affecting green infrastructure to:

- a. be consistent with the above focus for green infrastructure and the wider than local value that green infrastructure can have;
- b. have regard to local landscape character and contribute to its conservation or enhancement;

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c. avoid the loss of existing urban greenspace or features e.g. trees unless suitable alternative provision is made, it has limited value, and its development or change of use will help to meet other sustainability or local regeneration objectives;

h. protect ancient woodlands and hedgerows, support new woodland and tree planting in new developments, and replace removed trees from a site at a ratio of 2:1.

### 2.13 Policy G7 – Increasing the Value of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

We will ensure that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection.

Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, creating new sites and features of interest and improving opportunities for public enjoyment will be supported. No development should result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity interest in the borough and overall development in the borough should result in a net gain.

### 2.14 Policy DM1 – General Development Requirements

All development proposals, including changes of use of land and buildings, extensions and alterations, will be expected to demonstrate that they:

a. Are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area;

b. Are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users;

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- c. Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy;
- d. Mitigate against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation or inadequate access, where such mitigation is identified as being necessary;
- j. Incorporate, where appropriate, high quality landscape schemes;

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (saved policies)

### 2.15 G/D/1 – Defined Urban Area

The boundary of the urban area is defined on the proposals map. Outside this area, only development that is compatible with the policies in this chapter will be acceptable.

### 2.16 G/D/2 – Green Belt

The boundary of the urban area is defined on the proposals map. Outside this area, only development that is compatible with the policies in this chapter will be acceptable.

### 2.17 EC/2 Primary Employment Zones

Within Primary Employment Zones development and change of use, for industrial, business and warehouse uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) will be permitted where proposals:

- a) Are of an appropriate scale and character to the area;
- b) Will cause no unacceptable environmental or amenity problems in the

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employment area or adjoining areas ; and

c) Will cause no unacceptable traffic problems and have adequate on-site provision for parking, servicing and manoeuvring.

Oldham Local Development Framework

2.18 The following LDF Policies have been identified as being of relevance to landscape matters – to avoid including the entire policy text, relevant extracts of the various policies have been set out below:

LDF Objectives

- 2.19 SO4 – To improve and value the borough’s environment by:
- a. maintaining the positive features and characteristics that add to the borough’s local identity.
  - b. protecting, conserving and enhancing the character and quality of the borough’s landscapes and townscapes, its natural assets and heritage, green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity, and its built heritage and historic environment, including their wider settings.
  - c. ensuring development respects our rural and historic landscapes.
  - d. ensuring appropriate land management in the open countryside and Green Belt that has regard to the needs of the rural economy.
  - e. maintaining Green Belt boundaries, and permitting only appropriate developments.
  - f. identifying ‘Other Protected Open Land’ and ‘Land Reserved for Future

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Development`.

Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies

### 2.20 Policy 1 – Climate Change and Sustainable Development

When allocating sites and determining planning applications, the council will:

h. promote sustainable and high quality design and construction of development that respects Oldham's local character, distinctiveness and sense of place, and enhances the borough's image.

i. promote the prudent use and sustainable management of Oldham's natural and man-made resources, including land, soil, minerals, waste, air and water.

j. maintain the borough's Green Belt, and protect locally designated `Other Protected Open Land` and `Land Reserved for Future Development`.

k. ensure development respects Oldham's natural, built and historic environments, Green Infrastructure, biodiversity (including the environmental value of brownfield sites), geodiversity and landscapes, and their settings.

### 2.21 Policy 6 - Green Infrastructure

The borough has a great, rich and vast built and natural environment. Features include a range of nature conservation areas, the recently restored Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow Canals, an extensive rights of way network and our wide range of open spaces such as the award-winning Alexandra Park. We will value our local natural, built and historic environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes, and their wider settings. The council will identify, protect, conserve and enhance this multi-functional Green

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Infrastructure network in the borough and maximise the benefits associated with Green Infrastructure, such as health and climate change adaptation.

When allocating sites and determining planning applications, the council will have regard to international, national, Greater Manchester and local guidance and policies, including:

- North West Green Infrastructure Guide.
- Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework.
- Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study.
- Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment, where appropriate.
- Oldham Landscape Character Assessment.

Development proposals, where appropriate, must:

- a. promote and enhance the borough's Green Infrastructure network. This currently consists of nature conservation sites, strategic recreation routes, green corridors and links, canals and open spaces which are defined below; and
- b. make a positive contribution to Green Infrastructure assets and its functions in priority areas identified in the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework and elsewhere where there are deficiencies in quantity, quality, accessibility and functionality;
- f. have regard to historic landscape as identified in the Greater Manchester and

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Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study; and

g. enhance and reinforce distinctive elements of the borough's landscapes and have regard to the Oldham Landscape Character Assessment;

### 2.22 Policy 9 – Local Environment

Local Environmental Quality and Amenity

a. The council will protect and improve local environmental quality and amenity by ensuring development:

iii. does not cause significant harm to the amenity of the occupants and future occupants of the development or to existing and future neighbouring occupants or users through impacts on privacy, safety and security, noise, pollution, the visual appearance of an area, access to daylight or other nuisances; and

iv. does not have a significant, adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, including local landscape and townscape;

### 2.23 Policy 20 – Design

Development proposals must meet the following design principles, where appropriate:

a. Local Character (including a character appraisal as appropriate).

### 2.24 Policy 21 – Protecting Natural Environmental Assets

New development and growth pressures must be balanced by protecting, conserving and enhancing our local natural environments, Green Infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes to ensure a high quality of life is



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sustained. The council will value, protect, conserve and enhance the local natural environment and its functions and provide new and enhanced Green Infrastructure.

When allocating sites and determining planning applications, the council will have regard to international, national (including Planning Policy Statement 9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation', PPS9) and local guidance and policies (including Policy 6 on Green Infrastructure and the findings of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, HRA).

Development proposals must:

- a. protect and maximise opportunities for Green Infrastructure at or near to the site.
- b. protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, designated nature conservation sites, legally protected species and their habitats and Local Nature Reserves. The hierarchy for site protection is:
  - i. Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
  - ii. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
  - iii. Sites of Biological Importance (SBI's); and
  - iv. Local Nature Reserves and other non-designated sites containing substantive nature conservation value of local significance.

In exceptional circumstances where development is unavoidable and cannot be accommodated elsewhere:

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vi. the development must set out how the proposals will protect and enhance the nature conservation, including how any harm will be minimised effectively through design and mitigation measures.

c. maintain, extend or link existing green corridors and links, including strategic recreational routes, where appropriate.

d. have regard to the principal landscape objective for the relevant landscape character area and type found within the Oldham Landscape Character Assessment. Development must enhance the visual amenity of the area, including Green Belt land, through conserving and reinforcing the positive aspects and distinctiveness of the surrounding landscape character.

### 2.25 Policy 21 – Protecting Natural Environmental Assets

Oldham has a rich historic environment with many significant and valuable features, structures and characteristics. The council will protect, conserve and enhance these heritage assets and their settings which adds to the borough's sense of place and identity.

Development proposals must have regard to:

- Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study.

### 2.26 Policy 22 – Protecting Open Land

The majority of the borough's open land is designated Green Belt. The main purpose of the Green Belt is to keep land permanently open. Pressure for development in the Green Belt is generally small-scale developments such as

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the re-use of agricultural buildings. The borough also has locally protected open countryside called 'Other Protected Open Land' (OPOL) which aims to preserve the distinctiveness of an area. Oldham also has a small amount of safeguarded land called 'Land Reserved for Future Development' (LRFD) which protects land for future development needs.

Oldham Unitary Development Plan (saved policies)

### 2.27 UDP Policy D1.5

In determining a planning application for development of a site containing existing trees, or adjoining a site containing trees, the Council will only permit a proposal where:

a. the development is designed, insofar as is reasonably practicable, to maximise the retention and continued health of the trees in question;

In those cases where it is agreed that trees will be lost to accommodate the development, adequate replacement planting will be required as a condition of planning permission for the development. Where trees are to be lost to development, the Council will require, as a minimum, replacement at a ratio of three new native trees for each mature or semi-mature tree lost. Where possible the replacement trees should be accommodated on or immediately adjoining the development site.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Oldham and Rochdale Urban Design Guide

### 2.28 The Boroughs of Rochdale and Oldham have adopted the series of urban

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design guides as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). This Guide will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. Its aim is to provide clear guidance to everyone involved in development (including architects, designers, public and private sector developers, house builders and engineers) on the quality of design expected by both Boroughs. The Guide will also be used by local authority officers to help assess the quality of planning applications and incorporates a Residential Design Guide, a Public Realm Design Guide and the Design and Planning Process: Guide to Good Practice.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

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### The Site

- 3.1 The site comprises a large tract of agricultural land (circa. 67ha) located within the Green Belt to the south/south-east of Stakehill Industrial Estate.
- 3.2 The site predominantly comprises small, medium and large irregular pastoral fields of improved grassland. The internal field boundaries within the site include a mixture of post and wire fencing and/or mature native species hedgerow (predominantly Hawthorn), with a number of native species field boundary trees and individual trees within fields of varying size and maturity. The hedgerows are managed and intact in some locations, whereas in other instances an apparent lack of management has given rise to overgrown and gappy hedgerows.
- 3.3 A number of natural and man-made ponds are located in various areas throughout the site, mostly attributed to the undulating landform. An area of wet meadow scrubland is also located to the north east of the site, close to the A627(M).
- 3.4 Two farmsteads are located within the site - Black Pits Farm and Acres Farm. These comprise small scale farmyards with some larger residential properties, hardstanding and a small number of barns and storage buildings. There is a noticeable increase in tree and hedgerow planting around the boundaries of these properties, which filters their visibility from the south, although they remain visible from the north.

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Existing farm buildings and open fields within the application site

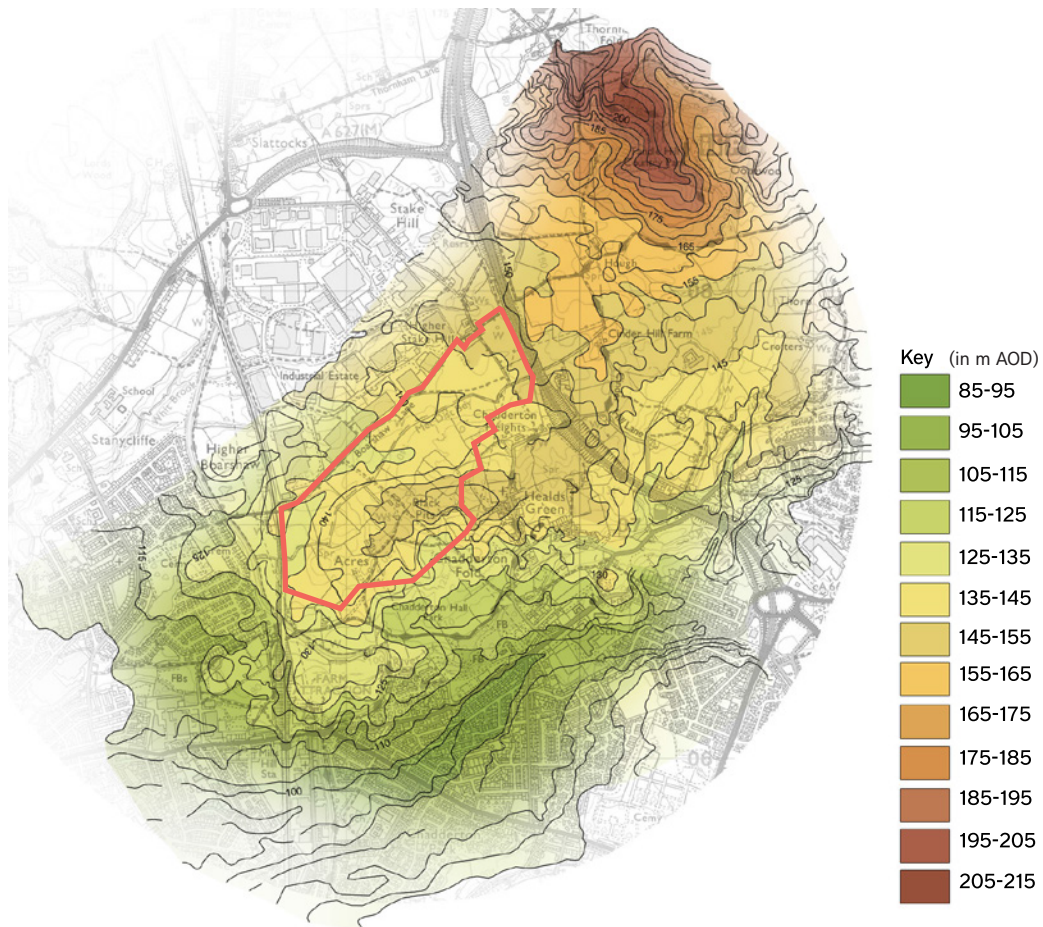


Undulating landform to the north of the application site

- 3.5 The landform within the site boundary and within the wider study area undulates significantly, with an overall rise towards higher ground to the north/north-west and a general fall to the south-west. Within the site, the landform undulates between fields with an overall fall from the higher north-east end of the site, to a low point at the south-western end of the site. This low point is occupied by a small watercourse that passes beneath the railway which delineates the site's western extent. In some areas the undulations are particularly localised, with the landform rising and falling a number of metres over relatively short distances.

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Topographical plan of the site and the wider study area

- 3.6 A Public Right of Way (Boarshaw Lane, comprising a restricted byway/footpaths Middleton 30, 31 and 37) tracks along the northern boundary of the site, thus separating it from Stakehill Industrial Estate to the north. The footpath begins at its junction with the Rochdale Canal towpath at the end of Boarshaw Road to the west of the site and continues to the north-east to pass beneath the A627(M), before heading towards Tandle Hill and Royton. Adjacent to the site, this route is effectively contained by woodland and associated understorey to the north (between the footpath and Stakehill Industrial Estate), whereas to the south, the boundaries comprise a mixture of post and wire fencing, native species

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hedgerow and native species understorey such bramble, nettle etc with a small number of mature trees scattered individually along the length of the boundary. The landform rises and falls along the length of the footpaths on both sides between the site and Stakehill Industrial Estate.

