Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Stockport Sensitivity Assessment Addendum

Final report
Prepared by LUC
April 2023

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Stockport Sensitivity Assessment
Addendum

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Introduction

1.1 LUC was commissioned by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) in January 2023 to produce an addendum to the Stockport Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study produced by LUC in 2018.

1.2 The 2018 study was produced as part of the landscape evidence to support Stockport's Local Plan. It involved undertaking a critical review of the landscape character evidence included in the UDP Review (2006) to produce a comprehensive and up to date assessment of the landscape character and sensitivity of the Borough of Stockport. This 2023 addendum provides additional evidence alongside the 2018 report.

1.3 The 2018 study identified 12 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within Stockport. The LCA profiles covered the following:

- Landscape character description
- Landscape evaluation
- Landscape sensitivity assessment
- Assessment of landscape sensitivity to a range of development scenarios (residential and small-scale commercial for all 12 LCAs and 75m high wind turbines for 11 of the LCAs – excluding LCA D: River Mersey)

1.4 This 2023 addendum assesses landscape sensitivity of all 12 LCAs to two additional wind energy development scenarios, as outlined below:

- Micro – typical height to blade tip of 25m
- Small – typical height to blade tip of 50m

1.5 The approach to the assessment in this addendum takes into account updated guidance on sensitivity assessment which was published after the 2018 study. A review of the 2018 results for landscape sensitivity to medium scale wind turbines (typical height to blade tip of 75m) has therefore also been undertaken.

1.6 This addendum serves as an update to the previous study and highlights any changes. For the full Stockport Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study, refer to the 2018 report.

1.7 This report is structured into, as follows:

- Chapter 2 sets out the approach and methodology followed within this addendum report.
- Chapter 3 sets out the methodology and criteria followed to produce the landscape sensitivity assessments.
- Chapter 4 reviews the context and baseline of the study area, including policy and guidance, landscape baseline and relevant landscape character studies.
- Chapter 5 presents the assessment profiles for the 12 Landscape Character Areas.

Chapter 2
Approach

Stage 1: Desk-based review

Policy and Guidance Context Review

2.1 A desk-based review of policy and guidance context is summarised in Chapter 4.

Landscape Context Review

2.2 A desk-based back-check and review of the landscape baseline was undertaken to assess whether there have been any material changes to the landscape since the 2018 study was produced. This considered, for example, any changes to designations, land use and new developments. This is summarised in Chapter 4.

Methodology Review

2.3 The methodology used in the 2018 study covered a wide range of development scenario types including, residential, small-scale commercial developments, solar PV developments and wind turbines of 75m in height from ground to blade tip. This 2023 study specifically considers landscape sensitivity to small scale wind turbines. The method has therefore been reviewed and updated in line with current guidance. The updated method is presented in Chapter 3.

Stage 2: Field Verification

2.4 A site visit has been undertaken to verify any changes to the landscape and its sensitivity identified within the desk based research. The field survey verification has been undertaken in a systematic way using GIS mapping technology on tablets within the field.

Stage 3: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

2.5 Once the baseline and landscape sensitivity had been reviewed, confirmed on site and updated for each applicable LCA, the landscape sensitivity of each of the 12 LCAs to the different wind energy development scenarios was assessed.

2.6 As an assessment of landscape sensitivity to medium turbines (75m) was included within the 2018 report for 11 of the 12 LCAs, these results were reviewed against the updated baseline and updated criteria and any changes highlighted. In the 2018 study, LCA "D River Mersey" was not assessed for sensitivity to turbines. An assessment of this LCA has been carried out as part of this 2023 study.

2.7 The landscape sensitivity to micro turbines (25m) and small turbines (50m) was then assessed for all 12 LCAs.

2.8 All of these results are detailed in Chapter 5 of this report and are supported by mapping.

Stage 4: Reporting

2.9 This addendum report was produced at the beginning of April 2023 for consideration by SMBC and for publication as part of the evidence base. Comments received have been accounted for in this final addendum report.

2.10 An accessible version (pdf) of the addendum report has been provided along with six printed copies (6 colour, double sided, capable of reproduction in black and white). The GIS data of the final sensitivity assessment results has also been provided to SMBC.