- 3.7 The north-eastern site boundary is considerably shorter in length and adjoins the A627(M). The highway is elevated slightly above the site, with the landform in this location rising to meet the highway. A mature belt of densely planted native species trees visually and physically separates the highway from the site, however this diminishes towards the south-eastern corner of the site, thus increasing levels of intervisibility between the site and the motorway corridor.
- 3.8 The southern boundary of the site is irregular and extends over a similar distance to the north-western site boundary. For the most part the southern boundary of the site follows existing field boundary lines and as such comprises a mixture of post and wire fencing, native species hedgerows and scattered blocks of native species trees, along with individual boundary trees. In some instances the boundary crosses directly through existing fields and across Public Rights of Way and as such the boundary becomes open and undefined on the ground.



Railway line and pylons along the south-western site boundary



Mature and overgrown hedgerows within the application site



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Undulating landform and ponds within the site



Changing landform along the northern site boundary

- 3.9 The western boundary of the site is formed by the railway line that travels north to south. At the north-western corner of the site, the railway sits in a shallow cut as it passes below the footpath on Boarshaw Lane via an overbridge. To the south however, it becomes slightly elevated above the site on a section of embankment that enables it to pass over the Rochdale Canal. Comprising post and wire fencing with a small number of mature native species trees scattered along its length, the western site boundary is relatively open.

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Views of the urban edge across the open landscape near Chadderton Fold / Healds Green



Expansive view across the wider study area from Tandle Hill

### The Surrounding Landscape

- 3.10 The site is situated within a large tract of open Green Belt land to the east of the urban edge of Middleton (circa 100m+ to the west), to the north of the urban edge of Chadderton (circa 420m+ to the south) and to the immediate south of Stakehill Industrial Estate.
- 3.11 The Green Belt land is part of a larger swathe of Green Belt that extends northwards from the site and beyond Stakehill Industrial Estate (which is outside the Green Belt) and separates Middleton, Chadderton and Royton and Rochdale circa 3km to the north.
- 3.12 The Rochdale Canal is located between circa 100m and 220m to the south-west of the site and travels in a north to south direction. Within the study area, the setting of the canal is a mixture of residential urban edge to the south and west, overlooked by the rear gardens of adjoining properties, with open pastoral landscape to the north and east.
- 3.13 The urban edges of Middleton and Chadderton establish the southern periphery of the Green Belt in a sinuous shape, with the interface between Green Belt and

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urban form varying in different locations. To the west, the interface comprises residential properties backing onto the Rochdale Canal, with scattered trees to the west of the canal and short sections of hedgerow, post and wire fencing and the open pastoral landscape to the east of the canal. To the south, the urban edge of Chadderton becomes fragmented and is partially formed by the River Irk and Chadderton Hall Park, however further to the north the built form becomes scattered across the landscape with a series of farmsteads and residential properties located along narrow lanes, such as Chadderton Heights Farm and Cinder Hill Farm, and as such the urban edge less defined. To the north-east, the interface between the residential properties on the urban edge of Royton and the Green Belt comprises substantial blocks of mature woodland, although some properties directly back on to the open landscape close to Oozewood Road near Tandle Hill.

- 3.14 The open Green Belt landscape between these urban edges is bisected by the A627(M) which runs parallel to the north-eastern boundary of the site and connects Chadderton and Oldham to the south-east to Rochdale in the north.
- 3.15 The landscape is characterised by a transition from the urban residential edge into a semi-rural landscape that is heavily influenced by the presence of the industrial estate and urbanising features such as the A627(M), electricity pylons and railway. The urban edge is often visible from publicly accessible locations towards the south of the study area, however this becomes less prevalent to the north, as views become restricted by the intervening landform and vegetation, and the influence of the industrial area and A627(M) becomes increasingly apparent.
- 3.16 Away from the urban edge, the landscape is predominantly characterised

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by open pastoral fields with relatively sparse tree planting, except for small clusters and groups of trees within fields and individual trees along hedgerow boundaries. The only significant areas of tree coverage and woodland planting within the wider landscape are located around Tandle Hill Country Park to the north and Chadderton park to the south, along with a significant number of trees along the Rochdale Canal Towpath and A627(M).

- 3.17 The open landscape within the study area undulates significantly, and as such contains a number of natural ponds and wet meadows formed within localised depressions in the landform. Tandle Hill Country Park is centred upon a local high point within the wider landscape, emphasised by the intervisibility of this area within most views from this elevated location. The undulating landscape also contributes to pockets of enclosure within the landscape, where in certain instances, views become restricted and the character becomes increasingly tranquil and rural with a reduced influence from the nearby urban edge, the motorway and Stakehill Industrial Estate.
- 3.18 Open views across the pastoral landscape are often experienced when travelling through the study area and possible from numerous publicly accessible locations, particularly along Public Rights of Way and from elevated vantage points, namely Tandle Hill to the north. However, as aforementioned, views often incorporate the urban edge, industrial estate, A627(M) or electricity pylons, thus enhancing the sense of a semi-rural/urban fringe landscape, rather than one that is wholly rural.
- 3.19 Stakehill Industrial Estate is a prominent feature within the study area and wider landscape. It is visible from public footpaths in close proximity and to the west, although dense woodland planting and changes in landform along

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the peripheries of the industrial estate filters views significantly from these locations. Further to the north-west, views from elevated ground on Tandle Hill in particular, are expensive and Stakehill Industrial Estate, with its large scale units are visually prominent within open views across the landscape. To the south however, the industrial estate is less prominent within the majority of views as the undulating landform and vegetation intervene and restrict visibility towards the north.

### Access and Circulation

- 3.20 Vehicular access to the site is limited and currently comprises the single track access roads to the existing farmsteads. This includes Hough Lane, which adjoins the north-western boundary of the site close to the A627(M) and continues to wind between field boundaries to the east of the motorway, towards the urban edge of Chadderton / Royton. The only other vehicular access comprises the bitmac surfaced single track road Chadderton Fold, which extends from Kiln Hill Lane off the B6195 at Chadderton Park to Black Pits Farm, and a further unsurfaced access track that extends southwards to Don Street, off Oldham Road in Middleton, from Acres Farm.
- 3.21 A significant number of Public Rights of Way form a legible and well used network across the wider landscape, with a number of these traversing the site including Middleton 38, and Chadderton 16, 17 and 18, which link between Middleton 31 and lead to the urban edge of Chadderton to the south, however Chadderton 17 has been blocked at Black Pits Farm as access through the farmyard appears to have been restricted. Towards the north of the site and close to the A627(M), the site is traversed by footpaths Middleton 34, 36, 42 and Chadderton 10 which lead towards Healds Green / Chadderton Fold.

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- 3.22 To the west and south of the site, the Rochdale Canal winds through the landscape and follows the urban edge of Middleton. The canal towpath within the study area also forms a Public Right of Way (Middleton 43 and 28).
- 3.23 To the south of the site, the Oldham Way LDWR /Chadderton 19 is generally contiguous with the urban edge of Chadderton and along the northern boundary of Chadderton Park. The route adjoins Kiln Lane and continues northwards, ascending the hillside along Healds Green (road), crossing over the A627(M) and continuing northwards along Cinder Hill Lane to Hough Farm and Tandle Hill. A number of footpaths link directly between this LDWR and the site, however there is no intervisibility between the LDWR and the site until the route begins to ascend Tandle Hill to the north, due to intervening vegetation, topography and the presence of the A627(M) which limits views from the north-east and east.
- 3.24 A number of other footpaths are located to the north around the peripheries of Stakehill Industrial Estate and throughout the wider landscape, including a wooded footpath travelling east to west directly through the industrial estate.

### Landscape Character Assessments

- 3.25 The diverse characteristics of our broader landscape have, in most cases, been ascertained through the process of landscape character assessment (LCA). LCA is a technique used to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of what gives England's landscape its character. Assessments for the landscape in the vicinity of the site have been carried out at national and county scales as follows:

#### National

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- 3.26 England has been divided into 8 regional volumes which comprise a total of 159 areas with similar landscape character, which are called National Character Areas (NCAs); previously known as Joint Character Areas (JCAs). The 'Character of England Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map' produced in 2005 by The Countryside Agency with support from English Heritage, was an update to a 1996 original. This map subdivides England into 159 NCAs providing a picture of the differences in landscape character at the national scale.
- 3.27 The site falls within Countryside Character Volume 2: North West and specifically NCA 54 – Manchester Pennine Fringe.
- 3.28 NCA 54 is a transitional zone between open moorlands of the Southern Pennines / Dark Peak (NCA 51) to the east and the conurbation. This area includes industrial settlements as such Bury, Bolton, Rochdale, Oldham, Dukinfield and Glossop and is characterised by deeply incised, steep valleys which are present as the landform transitions from moorland to urban area. The following characteristics have been extracted from this document as they are considered to be relevant to the site and its surroundings:-
- Elevated vantage points provide extensive views across the adjacent Manchester Conurbation NCA.
  - Field boundaries include dry 'gritstone' walls at higher elevations and hedgerows at lower elevations.
  - Historic trans-Pennine communication routes, especially railways and canals.
  - Much of the countryside is influenced by recreational use from adjacent urban areas and the diversification of farmland, giving the area a distinct

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urban fringe character.

- High population densities across a belt of industrial towns, with busy transport networks and motorways. Almost half of this NCA is classed as urban.

### Regional – Rochdale

3.29 A Landscape Character Assessment has not been prepared for the Rochdale Council Area.

### Regional – Oldham

3.30 In 2009, Oldham Council published its Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). It describes the evolution of the borough's rural landscape and assesses its special character, distinctiveness and qualities. It draws on both the natural and cultural features of the area and classifies 7 landscape areas that contain more detailed landscape types.

3.31 The southern sections of the site are located within Landscape Character Area 3 – Chadderton Rolling Hills (see Appendix 1 for extract) and its key characteristics are defined as follows:

- Rolling landscape character accentuated in parts by large field plots.
- A predominance of post and rail fencing.
- Small blocks of established broadleaf woodland. Tandle Hill Country Park. Numerous footpaths and bridleways cross the area.
- Pockets of rural settlement and victorian terraces populate the primary highway



## 3.0 Baseline Setting

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routes.

- A broken network of hedgerows and clumps of hedgerow trees.
- Wide panoramic views over Greater Manchester and the M62 motorway.
- Power lines and communication masts dominate the skyline in the western corner.
- Five Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) designated within the area.
- Lush green semi-improved grassland dominates.

3.32 The site is also located within Landscape Type 3a – Rolling Pasture Land and its key characteristics are defined as follows:

- Rolling pastoral landscape character accentuated in parts by large field plots and variety in landform.
- A predominance of post and rail fencing creates a loose undefined landscape character.
- Some dry stone walling present, but there is evidence that these boundaries are not being repaired or maintained.
- Small blocks of established broadleaf woodland exist and are possible remnants surviving the industrial revolution.
- Numerous footpaths and bridleways scattered across the area, some long distance routes, that link up with an extensive Public Rights of Way network.
- Evidence of farm diversification with the conversion of many agricultural

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

buildings to accommodate haulage and riding schools use.

- A broken network of hedgerows and clumps of hedgerow trees are present throughout the area situated along field boundaries and footpaths/bridleways.
- Wide panoramic views over the urban conurbation of Greater Manchester to the south west and the M62 to the north.
- Power lines and communication masts dominate the skyline in the western corner of this landscape type.
- Historic trans-pennine communication routes of rail and canal provide important cultural associations.

3.33 Furthermore the study area also includes an area of Landscape Type 3b – Rural Settlement (which covers the hamlet of Healds Green and Chadderton Fold) and its key characteristics are defined as follows:

- A distinct but sheltered rural settlement on the rising slopes at Chadderton Fold.
- Varied building styles, mainly detached well-presented properties, many with established vegetation and tree cover.
- Some gritstone walling associated with private dwellings and road boundaries provides a character more recognisable of the moorland fringe areas.
- Village church and small graveyard in secluded wooded grounds on border of Healds Green.
- Noticable character shift from settlement pattern typical of Chadderton area which is typically urban fringe.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

- Dispersed settlement pattern comprising scattered farmsteads (sometimes in fairly close proximity) and occasional short terraces of houses.
- Close associations with the River Irk and Chadderton Hall Park which collectively form a valuable leisure resource that also links up with the recently improved Rochdale Canal.

### Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment 2018

- 3.34 LUC was commissioned by Manchester City Council on behalf of itself and the other nine Greater Manchester local authorities in November 2017, to produce up-to-date landscape evidence to support preparation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.
- 3.35 Its main objective is to inform the overall development strategy and provide the basis for the future management and enhancement of the conurbation's natural capital, green infrastructure network and the provision of a positive strategy for the future Green Belt.
- 3.36 This document appears to place the site into the Urban Fringe Farmland LCT, specifically Landscape Character Area 27 – Simister, Slattocks and Heald Green and ascertains this land has a medium sensitivity to Commercial/Industrial Development (a copy of the relevant extract is contained within Appendix 2). The study identifies a local variance in the sensitivity of LCA 27 as follows:
- 3.37 *'Explanation for variance in sensitivity from overall LCT scores: The urban farmland between Heywood and Middleton is judged to have a moderate sensitivity to commercial/ industrial development (in addition to the housing scenario) as it lies adjacent to and contains existing large industrial development*

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

*(Birch Business Park and Stakehill Industrial & Distribution Park) and is crossed by large road infrastructure such as the M62 and A627(M) which have a strong influence, detracting from the rural qualities of the landscape. However, the more elevated land in the east of this LCA (around Thornfields Farm) would be more sensitive to development due to its visual prominence from areas to the west.'*

3.38 The study also provides further information regarding special landscape qualities and key features that would be sensitive to change. The following extracts are considered to be relevant to the site and study area:

- Locations of elevated, open character with some prominent rural skylines forming a backdrop to views from adjacent urban areas.
- Areas of complex, undulating landform cut by distinctive steep wooded cloughs.
- Locally important semi-natural habitats and networks, including pockets of ancient and riparian woodland (e.g. Hopwood Woodlands LNR), patches of dry heath and acid grassland, remnant semi-natural grasslands, ponds and flashes.
- Intact lengths of gritstone walls, hedgerows and tree clumps along field boundaries forming ecological networks and bringing definition to the 18th and 19th century and post-medieval field patterns.
- Industrial relicts, including disused railway lines, canals...
- Large areas defined by a sparse pattern of scattered stone-built farmsteads, individual properties and small settlements, linked by winding country lanes.
- Opportunities to access and enjoy the rural landscape, including the long distance footpaths (Rochdale Way, Rotary Way, Middlewich Way), cycle routes

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

and a strong public rights of way network crossing the farmland and emanating from adjacent urban areas.

- The LCT's strong visual connections with foothills and uplands of the West/South Pennines and Peak District National Park, which lie to the north and east of Greater Manchester.
- Pockets of relative remoteness and tranquillity, including in the lower-lying south where robust hedgerows and lines of trees provide enclosure; elevated points in the north and east creating a sense of exposure.
- The LCT's role as an immediate rural backdrop to development and its important function in separating discrete urban areas, preventing coalescence.

3.39 Finally, the study provides further 'Guidance and Opportunities for Future Development and Landscape Management/Enhancement. The following extracts are considered to be relevant to the site and study area:

- Avoid siting any development on the highly prominent, elevated and very sparsely settled land in the elevated north and east. Conserve open, undeveloped skylines.
- Utilise dips in the landform, including valley slopes, and existing tree/woodland cover to integrate new development into the landscape.
- Protect and where possible enhance semi-natural habitats and networks, including pockets of ancient and riparian woodland (e.g. Hopwood Woodlands LNR), patches of dry heath and acid grassland, remnant semi-natural grasslands, ponds and flashes.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

- Strengthen and restore the dry stone wall and hedgerow network in association with any new development, reflecting local characteristics (choice of stone and building style; hedgerow species and management regimes). Encourage the restoration of traditional boundaries where fencing is present.
- Ensure any new development does not dilute the strong field patterns associated with the landscape.
- Design-in the introduction of SuDS to any new development, addressing any changes in hydrology (and subsequent knock-on effects such as increased diffuse pollution from agricultural run-off). This landscape is part of the wider catchment of a number of Greater Manchester's main river valleys.
- Protect the pockets of tranquillity and relative remoteness associated with the landscape, and the role the LCT plays as a rural backdrop and buffer between discrete urban areas.
- Conserve key views and intervisibility with the South/West Pennines and Dark Peak foothills, upland fringes and open moorlands.

3.40 In addition to 'urban areas', the wider study area also incorporates a section of the Pennine Foothills (West/South Pennines) LCT, specifically Landscape Character Area 28 – Rochdale and Oldham South Pennine Foothills and ascertains this land has a medium/high sensitivity to Commercial/Industrial Development and summarises as follows:

3.41 *'Areas of steep and/or complex landform, distinct hills, and prominent ridgelines would be of high sensitivity to any type or scale of development. These include (but are not limited to) Besom Hill, Tandle Hill, the ridgeline south of Bentgate,*

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

*Strine Dale, Wood Brook (all within LCA 28), north of Harwood (LCA 20) and Green Hill (LCA 30). These areas are highly prominent, widely visible from existing urban areas and the surrounding uplands and provide an undeveloped setting to development.'*

### Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment

- 3.42 On behalf of the ten Greater Manchester Authorities, Manchester City Council commissioned the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment, which was published in 2016.
- 3.43 The overall aim of the Study was to assess the extent to which the land within the Greater Manchester Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belts, as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.44 The Study does not advise on the suitability or potential of land in Great Manchester for development. It also does not consider whether 'exceptional circumstances' exist or make any recommendations relating to the alteration or review of Green Belt boundaries.
- 3.45 The site is located within a large Green Belt parcel (referenced as RD67, see

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

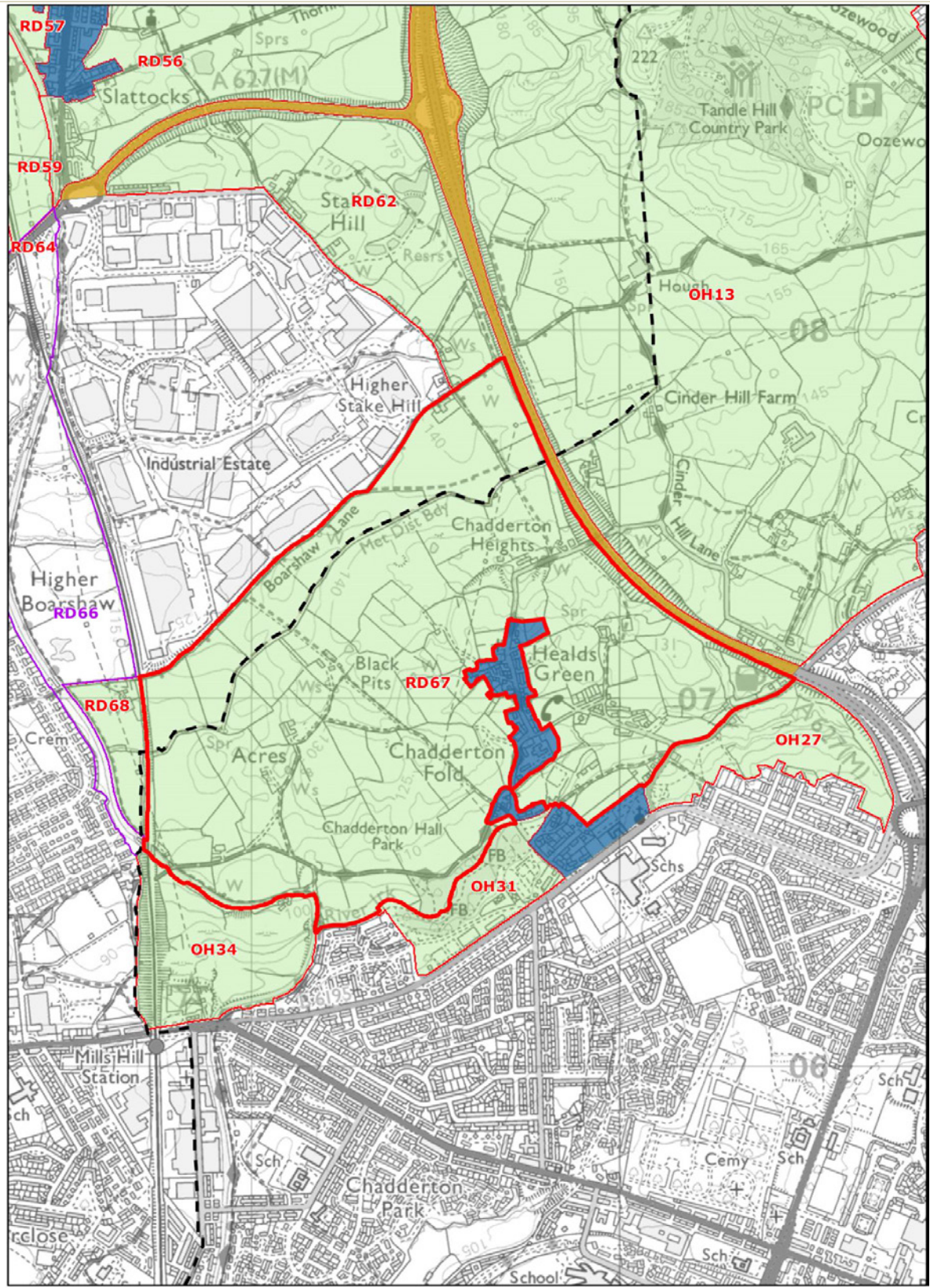
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figure below and Appendix 3 extract) contained by Stakehill Industrial Estate to the north, the A627(M) to the east, the northern edge of Chadderton to the south and the Rochdale Canal/Eastern edge of Middleton to the west. There are also four smaller parcels located to the south (OH27, OH31 and OH 34) and one to the west (RD68) and in general, these parcels perform moderately well in relation to the five purposes of the Green Belt, however RD67 contains the vast majority of the Green Belt located between Chadderton, Middleton and Stakehill Industrial Estate.



### 3.0 Baseline Setting

Land Parcel Ref:	RD67	Local Authority 1:	Rochdale
Parcel Type:	Green belt parcel	Local Authority 2:	Oldham



## 3.0 Baseline Setting

- 3.46 The parcel Description for RD67 is as follows:
- 3.47 *'This large parcel covers the extent between Stakehill Industrial Estate and Chadderton Fold. Approximately three quarters of the parcel lies within Oldham Council District. The A627 (M) forms the eastern boundary with Rochdale Canal and the railway combining to make the western edge. The undulating landform mostly comprises pasture fields defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees with a number of farmsteads situated throughout. A few clusters of residential development are also located in the eastern area between Healds Green and the A627 (M). Woodland is concentrated around the River Irk, which flows through the parcel and into the canal in the southern area of the parcel. Rochdale Way also traverses the parcel from east to west. There are steep topographical changes within the west of the parcel.'*
- 3.48 The assessment ascertains that the Green Belt within parcel RD67 performs moderately well in relation to four of the five purposes (there is no assessment against Purpose 5).
- Greater Manchester Historic Landscape Characterisation
- 3.49 On behalf of the ten Greater Manchester Authorities, Manchester City Council commissioned the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment, which was published in 2016.
- 3.50 The northern section of the site, which lies within Rochdale Council's jurisdiction, comprises Historic Landscape Character (HLC) Enclosed Land, specifically 'Piecemeal Enclosure'. The Enclosed Land HLC covers around 40% of the area of Rochdale (62.12km<sup>2</sup>) and Piecemeal Enclosure accounts for 44% or 26.94km<sup>2</sup>, making it the most prominent Enclosed Land HLC type in Rochdale.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

3.51 The southern sections of the site, which lie within Oldham Council's jurisdiction, also comprise Historic Landscape Character (HLC) Enclosed Land, specifically 'Piecemeal Enclosure'. The Enclosed Land HLC covers around 34% of the area of Oldham (46.98km<sup>2</sup>) and Piecemeal Enclosure accounts for 47% or 22.09km<sup>2</sup>, making it the most prominent Enclosed Land HLC type in Oldham.

### Heritage Assets

3.52 There are no recognised heritage assets within the site itself, however the wider study area contains a limited number of Grade II listed buildings/structures.

These include:

- Manchester to Leeds line disused railway bridge over the Rochdale Canal;
- Scowcroft Lane Bridge over the Rochdale Canal;
- Rochdale Canal Lock no.62 (Coneygreen Lock);
- Scowcroft Farmhouse;
- Cinder Hill Farmhouse;
- Church of St Matthew, Chadderton.

### Landscape Value

3.53 One of the starting points for assessing the value of a landscape is whether there are any landscape designations present, however, it is important to note that the fact that a landscape is not designated either nationally or locally, does not necessarily mean that it does not have any value.

3.54 GLVIA 3rd Edition recommends the consideration of a list of factors that are

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

believed to influence value (see GLVIA 3rd Edition, Box 5.1).

- 3.55 Having considered the various factors, The majority of the wider agricultural landscape within the study area (including the site) is considered to be of a community/local (low to medium) value, the hamlet of Healds Green and areas to the north-east, beyond the A627(M) around Tandle Hill, are considered to be of a local (medium) value and Stakehill Industrial Estate and the larger urban areas to the west and south are considered to be of community (low) value for the following reasons:
- No part of the Study Area is located within a nationally designated landscape such as a National Park or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or a locally designated landscape, such as a Special Landscape Area.
  - Landscape quality – The agricultural landscape is characterised in part by undulating, enlarged fields, enclosed by post and wire fencing or denuded hedgerows/drystone walling. There is a broken network of hedgerows and overhead cables and the motorway corridor form dominating elements. To the north-east at Tandle Hill the rising agricultural land gives way to steeper, wooded slopes. Overall, some areas are relatively intact and are well maintained, however a lack of management and neglect are evident in places. The urban areas to the west and south (Middleton and Chadderton) comprise large, unremarkable residential estate areas, constructed predominantly during the 20th Century, whereas Healds Green is a small hamlet with a variety of building ages and styles forming a ribbon of development on sloping ground.
  - Scenic Quality – The landscape within the study area is varied in its scenic quality. Highlights include some localised, rural views incorporating good

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

hedgerows and associated mature trees, with little or no intervention from built form or transport/power infrastructure, however most views incorporate the latter. From some locations there are also expansive, distant views over the conurbation to the south. Detractors include the presence of the large built forms at Stakehill, although for the most part they are well screened, and the presence of pylons/overhead powerlines and the A627(M).

- **Rarity** – Generally the features within the landscape and townscape are common to both the area and the relevant landscape character types/areas.
- **Representativeness** – The agricultural landscape which makes up the majority of the study area is located within Oldham Landscape Character Area 3 Chadderton Rolling Hills, specifically Landscape Type 3a Rolling Pasture Land and to a lesser extent, the Pennine Foothills (West/South Pennines) LCT, specifically Landscape Character Area 28 – Rochdale and Oldham South Pennine Foothills. The Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment places the site into the Urban Fringe Farmland LCT, specifically Landscape Character Area 27 – Simister, Slattocks and Heald Green. Both of these identified areas of character cover relatively extensive areas beyond the study area (excluding urban areas). Consideration of their key characteristics suggests the site and non-urban areas within the wider study area are consistent with the LCAs. The site and the wider study area do not incorporate any particular landscape features or elements which elevate their representativeness above that associated with other areas therein.
- **Conservation Interests** – The site itself does not contain any particular features with a conservation interest and within the wider study area, heritage assets include the Rochdale Canal corridor and a relatively small number of listed

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

buildings and structures, some of which are associated with the canal. In addition, to the north-east of the site, Tandle Hill Country Park includes a popular local viewpoint with a War Memorial commemorating the men of Royton who lost their lives in the First World War.

- Recreation Value – The Public Right of Way network within the study area is quite extensive. There are a number of Public Rights of Way within the site in the form of Public Footpaths linking the long distance footpath known as the Oldham Way to the south, with a Restricted Byway that tracks along the northern boundary of the site (Boarshaw Lane). The Oldham Way connects with the Rochdale Canal to the south-west of the site and tracks south, whereas to the east, it passes through Healds Green, crosses over the A627(M) and heads towards Tandle Hill. The Restricted Byway on Boarshaw Lane links with the Rochdale Canal towpath and the eastern edge of Middleton and to the north, the canal towpath intersects the Rochdale Way, which tracks across the landscape to the north of Stakehill Industrial Park. Tandle Hill Country Park also forms a popular recreational destination.
- Perceptual Aspects - Levels of tranquillity are lower at the eastern sections of the site and the study area due to the partially visible, but predominantly the audible presence of the A627(M). Levels of tranquillity increase towards the west as the distance from the motorway increases. Rural areas within the site and the study area, which are located away from the boundaries abutting the motorway, the surrounding residential areas and associated road network, the rail corridor to the west and Stakehill Industrial Estate, contain localised areas with higher levels of tranquillity. For the most part however, there is a perception that one is never far from settlement areas and transport/power infrastructure.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

- Associations – The Rochdale Canal and the presence of historic buildings within the nearby settlement areas are representative of the significant changes that the industrial revolution brought to the wider landscape and townscape.