Chapter 3
Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Methodology

3.1 The methodology for assessing landscape sensitivity in the 2018 study has been updated and takes into account the following:

- Updated guidance published by Natural England in 2019[1]
- Tailored to be more specific to wind turbine development.

Types of development considered

3.2 This landscape Sensitivity Addendum assesses each of the LCA in terms of its sensitivity to the 'principle' of wind energy development, without knowing the specific size, configuration or exact location (as this would be detailed at planning application level). The three development scenarios assessed across all Stockport LCAs are:

- Micro – typical height to blade tip of 25m
- Small – typical height to blade tip of 50m
- Medium – typical height to blade tip of 75m (note: all LCAs with the exception of LCA D: River Mersey were assessed in the 2018 study and have been reviewed against the updated methodology)

3.3 In 2022, a piece of mapping work was produced by SMBC which identified potentially suitable locations for wind turbine development across the borough. This exercise established that there is very little land that is suitable for large scale wind turbines (i.e. those that are 75m in height), due to the presence of constraints and clearance/safety buffers around turbines of taller heights. Therefore, large turbines (75m+ in height) have not been assessed as part of this study.

A criteria-based assessment

3.4 Landscape sensitivity is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria and drawing on knowledge from previous studies and experiences.

3.5 Criteria selection is based on the attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected by the type of development (in this case, wind energy) and considers both 'landscape' and 'visual' aspects of sensitivity. The criteria

[1] The Natural England guidance is available here

used by this study, which has been updated since the 2018 study, is shown below.

3.6 The criteria heading 'Form, density and setting of existing development' was used in the previous assessment and was most relevant to residential and small-scale commercial development scenarios. This assessment has been tailored to wind development specifically and a new and more relevant criteria has therefore replaced it, i.e., 'Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)'.

Making an overall judgement on levels of landscape sensitivity

3.7 A five-point rating from 'low' to high' landscape sensitivity is used to illustrate overall levels of landscape sensitivity – i.e., how susceptible the character and quality of the landscape would be to change. These definitions are shown below and have been updated since the 2018 study.

Table 3.1: Table 3.1 Five-point sensitivity rating definitions

Sensitivity Level	Definition
High (H)	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly vulnerable to change from wind energy development. Such development is likely to result in a significant change in character.
Moderate - High (M-H)	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from wind energy development. There may be some limited opportunity to accommodate wind turbines without significantly changing landscape character. Great care would be needed in siting and design.
Moderate (M)	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb wind energy development, it is likely to cause a degree of change in character. Care would be needed in siting and design.
Low - Moderate (L-M)	Fewer of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate wind energy development with limited change in character. Care is still needed when siting and designing to avoid adversely affecting key characteristics.
Low (L)	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust in that they can withstand change from the introduction of wind turbines. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate wind energy development without a significant change in character. Care is still needed when siting and designing these developments to ensure best fit with the landscape.

3.8 As with all assessments based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation. This is particularly to avoid the suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can automatically be associated with certain sensitivities – the reality is that an assessment of landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (i.e., 'criteria').

3.9 A landscape sensitivity judgement (using the five-point scale above) has been provided for each development scenario for each LCA. This takes into account the inter-relationships between the different criteria and the specific characteristics of the landscape being assessed. The sensitivity judgements for all of the LCAs are presented in Chapter 5.

3.10 Landscape sensitivity often varies within LCAs, with areas exhibiting of higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each LCA profile in Chapter 5, particularly in relation to the: 'Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity' and 'Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities'. Whilst the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals for wind energy development will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

3.11 Landscape sensitivity may also vary between different wind energy development scenarios. These variations are addressed through professional judgement and on a case for case basis. Variations are explained within the assessments. Some examples of modifying factors are listed below:

- Lower sensitivity to micro turbines where woodland cover provides opportunities for screening.
- Lower sensitivity to small turbines where existing similar sized vertical infrastructure, such as pylons, are already present in the landscape.
- Higher sensitivity to medium turbines where the field pattern and scale is small and the larger scale turbine would contrast with this.
- Narrow wooded valleys are more sensitive to medium turbines due to the contrast with the enclosed small-scale of the landscape.