### Visual Receptors

- 3.56 Due to the presence of intervening vegetation, built form and localised undulations in the topography, views of the site are experienced from limited and separated locations to the north, east, and south, with limited visibility from the west.
- 3.57 To the west, increasing vegetation and built form and a reduction in the number of public accessible locations significantly reduce the visibility of the site.
- 3.58 The following groups or individual visual receptors have been identified as they experience a view of the site. The receptors identified are considered to be representative of the current visual prominence of the site.
- 3.59 The identification of all potential visual receptors, which in the case of this appraisal, were predominantly people using Public Footpaths, was undertaken by way of a desktop survey, followed by site based survey work. Their identification was primarily determined by the topography of the surrounding area, the presence of trees and screening buildings.
- 3.60 The survey work associated with this appraisal was undertaken during July 2020 when there was a high level of leaf cover on the deciduous trees in the area. As a result, the visibility of the site and the features contained therein were assessed at a time of year when surrounding deciduous vegetation was providing effective levels of screening/filtering.

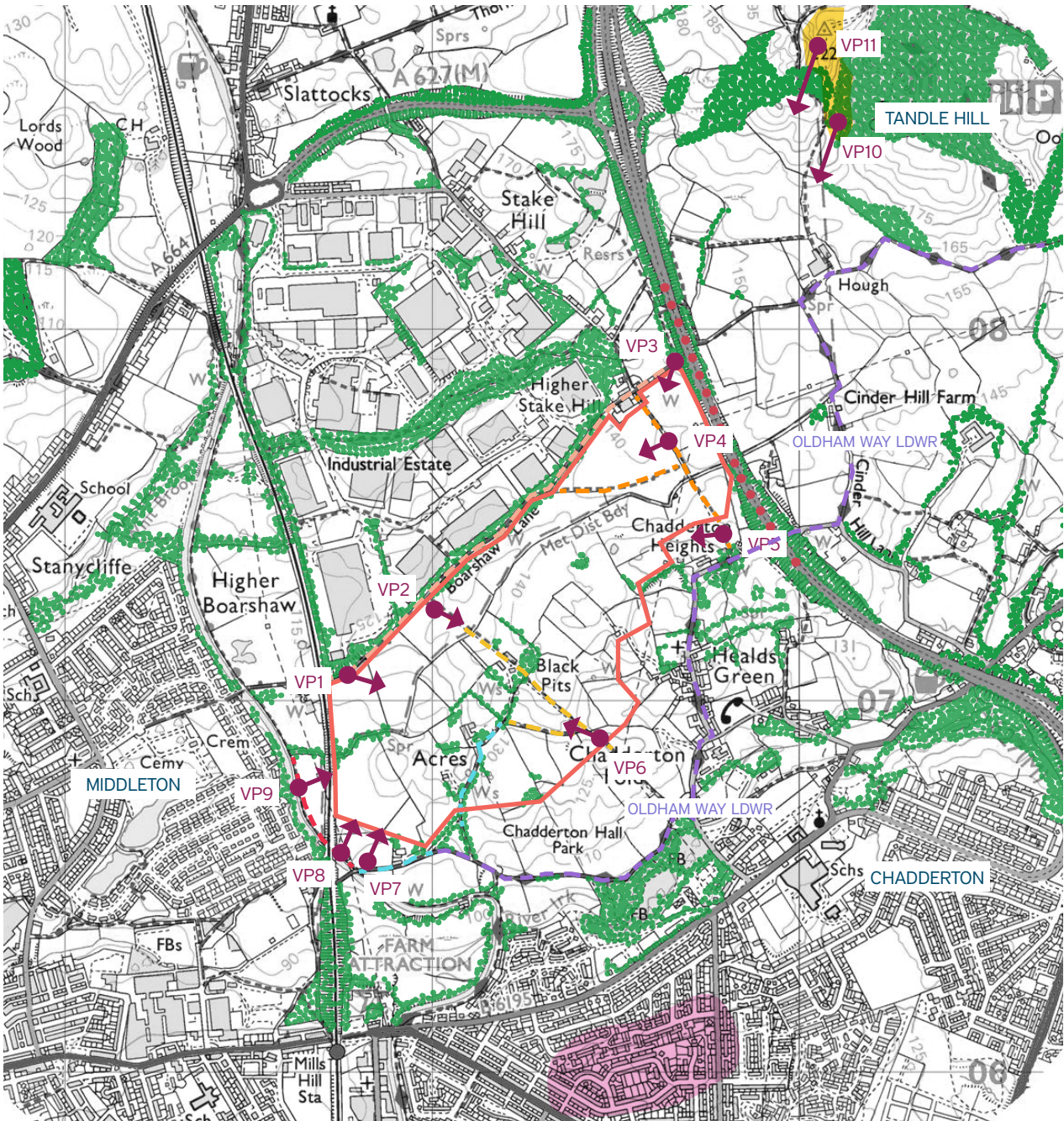
## 3.0 Baseline Setting

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- 3.61 Photographs of the site, the surrounding landscape and specific viewpoints were taken on the day when the survey was undertaken. Some of the views included wide panoramas and it was therefore considered beneficial to join some of the individual photographs together to produce panoramic views. All photographs were taken using a Nikon D80 Digital SLR camera and specific viewpoints were photographed using a 50mm lens.
- 3.62 The following footpaths and associated viewpoint photograph locations are described by Figure 2.



# 3.0 Baseline Setting














- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Site Location                                       |  | Intervening Vegetation  |  | Viewpoint and Direction                                       |
|  | RG1 - People using PRoW Middleton 30, 31, 37 and 41 |  | RG2 - People using PRoW Middleton 34, 36 and 42 and Chadderton 1                |  | RG3 - People using PRoW Middleton 38 and Chadderton 16 and 17 |
|  | RG4 - People using PRoW Chadderton 18, 71 and 75    |  | RG5 - People using PRoW Chadderton 23 and Middleton 43 / Rochdale Canal towpath |  | RG6 - Private residents around Chadderton                     |
|  | RG7 - Road users travelling along the A627(M)       |  | RG8 - Visitors to Tandle Hill Country Park                                      |   |   |

Fig 2 Visual Receptor and Viewpoint Location Plan

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

### People Using Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 3.63 Receptor Group 1 (RG1) - People using the Public Footpaths Middleton 30, 31, 37 and 41 – People walking in a north easterly direction begin to experience views of the site upon crossing the railway line footbridge at the western corner of the site (Viewpoint 1). A small number of small sized trees along the site boundary initially filter views somewhat, however the boundary of the site in this location is mostly open and comprises only post and wire fencing and disjointed areas of native species vegetation and individual trees along the boundary. As such, open views across the site are experienced, with the wider open landscape visible in the background of views. Views also contain the dense wooded belt along the periphery of Stakehill Industrial Estate, with glimpsed views of the industrial units possible through the vegetation. In numerous locations along the route of the footpaths, the land rises and falls with both man-made and natural undulations and increased tree coverage on either side which restricts visibility. Views of this nature continue along the route of the footpaths until approaching the A627(M) to the north, where views become increasingly open (Viewpoint 2). Footpath users travelling in a south-westerly direction begin to experience views of the site upon crossing beneath the motorway and views comprise the dense woodland belt along the boundary of the highway, with the open pastoral fields to the north of the site visible in the middle ground of the views, with the undulating open landscape in the background. From this location, the localised absence of tree cover and vegetation emphasises the open nature of the views, however mature hedgerow field boundaries filter views at ground level (Viewpoint 3). Views are experienced from within circa. 5-10m of the boundary of the site.

## 3.0

## Baseline Setting



VP1 View looking east across the site from public footpath Middleton 30



VP2 View looking east across the site from the junction of footpaths Middleton 30, 31 and 38



VP3 View looking east/south-east across the site from public footpath Middleton 41

- 3.64 RG2 – People walking public footpaths Middleton 34, 36 and 42, and Chadderton 1 - These footpaths traverse the northern portion of the site and as such, footpath users experience clear and open views across the site and

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

the wider landscape. Views often incorporate open pastoral fields within the foreground, with the wooded boundary of Stakehill Industrial Estate forming a prominent feature when looking to the north-west. To the north-east, the A627(M) is clearly visible in the middle ground of views, with the elevated landform around Tandle Hill visible beyond the motorway corridor. Views also contain a number of scattered trees across the site, post and wire fencing, hedgerow field boundaries, and electricity pylons to the north near the A627(M). See viewpoints 4 and 5.



VP4 View looking south across the site from public footpath Middleton 34



VP5 View looking north-west towards the site/Stakehill Industrial Estate from public footpath Chadderton 1

- 3.65 RG3 - People walking public footpaths Middleton 38 and Chadderton 16 and 17 - Middleton 38 and Chadderton 17 traverse across the site from Middleton 30 along the northern boundary to Black Pits Farm, and as such open views are

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

experienced across the site, with the pastoral fields dominating the foreground and midground of views (See Viewpoint 2). Chadderton 17 has been blocked at Black Pits Farm and there appears to be no interconnectivity between this route and Chadderton 16 to the south east of the farm. Footpath users travelling north west along Chadderton 16 begin to approach the southern boundary of the site, however views are restricted by the undulating landform which only allows for short range albeit open views of the southern portion of the site. The northern portion of the site and Stakehill Industrial Area are screened from views by the rising landform and intervening vegetation around the farmyards. Views are dominated by the open landscape in this location, comprising field boundary hedgerows, ponds, and increased tree coverage (see Viewpoint 6).



View looking north-west from public footpath Chadderton 16/Chadderton Fold on the southern boundary of the site

VP6

- 3.66 RG4 - People walking along public footpaths Chadderton 18, 21 and 75 - Viewpoint 7 – Footpath users travelling along Chadderton 21 experience open and clear views of the site in close proximity to the southern boundary. Boundary trees and hedgerows filter and limit views from some locations along the footpath, however most views are dominated by the open and undulating landscape that comprises the site to the north and wider landscape to the south. Views become increasingly filtered along Chadderton 18 as tree cover increases

## 3.0

## Baseline Setting



VP7

View looking north-west across the southern section of the site from public footpath Chadderton 18

- 3.67 RG5 - People walking along public footpaths Chadderton 23 and Middleton 43 - Footpath users travelling along the Rochdale Canal may experience partial and glimpsed views of the site in the background of views, however the undulating topography and elevated railway significantly restrict visibility from this location. Views comprise the open pastoral landscape to the north and east with the residential urban edge of Middleton to the west. A small number of intervening trees are scattered along field boundaries which further limit views of the site, however some medium range views prevail between vegetation and across low points within the landscape, where the site appears framed between elements of the wider landscape. See viewpoints 8 and 9. Views are experienced from circa. 60-110m.

## 3.0

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VP8

View looking north towards the site from public footpath Chadderton 23/  
Rochdale Canal towpath



VP9

View looking north-east towards the site from public footpath Middleton 43  
along the Rochdale Canal towpath

## Private Residents

- 3.68 RG6 - Private residents of properties at the northern edge of Chadderton
- A number of residents of properties located around the northern edge of Chadderton may experience partial, long range views of the application site, particularly from properties to the north of Haigh Lane, along Edge View, Riverside and Kiln Lane. Views mostly comprise the open undulating pastoral landscape in the foreground and midground, with the landform rising to the north towards the site, and a small portion of the southern part of the site visible in the background of views. Views beyond this are restricted by the changes in elevation, as the landform begins to drop again towards Stakehill Industrial Estate. Views are experienced from circa. 800m-1km.

## 3.0 Baseline Setting

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### Road Users

- 3.69 RG7 - Road users travelling along the A627(M) - These road users are likely to experience clear and direct views of the site that are glimpsed whilst travelling at high speed. Views are likely to only be experienced for a short section of the highway as it runs parallel to the north western site boundary and the wooded belt along the highway diminishes. Views comprise the open undulating pastoral fields that occupy the northern portion of the site and are experienced from circa 10m+.

### Others - Visitors to Tandle Hill Country Park

- 3.70 RG8 - Visitors at Tandle Hill Country Park may experience long range views of the site from a limited number of locations to the south west of the country park at the woodland edge, where a number of footpaths allow open views between the trees (see Viewpoint 10), and from the view point atop the elevated landform. The view point is situated atop a localised high point within the wider landscape and as such expansive and panoramic open views across the study area can be experienced from this location (see viewpoint 11). Views comprise the open undulating Green Belt landscape in the foreground and middle ground, with the urban edge in the background and the wider Manchester conurbation visible in the distance. The site is clearly visible in the midground of views, along with Stakehill Industrial Estate and the A627(M). Views are experienced from circa 930m-1.2km.



3.0

Baseline Setting



VP10

View looking north-west from Tandle Hill Country Park, at the woodland edge close to the viewpoint.



VP11

View looking south from Tandle Hill Country Park view point

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

- 4.1 This document primarily forms the landscape and visual baseline setting associated with a fuller Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Landscape and Visual Appraisal, it does not therefore incorporate a methodology or the application of a methodology to inform a full assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of developing the site.
- 4.2 By undertaking site and desktop studies to confirm the landscape and visual baseline, an appropriate study area and the key landscape and visual resources have been ascertained. With reference to the proposed development of the site with commercial/industrial development akin to that of the existing built form to the immediate north of the site, this document provides an indication of the likely landscape and visual effects associated with a development of this nature.

### Indicative Landscape Effects

- 4.3 Section 5.1 of the GLVIA 3rd Edition states ‘An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource.’ Landscape effects can be generated by a development on the character, fabric and quality of the landscape. These could include direct, physical effects upon landscape elements but also includes aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of a landscape which may contribute to an existing landscape character.
- 4.4 The baseline has ascertained the landscape resource within the site and the wider study area to be as follows:
- Physical features - hedgerows, trees, small woodland blocks, field ponds and undulating topography;
  - Landscape Character Areas defined by the Oldham Landscape Character

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

Assessment - Landscape Character Area 3 – Chadderton Rolling Hills, specifically Landscape Type 3a – Rolling Pasture Land (including the site and parts of the wider study area) and Landscape Type 3b Rural Settlement (comprises Healds Green; land that is outside the site but is within the wider study area);

- Landscape Character Areas defined by the Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment - Urban Fringe Farmland LCT, specifically Landscape Character Area 27 – Simister, Slattocks and Heald Green (including the site and parts of the wider study area) and the Pennine Foothills (West/South Pennines) LCT, specifically Landscape Character Area 28 – Rochdale and Oldham South Pennine Foothills (incorporating rural areas outside the site, yet within the study area to the east of the A627(M));
- Urban Areas – primarily to the west (the north-eastern edge of Middleton) and the south (the northern edge of Chadderton).
- Stakehill Industrial Estate to the immediate north of the site.

### Physical Features

4.5 The nature of the development would likely result in the loss of existing hedgerows, trees, improved pastoral grassland and field ponds. These features contribute to the appearance of the rural landscape in this location and its character. With a higher value (with the exception of the grassland), and a higher susceptibility to change, these features are considered to have a higher sensitivity. The loss of these features is therefore likely to generate levels of adverse landscape effect.

4.6 The existing topography would also be affected within the site, due to the likely

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

large scale of any new built form therein and its need for larger areas of flatter land. Changes to the topography to accommodate the development (comprising cut and fill) are therefore likely to be extensive and will generate levels within the site that are inconsistent with existing, unaffected rural areas within the study area to the south and east. These changes are likely to generate adverse levels of landscape effect.

### Landscape Character

- 4.7 The Oldham Landscape Character Assessment - Landscape Character Area 3 – Chadderton Rolling Hills, specifically Landscape Type 3a – Rolling Pasture Land and the GM Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Urban Fringe Farmland LCT, specifically Landscape Character Area 27 – Simister, Slattocks and Heald Green, will be directly affected by the development of the site. The character of the site itself will inevitably be changed significantly by its development and given its rural fringe character, there are likely to be adverse landscape effects generated. That said, the character of the site is heavily influenced by the proximity and presence of transport and power infrastructure, urban areas and the existing Stakehill Industrial Estate and these elements are considered to affect the site to a greater extent than other locations within the identified character areas. As a result, resulting adverse landscape effects are to a degree, expected to be moderated.
- 4.8 The Oldham Landscape Character Assessment - Landscape Type 3b Rural Settlement Foothills. This character type is located outside the site. Landscape Type 3b Rural Settlement covers the hamlets of Healds Green and Chadderton Fold and is considered to be of a local (medium) value. These rural settlement areas are likely to have a medium to high susceptibility to the kind of changes

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

proposed, so they are likely to have a medium to high sensitivity. Although this character area is located within relatively close proximity to the site, it is considered that sufficient physical and visual separation can be maintained to limit any adverse landscape effect upon the established character of these rural settlements.

- 4.9 Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment - Pennine Foothills (West/South Pennines) LCT, specifically Landscape Character Area 28 – Rochdale and Oldham South Pennine Foothills. This character area is located to the east of the A627(M) and as such, is physically separated from the site. It is considered to be of a medium value. Due to rising ground in the east, there is an existing level of intervisibility between this character area and the site, however those levels of intervisibility also exist with the existing Stakehill Industrial Estate, the motorway and the urban areas of Chadderton and Middleton. As a result, this character area is to an extent, currently influenced by these dominating features. The susceptibility to the kind of change proposed is therefore expected to be medium, resulting in a medium sensitivity. As such, any adverse landscape effects the development of the site may have upon this character area, are expected to be moderated.
- 4.10 Urban Areas – Nearby urban areas located within the study area primarily comprise mixed residential development to the west of the site (on the north-eastern edge of Middleton) and to the south (the northern edge of Chadderton). The existing Industrial Estate at Stakehill already influences the landscape context of these urban areas to some extent, as the existing large buildings located at the south-western corner of Stakehill Industrial Estate are intermittently visible from locations within the settlement areas of Middleton

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

and Chadderton. Notwithstanding any likely visual effects, the development is therefore not expected to generate any adverse or beneficial landscape effects upon the character of these urban areas.

- 4.11 Stakehill Industrial Estate - The development proposals are not expected to generate any adverse or beneficial landscape effects upon the character of Stakehill Industrial Estate.

### Indicative Visual Effects

- 4.12 It has been ascertained by the Baseline that the key groups of people or individuals who experience a view of the site or part thereof, comprise those using the local Public Right of Way network and the residents of properties.
- 4.13 The visual receptors and the nature of the current views of the site, have been considered within the Baseline by way of 11no Representative Viewpoints.
- 4.14 Due to the visual prominence of the site, and the dispersed nature of the visual receptors, it was impractical to identify each and every visual receptor/view within the Baseline, however the viewpoints included are considered to be representative of the visual prominence of the site.
- 4.15 People using Public Rights of Way are generally considered to have a medium or medium to high sensitivity due to the medium to high values associated with the views they experience and their medium to high susceptibility to the kind of changes proposed.
- 4.16 There are a number of Public Footpaths and a Restricted Byway that are located within the site itself. If the site was to be developed, these routes would lose their rural/semi-rural context and the views of those using these routes would

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

be adversely affected. Inevitably the magnitude of change brought about by the development of the site will be higher and adverse for the users of these Public Rights of Way and as a result, higher levels of adverse visual effect would be expected.

- 4.17 Views from locations on Public rights of Way outside the site (but within the study area), may be affected to a variable extent, depending on the nature of the existing view. Where an existing view is already influenced by the existing development at Stakehill, and/or the presence of the motorway, the nearby settlement areas and the electricity pylon/overhead power lines, the development of the site is less likely to generate higher levels of adverse visual effect. However, where an existing, localised view is wholly rural, by virtue of the absence of the aforementioned detracting elements, the introduction of the developed site into a view, is likely to generate higher levels of adverse visual effect.
- 4.18 Tandle Hill Country Park represents a popular local destination, particularly the viewpoint at the elevated location of its War Memorial. People experiencing the expansive views over Rochdale, Chadderton, Oldham and the wider conurbation of Manchester are considered to be of a higher sensitivity, however the magnitude of the changes anticipated would be moderated by the presence of the existing Stakehill Industrial Estate within the views experienced. Rather than introducing a new element into these expansive views, the development of the site would extend an existing feature. The visual effect of the proposals is therefore expected to be adverse, but the significance of the adverse visual effect would be moderated.
- 4.19 People located on rising ground within the settlement areas to the south, on

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

the northern edge of Chadderton (including the views of residents and people using the highway network) can experience distant views to the north, across intervening lower lying ground, which incorporate the western end of the site and the buildings within Stakehill Industrial Estate beyond. Developing the site as proposed would affect views of this nature, however the level of any adverse visual effect generated is likely to be moderated as the development of the site would extend the existing development forwards in the view, rather than it introducing a new built element therein.

- 4.20 People located on lower lying ground to the south of the site (including those on Public Rights of Way, people using the highway network and residents) along the northern edge of Chadderton (in the vicinity of the B6195 Haigh Lane) and at Healds Green, often experience open, semi-rural views to the north comprising rising, undulating pastoral fields, with some tree cover and occasional dispersed, residential/agricultural built form. These views do not incorporate the existing Stakehill Industrial Estate. If the proposed development of the site were to introduce new, large scale built forms into these semi-rural views, levels of adverse visual effect are likely to be generated.
- 4.21 Views of the site from the west are limited as in general the land beyond the Rochdale Canal falls away. People using the canal and its towpath and some of the residents of houses located along the eastern edge of Middleton (eg Hereford Way, Boarshaw Crescent and Arnold Drive, amongst others) may experience views which incorporate the existing buildings on Stakehill Industrial Estate, set behind the boundary tree planting. The development of the site, could introduce additional built form into their views, however intervening existing tree cover, local topography and the railway corridor are expected to



## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

moderate any adverse visual effects generated.

### Green Belt

- 4.22 The site and the open agricultural land to its immediate south is predominantly located within one Green Belt parcel (RD67) within the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment. The parcel is contained by the canal, railway and the eastern edge of Middleton to the west, Stakehill Industrial Estate to the north, the M627(M) to the east and Chadderton to the south.
- 4.23 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that ‘the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence’. The NPPF also states that Green Belt should serve five purposes without inferring that any differential weighting should be applied:

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

### 4.24 The Five Purposes of the Green Belt:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.25 The GM Green Belt Assessment ascertains that Green Belt parcel RD67 performs moderately in relation to four of the five purposes (there is no assessment against Purpose 5). This is in part due to the parcel being considered to form part of a gap between the settlements of Chadderton and Middleton and that the assessment considers that it is not of critical importance to the separation of the two settlements, as they have already merged to the south.

4.26 The development of the site will inevitably physically reduce the extent of the Green Belt in this location, however its moderate performance against the five purposes will limit the adverse effect upon the effectiveness of the remaining Green Belt ie a similar reduction of a Green Belt parcel that is identified as being a strong performer against the five purposes, would naturally result in comparatively higher levels of adverse effect upon the effectiveness of the remaining Green Belt.

4.27 In addition, the proposed development will physically reduce the extent of the

## 4.0 Overview of Anticipated Landscape and Visual Effects

Green Belt between Middleton and Chadderton, however the visual prominence of the proposed extension to Stakehill could also affect the sense of separation and the perceived gap. The visual prominence of the development, and the way in which it may affect views is therefore fundamental in ascertaining how it may affect the existing levels of perceived separation.

### Conclusion

- 4.28 Based upon the assessment work to date there are no landscape constraints which would preclude the proposed development. This report identifies the levels of risk associated with each opportunity or constraint and how they can be assessed and considered in the design of the scheme at detailed planning stage. No further work is considered to be required at this stage to support the allocation of the site as proposed.



## Appendices

## Appendix 1 - Extract from Oldham Council Landscape Character Assessment –

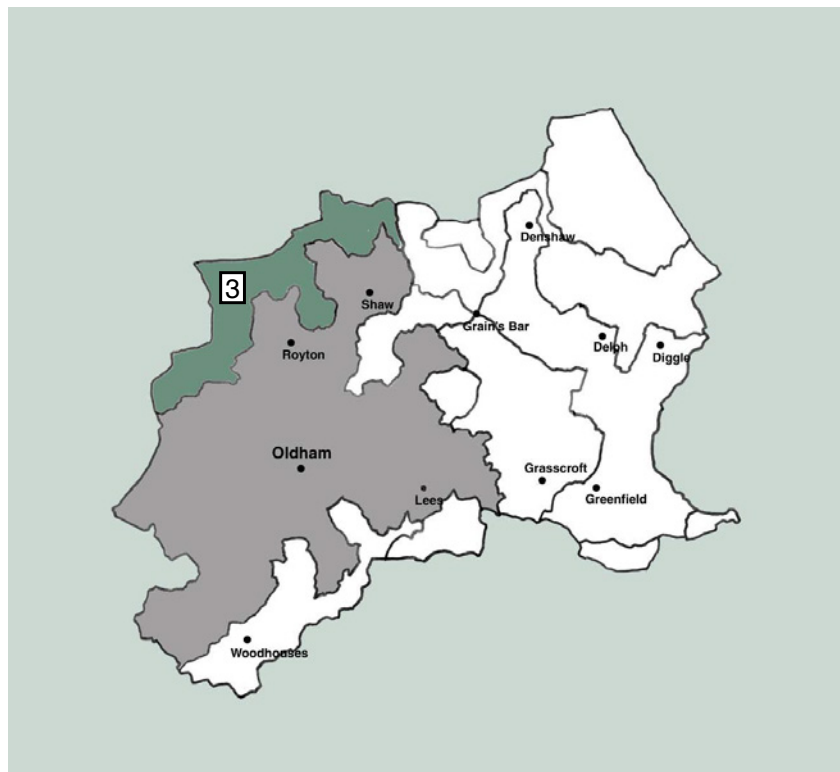
## A.1

## LCA 3 Chadderton Rolling Hills/3a Rolling Pasture Land/3b Rural Settlement

- A network of narrow winding lanes connects the dispersed farmsteads and settlements. Many lanes consist of gritstone walls with no grass verges. An absence of street lights and other urban road elements contribute to the rural feeling.
- Distinctive vernacular architecture typified by millstone grit building stone.

**Principal Landscape Objective**

**5.27** To maintain the distinction between the Settled Moorland Fringes and the more sheltered valleys that cut into the moors.

**Area 3 Chadderton Rolling Hills****Map 10: Chadderton Rolling Hills****Overview**

**5.28** This marginal hillside wraps around the northern edge of the borough and the townships of Shaw, Royton and Chadderton and represents the surviving strip of Green Belt between the Rochdale and Oldham urban areas. The rolling landscape provides a valuable green buffer to the M62 motorway and affords some fine panoramic views

## Appendix 1 - Extract from Oldham Council Landscape Character Assessment –

## A.1

## LCA 3 Chadderton Rolling Hills/3a Rolling Pasture Land/3b Rural Settlement

towards Manchester and beyond. Various stands of established broadleaf woodland are present throughout the area linked by a comprehensive network of footpaths and bridleways. Post and wire fencing is common, with many boundaries incorporating broken hedgerows and established clumps of hedgerow trees. The presence of transportation corridors, power lines and pylons dominates in the west around Chadderton Fold. Land use is primarily livestock farming, however several pockets of housing are present.

#### Key Landscape Characteristics

- Rolling landscape character accentuated in parts by large field plots.
- A predominance of post and rail fencing.
- Small blocks of established broadleaf woodland.
- Tandle Hill Country Park.
- Numerous footpaths and bridleways cross the area.
- Pockets of rural settlement and victorian terraces populate the primary highway routes.
- A broken network of hedgerows and clumps of hedgerow trees.
- Wide panoramic views over Greater Manchester and the M62 motorway.
- Power lines and communication masts dominate the skyline in the western corner.
- Five Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) designated within the area.
- Lush green semi-improved grassland dominates.

#### Geology & Landform

**5.29** The Chadderton Rolling Hills are almost entirely underlain by sandstone. A short strip of Gritstone/Sandstone occupies the area between Whitfield Hall and Garside to the north east. This rolling landscape type occupies the altitude between 100 and 250 metres above sea level. The landform, accentuated by large field enclosure and subtle boundary treatment, appears 'wave like' in places with only small clumps of trees and hedgerows providing any natural definition. Other areas present a sweeping hillside landscape, sparsely vegetated.

#### Nature Conservation

**5.30** Established clumps of hedgerow and hedgerow trees provide valuable local habitats and wildlife corridors. The more extensive areas of woodland, in particular Tandle Hill Country Park, are important habitats as are the many fields of species rich grassland. Several disused reservoirs exist that offer valuable species rich habitats. Five Sites of Biological Importance exist within this landscape character area.