Justifications for variations in sensitivity between development scenarios are outlined in the box entitled 'Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity' and justifications vary from LCA to LCA.

Table 3.2 Landscape sensitivity criteria specific to wind energy development

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria	
Physical character (including topography and scale) This considers the shape and scale of the landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the scale of potential development. A flat or gently sloping landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features (including prominent hills and valleys) or pronounced undulations. Developments that fit the scale of the landscape, in terms of overall landscape pattern and individual features, will result in lower levels of impact (landscape sensitivity to developments of an appropriate size and scale will be lower). Landform is considered in terms of its shape and scale, for example smooth, gently undulating or flat landscapes such as plains that cover a large area are judged to be landforms that are large in scale, as are large mountainous areas with high peaks and plateaus. More enclosed valley landscapes, with small scale features, or lowland areas with many small undulating hills, would be landforms that are considered small in scale.- Smaller scale landforms are likely to be more sensitive than larger scale landforms because turbines may appear out of scale, detract from visually important landforms, or appear visually confusing (due to turbines being at varying heights) in the latter types of landscapes. Landscapes with frequent human scale features, such as existing small-scale buildings, trees, hedgerows and dry-stone walls or small-scale intricate landscape patterns (e.g. smaller and/or irregular field sizes) may be particularly sensitive to larger turbines. This is because large features such as wind turbines may dominate smaller scale features within the landscape.	
Data Sources: Stockport Landscape Character Assessment; field survey; OS contours; OS mapping	
Some indicators of lower sensitivity ■ An extensive lowland flat landscape or plateau. ■ Larger scale landform, such as that which is uniform, featureless, smooth and covers large area. ■ Few/no human-scale features.	**Some indicators of higher sensitivity** ■ Rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale). ■ The landform may be very steep with exposed, visible slopes. ■ Small-scale or intimate landform, such as narrow valleys, often with a dense distribution of human-scale features, such as woodland.
Natural character This criterion considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape in terms of coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g., trees, hedgerows) which could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of nationally or internationally designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscapes with limited natural features (including intensively farmed areas or areas with high levels of existing development) will be less sensitive.	
Data Sources: Stockport Landscape Character Assessment; field survey; OS mapping; designated area boundaries; Aerial imagery (Google Earth)	
Some indicators of lower sensitivity ■ Much of the landscape is intensively farmed or developed. ■ Little semi-natural habitat coverage. ■ Few valued natural features.	**Some indicators of higher sensitivity** ■ Large areas of the landscape are nationally or internationally designated for their nature conservation interest. ■ Frequent occurrence of valued natural features across the landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria	
Historic landscape character This considers the extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' (a sense of being an historic landscape, with reference to the Historic Landscape Characterisation) and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character (i.e., Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features and remains or other features listed in the landscape character assessment). Landscapes which contain important archaeological or historic features or historic associations are likely to have a higher level of sensitivity to wind energy development. Historical features may be in the form of historic land cover types and field systems, areas of buried archaeology, historic designed landscapes such as a Registered Park and Garden, or buildings/structures designated for their historical significance. Areas which make a significant contribution to the setting of a historical feature or landscapes may also have higher sensitivity to wind energy development. Landscapes that are primarily of modern influence and origin will have a lower sensitivity to wind energy development.	
Data Sources: Stockport Landscape Character Assessment; field survey; OS mapping; designated area boundaries	
Some indicators of lower sensitivity ■ Landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area. ■ Little time depth (i.e. large intensively farmed fields).	**Some indicators of higher sensitivity** ■ Landscape with a high density of historic features (many designations) important to the character of the area. ■ Great time depth.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns) Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of consistent ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development but may be more sensitive than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller and / or irregular field sizes. Man-made surfaces or brownfield sites are likely to have lower sensitivity while naturalistic landcover elements such as woodlands, rivers/streams/water bodies, meadows, heathland, unimproved or semi-improved grasslands and parkland will increase sensitivity to wind energy development. Large-scale infrastructure, major communications routes and large-scale developments reduce sensitivity to wind energy development although development needs to be carefully sited to avoid visual clutter.	
Data Sources: Stockport Landscape Character Assessment; field survey; OS mapping; Aerial imagery (Google Earth)	