#### Vegetation & soils

**5.31** The landscape is broadly dominated by semi-improved grassland associated with stock rearing and rough grazing. Established clumps of hawthorn and beech hedgerows line field boundaries and highways, many incorporating mature stands of broadleaf trees. Localised clumps of deciduous woodland are dispersed throughout the area. Tandle Hill Country Park (a beech dominant woodland) offers a more diverse range of species and contains areas of restored heathland and species rich grassland.

## Appendix 1 - Extract from Oldham Council Landscape Character Assessment –

## A.1

LCA 3 Chadderton Rolling Hills/3a Rolling Pasture Land/3b Rural Settlement

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**Perceptual**

**5.32** The Chadderton Rolling Hills have a serene calming quality created by its undulating fields with few strong defining boundaries. The area culminates in Tandle Hill Country Park and this makes the area feel safe and populated even though many areas have little activity. The area provides commanding views all around the Oldham district and beyond which is attractive and inspiring. The high number of footpaths, along with the country park landscape, form an attractive visitor destination.

**Land Use & Settlement**

**5.33** The land is predominantly improved grassland including horse pasture. The Chadderton Hills are well populated by small groupings of farmhouses and larger village settlements at Chadderton Fold and Low Crompton. The scattered farmhouses often include a range of modern outbuildings. The area is well furnished by public footpaths culminating in the country park landscape at Tandle Hill. Around Chadderton Fold low lying rough grazing and marshland surround the Rochdale Canal and an elevated rail embankment. Diversification of farming is apparent with uses such as haulage and riding schools present.

**Patterns & Features**

**5.34** The landscape pattern is particularly muted in this area with a dominance of semi-improved grassland throughout. Blocks of established woodland and hedgerow plantations provide some highlight with power lines and communications dominating the skyline in the west. Dry stone walls provide some pattern and definition but many are in a poor state of repair.

**Historic Features**

**5.35** Tandle Hill War Memorial commemorates the first and second world wars. The stone monument located at the peak of Tandle Hill commands wide and distant views over the surrounding landscape and is clearly visible from the M62 and A627 highway.

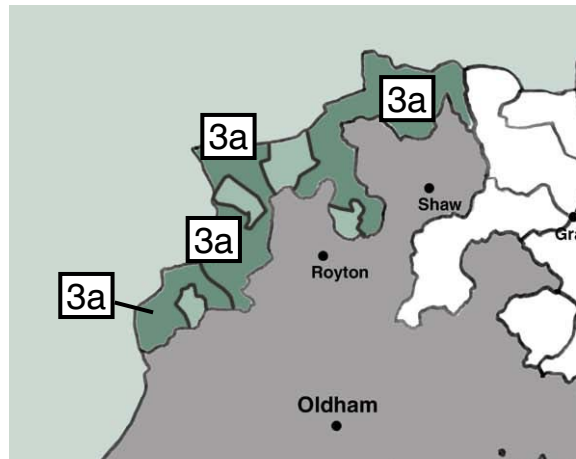
## Appendix 1 - Extract from Oldham Council Landscape Character Assessment –

A.1

## LCA 3 Chadderton Rolling Hills/3a Rolling Pasture Land/3b Rural Settlement

## Type 3a Rolling Pasture Land

Map 11: Type 3a - Rolling Pasture Land



## Key Landscape Features

- Rolling pastoral landscape character accentuated in parts by large field plots and variety in landform.
- A predominance of post and rail fencing creates a loose undefined landscape character.
- Some dry stone walling present, but there is evidence that these boundaries are not being repaired or maintained.
- Small blocks of established broadleaf woodland exist and are possible remnants surviving the industrial revolution.
- Numerous footpaths and bridleways scattered across the area, some long distance routes, that link up with an extensive Public Rights of Way network.
- Evidence of farm diversification with the conversion of many agricultural buildings to accommodate haulage and riding schools use.
- A broken network of hedgerows and clumps of hedgerow trees are present throughout the area situated along field boundaries and footpaths/bridleways.
- Wide panoramic views over the urban conurbation of Greater Manchester to the south west and the M62 to the north.
- Power lines and communication masts dominate the skyline in the western corner of this landscape type.
- Historic trans-pennine communication routes of rail and canal provide important cultural associations.

## Principal Landscape Objective

- 5.36** To retain and strengthen the distinctive rolling landscape character surrounding the northern edge of the borough. The area acts as an important separation zone between the urban boundaries of Oldham and Rochdale.



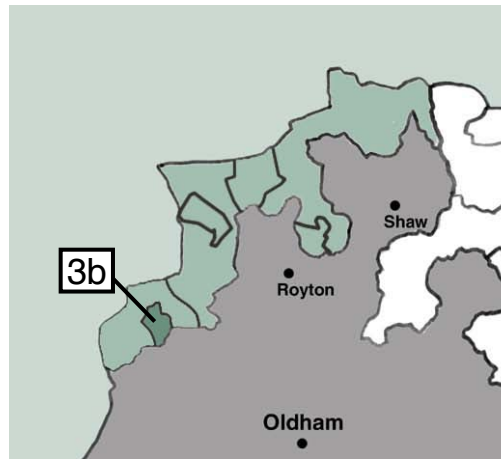
## Appendix 1 - Extract from Oldham Council Landscape Character Assessment –

## A.1

## LCA 3 Chadderton Rolling Hills/3a Rolling Pasture Land/3b Rural Settlement

## Type 3b Rural Settlement

Map 12: Type 3b - Rural Settlement



## Key Landscape Features

- A distinct but sheltered rural settlement on the rising slopes at Chadderton Fold.
- Varied building styles, mainly detached well presented properties, many with established vegetation and tree cover.
- Some gritstone walling associated with private dwellings and road boundaries provides a character more recognisable of the moorland fringe areas.
- Village church and small graveyard in secluded wooded grounds on border of Healds Green.
- Noticable character shift from settlement pattern typical of Chadderton area which is typically urban fringe.
- Dispersed settlement pattern comprising scattered farmsteads (sometimes in fairly close proximity) and occasional short terraces of houses.
- Close associations with the River Irk and Chadderton Hall Park which collectively form a valuable leisure resource that also links up with the recently improved Rochdale Canal.

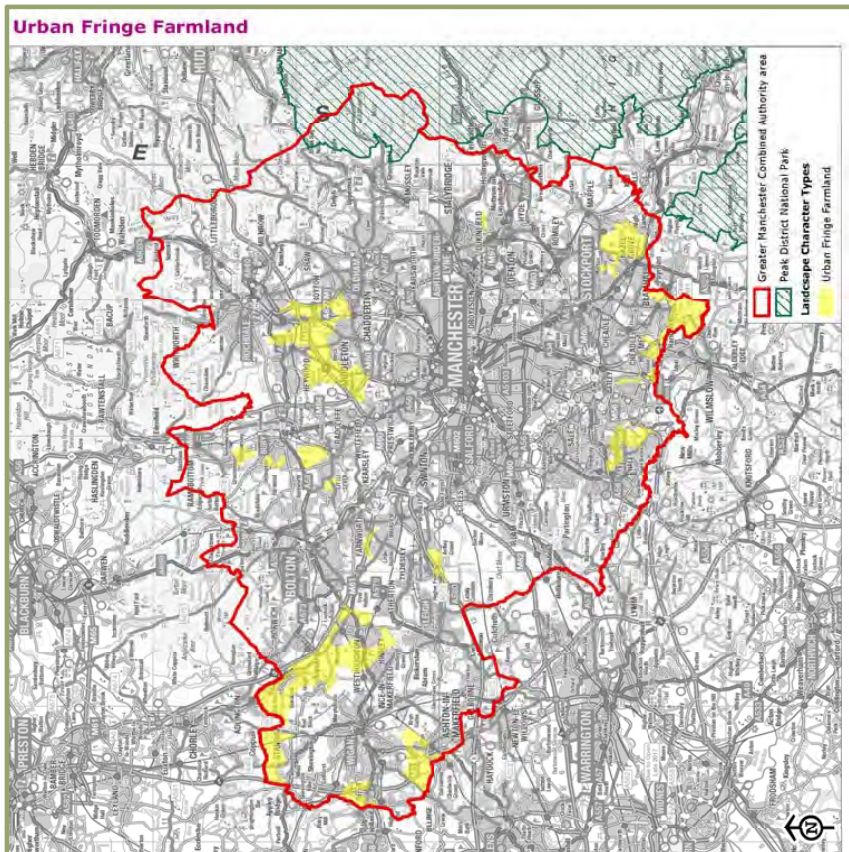
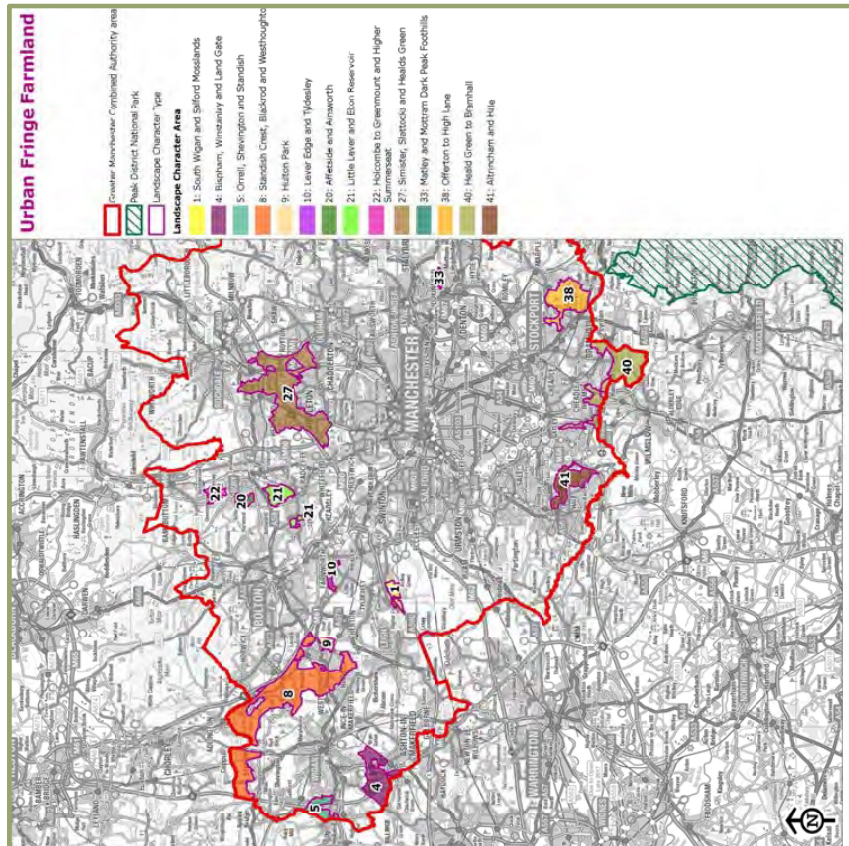
## Principal Landscape Objective

- 5.37** To conserve the distinct character associated with Chadderton Fold, Healds Green and Chadderton Heights through sensitive planning control and environmental improvements that conserve and enhance the visual amenity.

Appendix 2 - Extract from Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study – LCT 27 Urban Fringe Farmland

A.2

LCT: Urban Fringe Farmland

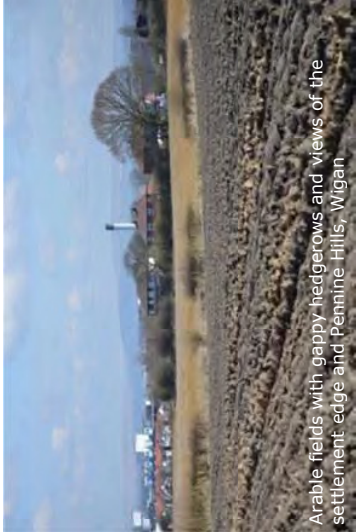


This Landscape Character Type (LCT) is found in Wigan, Bolton, Bury, Salford, Trafford, Rochdale, Oldham, Manchester, Tameside and Stockport Districts (all Greater Manchester authorities).

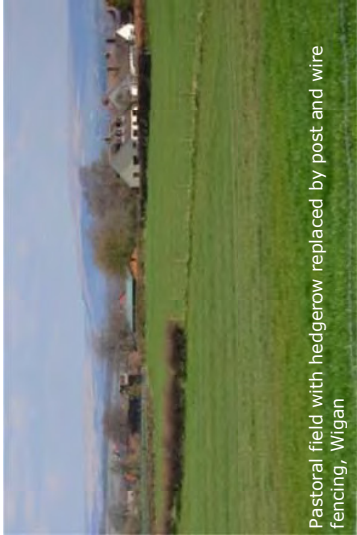
Appendix 2 - Extract from Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and

A.2 Capacity Study – LCT 27 Urban Fringe Farmland

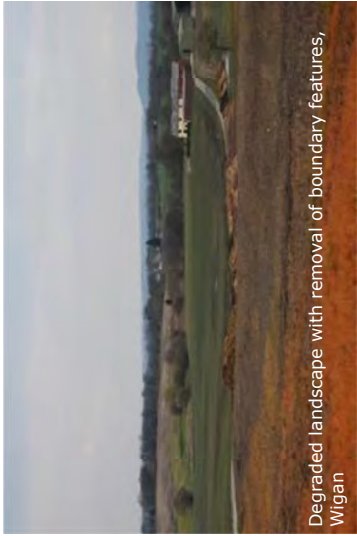
Representative photographs



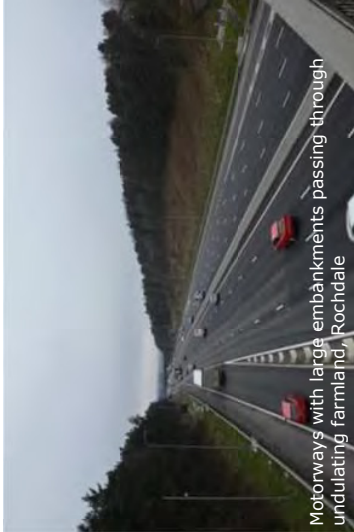
Arable fields with gappy hedgerows and views of the settlement edge and Pennine Hills, Wigan



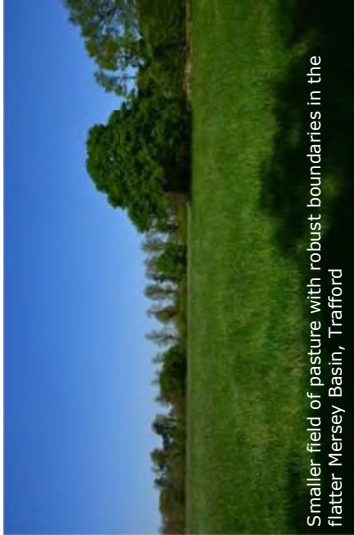
Pastoral field with hedgerow replaced by post and wire fencing, Wigan



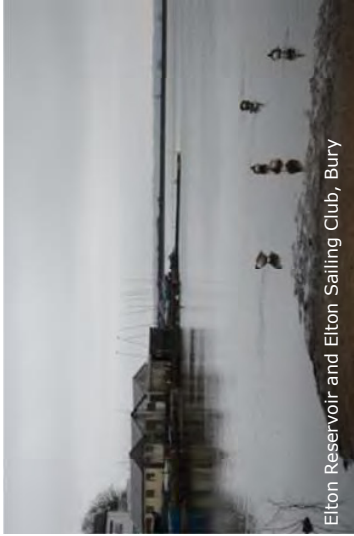
Degraded landscape with removal of boundary features, Wigan



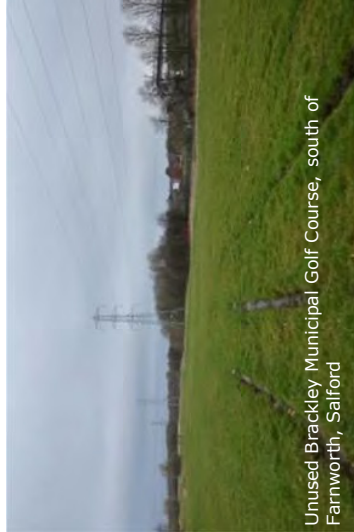
Motorways with large embankments passing through undulating farmland, Rochdale



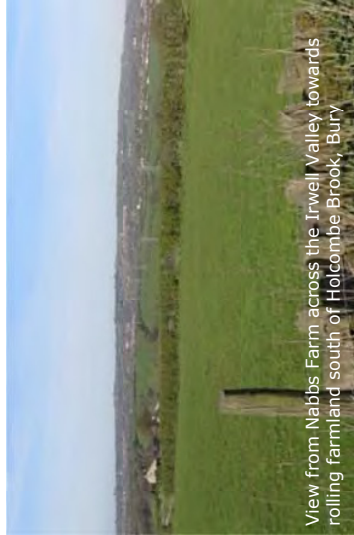
Smaller field of pasture with robust boundaries in the flatter Mersey Basin, Trafford



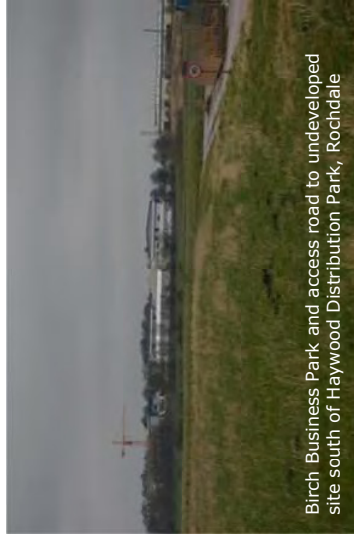
Elton Reservoir and Elton Sailing Club, Bury



Unused Brackley Municipal Golf Course, south of Farnworth, Salford



View from Nabbs Farm across the Irwell Valley towards rolling farmland south of Holcombe Brook, Bury



Birch Business Park and access road to undeveloped site south of Haywood Distribution Park, Rochdale

## Appendix 2 - Extract from Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and

A.2

### Capacity Study – LCT 27 Urban Fringe Farmland

#### Landscape character description

##### Key characteristics

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

- Rolling landscape with elevation ranging between 30 and 250m AOD. The landform becomes gentler as it falls towards the floodplains of the rivers Mersey and Bollin (from 10 to 60m AOD).
- Elevated farmland to the north and east, close to the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills, mainly comprising undulating hills and valleys.
- Landform dissected by narrow, often steep sided wooded cloughs, and drained by a network of streams and ponds (of local ecological value) throughout.
- Underlying bedrock geology at higher elevations dominated by Pennine Coal Measures mudstones, siltstones and sandstones. The Mersey and Bollin floodplains comprise sandstones of the Wilmslow and Chester formations, as well as deposits from the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation.
- Glacial till and fluvial deposits overlay the bedrock, creating the rolling landform.

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

- Variable land use, with the more elevated land in the north and east typified by lower grade agricultural land used for dairy farming, horse grazing and sheep rearing. Pockets of dry heath, acid grassland and moorland fringe are also present.
- 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. Fields tend to be larger with subtle boundary features, with occasional small pasture fields to the east of Altrincham.
- Field boundaries comprise often gappy, species-poor hedgerows with occasional established clumps of hedgerow trees. Post and wire fencing replaces hedges in many locations, whilst occasional stone walls provide definition at higher elevations, but many are in a degraded condition.
- Frequent recreational land uses with sports fields and golf courses located close to the urban edge. 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, often forming a rural buffer to the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills.

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

- Open landscape with sparse woodland cover generally limited to isolated plantation woodland, hedgerows and the steep cloughs that bisect the rolling farmland.
- A small number of Ancient Woodlands (e.g. Oaken Bank Wood and Glade Wood within Hopwood Woodlands Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Rochdale) provide important habitats and wildlife corridors.
- Established clumps of hawthorn and dog rose line some of the field boundaries and highways, with some incorporating mature broadleaved trees.
- Other SBI-designated habitats include areas of dry heath, acid and of species rich grassland. Elton Reservoir, south-east of Bury, remains a legacy of the area's industrial past and is an important site for water fowl. Flashes also form locally important wetland habitats of industrial origin.

###### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

- The Trans-Pennine railway, dismantled railway routes and canals serve as a reminder of the area's industrial past; the importance of the Macclesfield Canal is reflected in its Conservation Area status.
- Scheduled Monuments limited to moated sites north-west of Broadoak Farm (near Marple), another at Arley Hall east of Standish, and Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.
- Birch village (Rochdale) and part of Summerseat (Bury) are Conservation Areas. The landscape also forms part of the setting to a number of other Conservation Areas on its doorstep.
- Grade II Listed Buildings sparsely scattered throughout. The LCT includes the Grade II\* Listed Brandesholme Old Hall (Bury), Hopwood Hall (Rochdale) and Old Manor Farm (Stockport).

###### *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 20<sup>th</sup> century ribbon development strung along roads. Some industrial development and distribution parks are also located close to major roads.
- A network of major road and rail routes, including the M62, M61 and A627(M) motorways, form

## Appendix 2 - Extract from Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and

A.2

### Capacity Study – LCT 27 Urban Fringe Farmland

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. The Rotary Way and Rochdale Way are long distance footpaths connecting to the local network.
- Disused railway lines provide recreation and nature conservation corridors, including in Wigan and the Midshires Way in Stockport.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- In general the more elevated, rolling farmland has an exposed and open character with little sense of enclosure and strong visual connections with surrounding landscapes.
- 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.
- Wide panoramic views from high points over the Greater Manchester conurbation contained within a bowl dramatically flanked by the South/West Pennines and the Peak District National Park.
- Long views towards the coastal plain to the west stretch as far as Fiddler's Ferry Power Station near Widnes.
- Historic mills with tall chimneys and warehouses also form landmarks on the skyline.
- Transport corridors and pylon lines are very apparent, with the lack of tree cover within the rolling open farmland leaving the large roads and motorway visually exposed and audible.

#### **Intactness and condition**

This is a predominantly rural landscape of typically low grade pasture land and semi-improved grassland associated with stock rearing and rough grazing. The elevated farmland in the north and east is a generally open and exposed containing few settlements, however some areas are strongly influenced by the visual presence of the adjoining urban edge and by numerous tall pylon lines and major road and rail routes which bisect the landscape. Other areas are quieter and host a smaller network of winding country lanes connecting dispersed and isolated dwellings. Woodland is generally sparse, though the lower-lying and flatter south contains tree belts and tall hedgerows which provide pockets of seclusion. The influence of adjoining urban areas has eroded and fragmented some of traditional land uses, with industrial buildings, distribution centres and golf courses detracting from rural qualities. The noise of traffic and activity along the motorways and fast moving traffic along A and B roads weaken the sense of rural tranquillity, as does the fairly regular noise of planes overhead, particularly closer to Manchester Airport in the south. Field boundaries comprise predominately species poor hedgerows that are often gappy and in some have been replaced by post and wire fencing. Other signs of physical deterioration include derelict sections of dry stone wall gapped up or completely replaced by fencing; a prevalence of horse keeping on urban fringe (with associated over-grazed paddocks); and evidence of anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping and littering.

## Appendix 2 - Extract from Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and

A.2

## Capacity Study – LCT 27 Urban Fringe Farmland

## Landscape sensitivity assessment

Criteria	Description	Sensitivity Rating
<b>Physical character (including topography and scale)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The landform close to the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills is often strongly undulating, rising to a height of 250m AOD.</li> <li>Within the lower lying floodplain areas the landform is flatter and gently sloping between 10 – 60m AOD.</li> <li>The rolling elevated farmland is generally very open and windswept with a simple pattern of pastoral fields defined by subtle boundary features.</li> <li>The elevated farmland is generally large in scale but with pockets of smaller scale within incised valleys.</li> <li>Lower lying farmland areas are more irregular and overlain by a medium scale field pattern separated by gappy hedgerows that add a degree of complexity.</li> </ul>	M
<b>Natural character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land use is largely semi-improved pastoral farmland with occasional arable fields in lowland and floodplain areas.</li> <li>The rolling landscape is sparsely wooded and dominated by grazing land with relatively poor levels of biodiversity.</li> <li>Some isolated pockets of ancient and riparian woodland of ecological value (e.g. Hopwood Woodlands LNR).</li> <li>Semi-natural areas of dry heath and acid grassland and some fields of species rich grassland are present and form important SBI-designated habitats for local wildlife.</li> <li>Established clumps of hawthorn line some of the field boundaries, with some incorporating mature stands of broadleaf trees to offer a naturalistic character to the farmland.</li> </ul>	M
<b>Historic landscape character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure create a semi-regular field patterns across the rolling farmland.</li> <li>Dry stone walls delineate small pastures at higher elevations and provide a more traditional field pattern. Many are in poor repair.</li> <li>Few Scheduled Monuments within the LCT – those that are present are two moated sites and Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.</li> <li>A scattering of Grade II and II* listed buildings, mainly comprising manor houses and historic farmsteads.</li> <li>Birch Village, part of Summerseat and the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Areas are located within the LCT; it also forms part of the setting to others.</li> <li>Other industrial relicts are important evidence of past activities and land use.</li> </ul>	L-M
<b>Form, density and setting of existing settlement/development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relatively sparsely populated rural area with a scattered pattern of farms and small settlements linked by lanes and some larger roads.</li> <li>Some areas are strongly influenced by adjoining urban areas with ribbon development along roads, utility infrastructure and large electricity overhead lines intruding into the rural landscape.</li> <li>An extensive transport network with rail, large roads and motorways has a dominating influence in some areas.</li> <li>Away from major transport networks there are quieter areas with local roads connecting dispersed settlements and isolated dwellings.</li> <li>Industrial developments are located near to major roads and the large Birch Service Station is located along the M62.</li> <li>The landscape forms a rural backdrop and important separation function between discrete urban areas, preventing coalescence.</li> </ul>	M-H
<b>Views and visual character including skylines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A predominantly elevated, rolling farmland with open and expansive views over the Greater Manchester conurbation.</li> <li>Views in lower lying areas are generally more contained by hedgerows and buildings.</li> <li>The tower blocks of central Manchester are visible on the horizon.</li> <li>Historic mills with tall chimneys and warehouses also form landmarks.</li> <li>The rural character is often interrupted by a network of large electricity pylons extending high above the skyline as they rise up and over Pennine and Dark Peak foothills.</li> </ul>	M
<b>Access and recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Network of public rights of way, long distance footpaths and cycle routes and, closer to the urban edge, informal desire lines.</li> <li>Many areas close to the urban edge are used for recreation with amenity grassland associated with golf courses and large areas of playing fields.</li> </ul>	M-H
<b>Perceptual and</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some areas retain strongly rural characteristics with historic field patterns and traditional stone farmsteads and dwellings.</li> </ul>	M

## Appendix 2 - Extract from Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and

## A.2 Capacity Study – LCT 27 Urban Fringe Farmland

<b>experiential qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rolling elevated farmland has an exposed open character.</li> <li>• Pockets of seclusion and rural tranquillity are present within the lower lying areas, although these are largely open.</li> <li>• Major transport corridors severely detract from these qualities in places, introducing visual and aural impacts.</li> <li>• The rural character is further weakened by a network of large electricity pylons which extend urban influences.</li> <li>• The urban edge is almost always evident although in places a lack of development and relative inaccessibility provide a feeling of remoteness.</li> <li>• Anti-social behaviour, including fly-tipping, evokes a sense of neglect and urban fringe character in locations close to the urban edge.</li> </ul>	
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## Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity

Landscape Character Type level					
Development scenario	Sensitivity				
2-3 storey residential housing developments			M		
Commercial/industrial developments				M-H	
<p>Steeper slopes and land at higher elevation along the Pennine and Peak fringes would have <b>moderate-high</b> sensitivity to residential housing developments and <b>high</b> sensitivity to commercial/industrial developments) due to visual prominence of this rural landscape from surrounding areas. Such areas include elevated land near Thronfields Farm and Chadderton Heights to the immediate west of the A627(M), the site of Dukinfield Golf Club in Tameside (LCA 33), land along the western edge of Hawk Green and High Lane in Stockport (LCA 38), and the western and southern slopes of Pennington Hill (LCA 8, Wigan) upon which Blackrod sits.</p> <p>Areas on the immediate urban edge and adjacent to main roads and motorways typically have a lower sensitivity to both scenarios, due to the strong influence development already has on the rural qualities of the landscape. Areas in Wigan particularly affected include land between the urban edge of Westhoughton and the M61, land adjacent to Astley and the A580 (both LCA 8), and land set between the urban edge of Farnworth and the M61 (LCA 10).</p>					
Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity, by Landscape Character Area					
LCA 22: Holcombe to Greenmount and Higher Summerseat					
2-3 storey residential housing developments				H-M	
Commercial/industrial developments					H
<p><b>Explanation for variance in sensitivity from overall LCT scores:</b> This LCA lies between Brandlesholme and Holcombe Brook, to the north of Bury. The undeveloped farmland within the LCA comprises elevated land on the Pennine fringe and forms the edges of the incised Irwell Valley to the east and Kirklees Valley to the west. The LCA is highly sensitive to any scale or type of development due to its visual prominence in long distance views and function as the undeveloped skyline of the Irwell Valley (with associated Summerseat and Brooksbottom Conservation Areas) and the Kirklees Valley. It is therefore assessed as of <b>moderate-high</b> sensitivity to housing and <b>high</b> sensitivity to commercial/industrial developments.</p> <p><b>Because of the sensitivity of this LCA, it is of paramount importance that the guidance below is closely followed when development proposals are considered within the landscape.</b></p>					