Some indicators of lower sensitivity ■ An open, continuous landscape with uniform land cover and lacking in human-scale features, or an urban or 'brownfield' landscape. ■ A landscape dominated by large-scale industrial development or major infrastructure e.g., major transport routes, pylons.	**Some indicators of higher sensitivity** ■ A landscape with a strong variety in land cover, and complex patterns, containing numerous human-scale features and semi-natural land cover. ■ The field pattern may be characterised by small-scale, ancient fields. ■ A sparsely populated 'unspoilt' landscape with small-scale vernacular settlements and buildings. ■ Historic settlement pattern apparent. ■ Lack of large-scale infrastructure.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria	
Views and visual character including skylines This considers the visual prominence of the assessment area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform or land cover), and the degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape (i.e., the extent to which potential development would be visible). The relative visibility of a landscape may influence its sensitivity to wind development. An elevated landscape such as a hill range or plateau, which is viewed from other landscapes, may be more sensitive than a landscape with limited visibility. Landscapes which have important visual relationships with other areas, for example where one area provides a backdrop to a neighbouring area (which may be a designated landscape such as a National Park), are considered more sensitive than those with few visual relationships. The extent of inter-visibility may be modified by the importance of these views to appreciation of the landscape, and whether adjacent landscapes provide a setting for one another. Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to wind energy development because turbines may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments as well as landforms. Where skylines are affected by development, e.g., through the presence of electricity pylons or existing turbines, the addition of turbines of a different scale may lead to visual confusion. Therefore, the presence of existing development cannot always assume a lower sensitivity to new development.	
Data Sources: Stockport Landscape Character Assessment; field survey; OS contours	
Some indicators of lower sensitivity ■ An enclosed, self-contained landscape, or one with weak connections to neighbouring areas. ■ A landscape in which skylines are not prominent, and there are no important landmark features on the skyline.	**Some indicators of higher sensitivity** ■ A landscape which has important visual relationships with one or more neighbouring areas. ■ It or the landscape(s) it is visible from is designated as National Park. ■ A landscape with prominent or distinctive undeveloped skylines, or with important landmark features on skylines.
Access and recreation This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. They may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land, and outdoor tourist / visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation as long-distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population, presence of National Trust land ownership, and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.	
Data Sources: Stockport Landscape Character Assessment; OS mapping	
Some indicators of lower sensitivity ■ Recreation value limited to community sports facilities and local open spaces. ■ Limited provision of access routes which are likely to be of community importance, e.g., local footpaths, bridleways and limited areas of open access land.	**Some indicators of higher sensitivity** ■ Landscapes regionally important for access and enjoyment of the landscape, e.g., with popular outdoor tourist attractions, country parks, land under National Trust ownership, or a concentration of locally important outdoor attractions with visitor facilities. ■ Presence of well-connected long-distance routes and public rights of way linking centres of population.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria	
Perceptual and experiential qualities This considers qualities such as the rural character of the landscape (traditional land uses with few modern human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil tend to be more sensitive to wind energy, since turbines may be perceived as intrusive. Landscapes which are relatively free from overt human activity and disturbance, and which have a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality, will therefore be more sensitive. Qualities such as tranquillity can be found even in settled areas, where the influence of overtly modern development is reduced. Wind energy development will generally be less obtrusive in landscapes which are strongly influenced by modern human influences such as landscapes that have a busier character, sources of human noise and activity or visible signs of built form or other development, particularly larger scale modern infrastructure, industry or housing, or commercial forestry. In areas with existing built development/vertical structures, cluttering of skylines may become an issue, depending on the siting and design of structures but this needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Landscapes that have a high scenic quality (which may be recognised as a National Park or within the setting of such landscapes) will be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. This is particularly the case where their special qualities (as recorded in the Landscape Character Assessment or designation documents) are likely to be affected by wind energy development. Scenic and special qualities may relate to landscapes that are not designated as well as landscape designated for their natural beauty. Scenic qualities can include contrasts and combinations of landform and landcover.	
Data Sources: Stockport Landscape Character Assessment; field survey	
Some indicators of lower sensitivity ■ A landscape without attractive character, with no pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements, such as industrial areas or derelict land. ■ Special qualities will not be affected by wind energy development. ■ A landscape with much human activity and modern development, such as industrial areas.	**Some indicators of higher sensitivity** ■ A landscape of consistently attractive character, with pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements. All or the vast majority is designated for its scenic qualities. ■ Special qualities highly likely to be affected by wind energy development. ■ A tranquil landscape with little or no overt sign of modern human activity and development.