## Appendix 2 - Extract from Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and

A.2

## Capacity Study – LCT 27 Urban Fringe Farmland

<b>LCA 27: Simister, Slattocks and Healds Green (Oldham)</b>					
2-3 storey residential housing developments			<b>M</b>		
Commercial/industrial developments			<b>M</b>		
<p><b>Explanation for variance in sensitivity from overall LCT scores:</b> The urban farmland between Heywood and Middleton is judged to have a <b>moderate</b> sensitivity to commercial/ industrial development (in addition to the housing scenario) as it lies adjacent to and contains existing large industrial development (Birch Business Park and Stakehill Industrial &amp; Distribution Park) and is crossed by large road infrastructure such as the M62 and A627(M) which have a strong influence, detracting from the rural qualities of the landscape. However, the more elevated land in the east of this LCA (around Thornfields Farm) would be more sensitive to development due to its visual prominence from areas to the west.</p>					
<b>LCA 40: Heald Green (Stockport) to Bramhall</b>					
2-3 storey residential housing developments			<b>L-M</b>		
Commercial/industrial developments			<b>L-M</b>		
<p><b>Explanation for variance in sensitivity from overall LCT scores:</b> This LCA is already strongly influenced by urban land uses, housing and industrial developments (including new developments on brownfield land), major transport infrastructure and the sounds/movements of air traffic associated with Manchester Airport. It is therefore of <b>low-moderate</b> sensitivity to both development scenarios, providing the guidance below is followed. Please also refer to the Stockport Landscape Character Assessment (2018).</p>					

**Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities**

**The following provides a summary of the special landscape qualities and key features/attributes that would be sensitive to change (e.g. as a result of development):**

- Locations of elevated, open character with some prominent rural skylines forming a backdrop to views from adjacent urban areas.
- Areas of complex, undulating landform cut by distinctive steep wooded cloughs.
- Locally important semi-natural habitats and networks, including pockets of ancient and riparian woodland (e.g. Hopwood Woodlands LNR), patches of dry heath and acid grassland, remnant semi-natural grasslands, ponds and flashes.
- Intact lengths of gritstone walls, hedgerows and tree clumps along field boundaries forming ecological networks and bringing definition to the 18th and 19th century and post-medieval field patterns.
- Unifying vernacular of stone-built traditional farms and cottages, with some listed buildings including the Grade II\* Brandlesholme Old Hall (Bury), Hopwood Hall (Rochdale) and Old Manor Farm (Stockport).
- Conservation Areas at Birch Village, Summerseat and the Macclesfield Canal, and the role the landscape plays as a rural setting to adjacent Conservation Areas.
- Industrial relicts, including disused railway lines, canals, mill buildings and the nationally designated Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.
- Two medieval moated sites near Marple and Standish which are nationally designated as Scheduled Monuments.
- Large areas defined by a sparse pattern of scattered stone-built farmsteads, individual properties and small settlements, linked by winding country lanes.
- Opportunities to access and enjoy the rural landscape, including the long distance footpaths (Rochdale Way, Rotary Way, Middlewich Way), cycle routes and a strong public rights of way network crossing the farmland and emanating from adjacent urban areas.



## Appendix 2 - Extract from Greater Manchester Landscape Sensitivity and

A.2

### Capacity Study – LCT 27 Urban Fringe Farmland

- The LCT's strong visual connections with foothills and uplands of the West/South Pennines and Peak District National Park, which lie to the north and east of Greater Manchester.
- Pockets of relative remoteness and tranquillity, including in the lower-lying south where robust hedgerows and lines of trees provide enclosure; elevated points in the north and east creating a sense of exposure.
- The LCT's role as an immediate rural backdrop to development and its important function in separating discrete urban areas, preventing coalescence.

#### Guidance and opportunities for future development and landscape management/enhancement

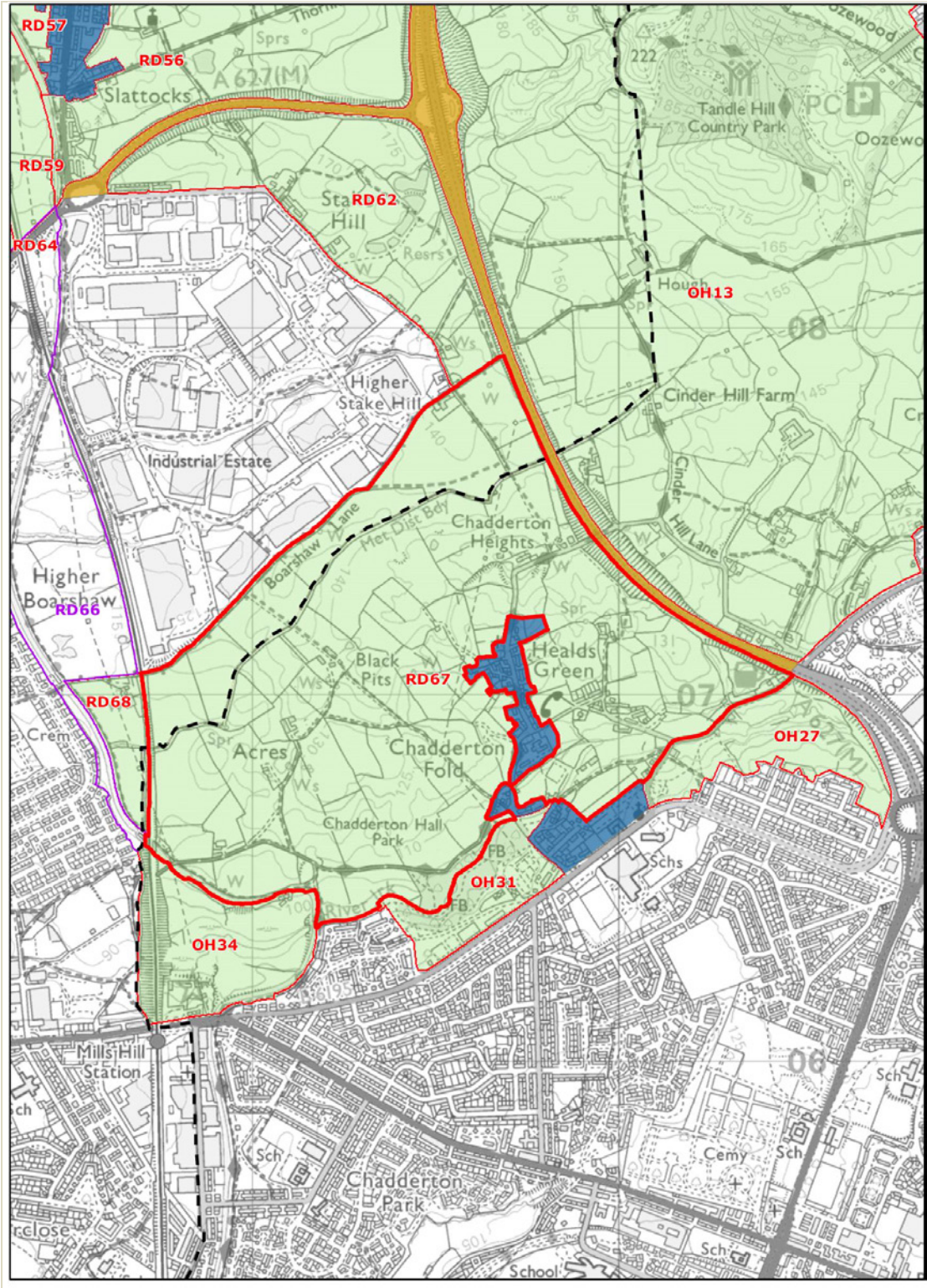
##### Guidance and opportunities to consider within this Landscape Character Type include:

- Avoid siting any development on the highly prominent, elevated and very sparsely settled land in the elevated north and east. Conserve open, undeveloped skylines.
- Utilise dips in the landform, including valley slopes, and existing tree/woodland cover to integrate new development into the landscape.
- Protect and where possible enhance semi-natural habitats and networks, including pockets of ancient and riparian woodland (e.g. Hopwood Woodlands LNR), patches of dry heath and acid grassland, remnant semi-natural grasslands, ponds and flashes.
- Strengthen and restore the dry stone wall and hedgerow network in association with any new development, reflecting local characteristics (choice of stone and building style; hedgerow species and management regimes). Encourage the restoration of traditional boundaries where fencing is present.
- Ensure any new development does not dilute the strong field patterns associated with the landscape.
- Respect local building styles and materials in new housing developments, seeking to reflect these in their design and build (particularly the use of local gritstone).
- Conserve the character and setting of the Conservation Areas at Birch Village, Summerseat and the Macclesfield Canal, as well as the role the landscape plays as a rural setting to adjacent Conservation Areas.
- Conserve remaining industrial relicts, including disused railway lines, canals, mill buildings and the nationally designated Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.
- Protect the setting and integrity of the two moated sites within the LCT which are Scheduled Monuments.
- Explore opportunities to develop unused Brackley Municipal Golf Course, south of Farnworth, for habitat creation with possible links with The Northern Forest initiative<sup>1</sup>.
- Explore opportunities to re-route the Rotary Way long distance footpath through Brackley Municipal Golf Course and thus avoid crossing over the M61.
- Design-in the introduction of SuDS to any new development, addressing any changes in hydrology (and subsequent knock-on effects such as increased diffuse pollution from agricultural run-off). This landscape is part of the wider catchment of a number of Greater Manchester's main river valleys.
- Encourage woodland creation schemes on areas of low grade agricultural land, including through the Northern Forest initiative. Woodland planting along motorways and staggered blocks of planting should be used to help screen views of traffic and reduce noise.
- Conserve the rural road network, ensuring any new highway design minimises unnecessary signage and lighting and reflects local characteristics (e.g. road verges/boundaries).
- Protect the pockets of tranquillity and relative remoteness associated with the landscape, and the role the LCT plays as a rural backdrop and buffer between discrete urban areas.
- Conserve key views and intervisibility with the South/West Pennines and Dark Peak foothills, upland fringes and open moorlands.

A.3

Appendix 3 - Extract from Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment – RD67

Land Parcel Ref:	RD67	Local Authority 1:	Rochdale
Parcel Type:	Green belt parcel	Local Authority 2:	Oldham



Land Parcel Ref:	RD67	Local Authority 1:	Rochdale
Parcel Type:	Green belt parcel	Local Authority 2:	Oldham

### Parcel Description

This large parcel covers the extent between Stakehill Industrial Estate and Chadderton Fold. Approximately three quarters of the parcel lies within Oldham Council District. The A627 (M) forms the eastern boundary with Rochdale Canal and the railway combining to make the western edge. The undulating landform mostly comprises pasture fields defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees with a number of farmsteads situated throughout. A few clusters of residential development are also located in the eastern area between Healds Green and the A627 (M). Woodland is concentrated around the River Irk, which flows through the parcel and into the canal in the southern area of the parcel. Rochdale Way also traverses the parcel from east to west. There are steep topographical changes within the west of the parcel.

### Purpose 1 - Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

#### 1a - Does the parcel exhibit evidence of existing urban sprawl and consequent loss of openness?

Rating: Moderate

##### Notes:

The parcel lies between Middleton and Chadderton. There are existing urbanising features within the parcel including clustered residential development east of Healds Green and adjacent to Mill Brow. There is a sense of openness within the parcel, particularly to the west. To the east, the parcel has a number of urbanising features including housing which reduces the sense of openness. The parcel contributes towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of Middleton.

#### 1b - Does the parcel protect open land from the potential for urban sprawl to occur?

Rating: Moderate

##### Notes:

The parcel lies between Middleton and Chadderton. There are some barrier features such as the A627 (M) on the eastern border and the River Irk to the south. Both play some role in preventing urban sprawl from occurring within respective areas of the parcel. Other features within the parcel include steep topographical changes to the west. The parcel plays some role in inhibiting ribbon development along a number of roads from east to west these include Street Bridge Road, Cragg Road, Healds Green, Kiln Hill Lane and two further minor access routes west of Kiln Hill Lane.

### Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

#### 2a - Does the parcel prevent the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between neighbouring settlements?

Rating: Moderate

##### Notes:

The parcel lies to the north of Chadderton and to the east of the majority of the development within Middleton. A high degree of development has already occurred however the parcel prevents the coalescence of an enclave of development which projects from the north-eastern edge of Middleton and Chadderton to the south. Whilst the parcel forms part of a gap between the settlements of Chadderton and Middleton, it is not of critical importance to the separation of the two settlements, as they have already merged to the south.

Land Parcel Ref:	RD67	Local Authority 1:	Rochdale
Parcel Type:	Green belt parcel	Local Authority 2:	Oldham

### Purpose 3 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

#### 3a - Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside?

Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?

Rating: Moderate

#### Notes:

The parcel has very little or no built development. There are influences of urban development visible from within the parcel as a result of a neighbouring large industrial estate. The parcel still displays some of the characteristics of the countryside despite these urbanising influences.

### Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

#### 4a - Does the parcel contribute to the setting and 'special character' of a historic town(s)?

Rating: Moderate

#### Notes:

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlements of Chadderton, Failsworth, Middleton (Town Centre), Royton and Shaw (Park Cottages). In practice, the parcel plays a role in the setting of the historic settlements of Middleton (Town Centre), and Chadderton, but to a limited degree. Note – It was not possible to assess in field due to inaccessibility of higher ground. Significant screening from roadside vegetation adjacent to minor roads within the west of the parcel limits intervisibility with historic settlements at lower elevation.

### Purpose 5 - Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

Green Belt has the potential to make a strategic contribution to urban regeneration by restricting the land available for development and encouraging developers to seek out and recycle derelict / urban sites. It is difficult to distinguish the extent to which each Green Belt parcels delivers against this purpose and therefore this study will not undertake a parcel by parcel assessment of the contribution made in relation to Purpose 5.