Chapter 4
Context and Baseline Review

Policy and Guidance Context Review

The European Landscape Convention

4.1 The European Landscape Convention[2] remains relevant despite the UK's departure from the EU.

National Planning Policy Context (NPPF)

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[3], published in 2012, was under review at the time of writing the 2018 study. Since the 2018 report was published there have been three revisions to this policy document, in 2018, 2019 and 2021.

4.3 The NPPF (2021) includes as part of its approach to protecting the natural environment, recognition for the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits to be secured from natural capital. Importantly, great weight is to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.

4.4 As part of the approach to achieving well-designed places the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments "are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting." The NPPF also recognises the benefits of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, areas of biodiversity and the wider ecosystem (para. 174).

4.5 Within para. 20, the NPPF states that policies should make sufficient provision for:

> "*conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation"*

4.6 Para. 155 of the NPPF states that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat plans should:

> "*provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts)"*
>
> *"consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development"*

4.7 In December 2022 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) opened a consultation[4] to seek views on how they might develop new and revise current national planning policy to support their wider objectives. Chapter 8 of the consultation addressed onshore wind and energy efficiency.

> The DLUHC consulted on their plan to making *'changes to planning policy for onshore wind to deliver a more localised approach that provides local authorities more flexibility to respond to the views of their local communities'*

Peak District National Park

4.8 The legislation and acts related to this designation have not changed since the 2018 study was published.

4.9 As outlined in para 4.3 above, the updated NPPF (2021) states that great weight is to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.

4.10 In 2019 a Policy Position Statement[5] was published by National Parks England (NPE) regarding Climate Change. This statement highlights the effects of climate change on National Parks and states that National Park Authorities and National Parks have a critical role to play in addressing the climate crisis. It also states that NPE would look to "Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Utilities to support

[2] Council of Europe (2000) The European Landscape Convention (Florence) (online) Available here
[3] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework [online] Available here
[4] Consultation information can be found here
[5] National Parks England: Climate Change Position Statement (2019) is available here

National Park Authorities (NPAs) in promoting small-scale, community-owned renewables".

4.11 The Peak District National Park Management Plan[6] has been updated since the 2018 study was published. This new management plan covers the management of the National Park between the years of 2023 and 2028. The special qualities outlined in the new management are as follows:

- Beautiful views created by contrasting landscapes and dramatic geology.
- Internationally important and locally distinctive wildlife and habitats.
- Undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies within reach of millions.
- Landscapes that tell a story of thousands of years of people, farming and industry.
- Characteristic settlements with strong communities and traditions.
- An inspiring space for escape, adventure, discovery and quiet reflection.
- Vital benefits for millions of people that flow beyond the landscape boundary.

Aims set out in the management include:

"The Peak District National Park is more resilient and net-zero by 2040 through its exemplary response to climate change."

"The Peak District National Park is a resilient landscape in which nature, beauty, and cultural heritage are significantly enhanced."

Guidelines

4.12 In the 2018 study it was stated that there is no prescribed method for assessing landscape sensitivity. The Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (Scottish Natural Heritage and the former Countryside Agency, 2004) is a discussion paper on landscape sensitivity and capacity which informed LUC's approach in the 2018 study. Since this 2018 report was published new guidance has been published by Natural England.

4.13 This 2023 assessment draws on advice contained in Natural England's '*Approach to landscape sensitivity assessment*' (2019)[7] which supersedes the topic paper referred to in the 2018 study. This describes the term 'landscape sensitivity', within the context of spatial planning and land management, as follows:

"Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value."

4.14 This new Natural England guidance has been used to inform the updated landscape sensitivity scale and criteria in Chapter 3.

4.15 The third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3, 2013), which the 2018 report was compliant with, remains unchanged.

Landscape Baseline Review

4.16 The LCA boundaries have remained as they were in the 2018 study and the location of these LCAs are shown on Figure 4.1.

Designations

4.17 There have been only minor changes to designations since the 2018 report was published. These changes have been incorporated into the LCA sensitivity assessments in Chapter 5 of this study and are briefly summarised below:

- Three Local Nature Reserves identified by DEFRA have been identified on formal mapping within the borough, two of which are located within LCAs (LCA E and LCA G).
- There are some minor changes to the National Cycle Network however these are mainly within the urban centre of Stockport and in most cases do not impact the LCAs. There are however two exceptions to this (LCA E and LCA G).
- There has been a very small length of Public Right of Way (PRoW) added to the east of Marple (within LCA G).

4.18 A very small number of changes to listed building designations throughout the borough, however none are expected to materially affect the baseline and for this reason, specific changes have not been included within the LCA sensitivity assessments.

[6] The Peak District National Park Management is available here

[7] Natural England's 2019 approach document is available here

Landscape Changes

4.19 In general, the character of the landscape across the borough, in respect to vegetation cover, field patterns, condition, perceptual characteristics and settlement pattern, remained similar to that in 2018 and no obvious significant changes were apparent.

4.20 Some new development has taken place since 2018, including new residential development and road infrastructure and the introduction of solar renewable energy, however these are small changes and are not determined to materially change the baseline of the LCA. These changes are highlighted within the LCA sensitivity assessments in Chapter 5 of this study.

Landscape Character Areas Review

National

4.21 There have been no changes to National Landscape Character Areas[8] since the 2018 study was published and therefore, they remain relevant to this study.

Greater Manchester

4.22 The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment[9] was published in August 2018, shortly after the Stockport Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment study.

4.23 These landscape character studies were prepared in parallel, and it was ensured that the local work undertaken for Stockport complemented the more strategic GM-wide study. Therefore, it is anticipated there are no additional changes or updates to highlight within this report and information presented in the 2018 report remains relevant.

Other Character Assessments

4.24 The following neighbouring studies have not been updated since the 2018 study was published and therefore remain relevant to this study:

- Peak District Landscape Strategy[10]
- The High Peak District's Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document[11]
- The Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment[12]

[8] The Landscape Character Area Profiles are available here
[9] The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity assessment (2018) is available here
[10] The Peak District Landscape Strategy (2009) is available here
[11] The High Peak District Landscape Character SPD (2006) is available here
[12] The East Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (2018) is available here

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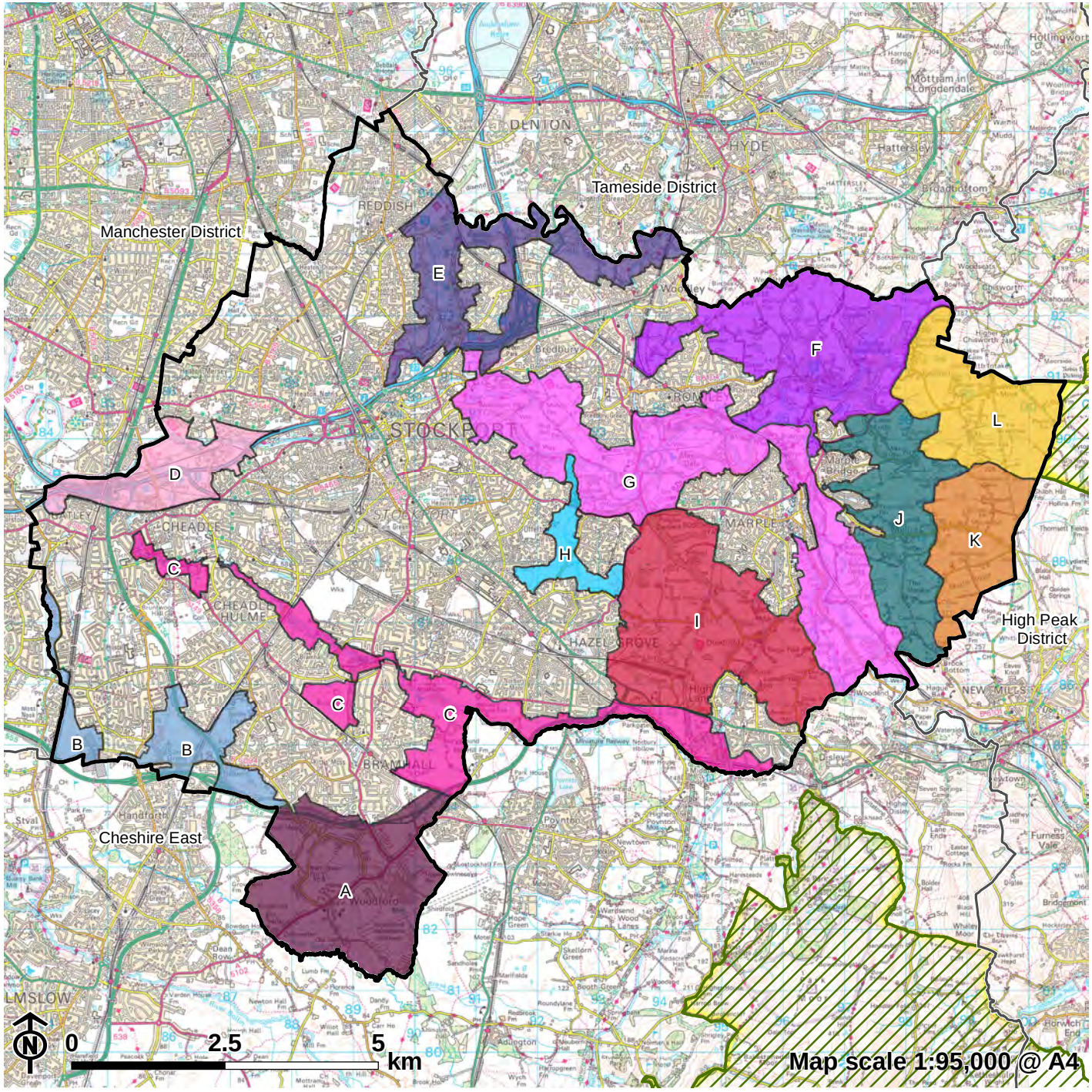
Figure 4.1: Landscape Character Areas



- Stockport Borough boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority boundary
- Peak District National Park

Landscape Character Area

- LCA A: Woodford
- LCA B: Heald Green Fringe
- LCA C: Ladybrook Valley
- LCA D: River Mersey
- LCA E: Tame Valley and Brinnington East
- LCA F: Etherow Parklands
- LCA G: Goyt Valley
- LCA H: Offerton - Poise Brook
- LCA I: Hazel Grove - High Lane
- LCA J: Marple Bridge
- LCA K: Mellor Moor
- LCA L: Ludworth Moor

Source: OS, NE

Chapter 5
LCA Sensitivity Assessments

5.1 This chapter contains the LCA landscape sensitivity assessments for each LCA. A summary of the landscape sensitivity assessment results are shown in Table 5.1 and on Figures 5.1 – 5.3 below and are explained further within the LCA proformas.

Table 5.1 Landscape Character Assessment Results Summary

	Micro (25m)	Small (50m)	Medium (75m)
LCA A: Woodford	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
LCA B: Heald Green Fringe	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High
LCA C: Ladybrook Valley	Low-Moderate	Moderate-High	High
LCA D: River Mersey	Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate-High
LCA E: Tame Valley and Brinnington East	Low-Moderate	Moderate	High
LCA F: Etherow Parklands	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
LCA G: Goyt Valley	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
LCA H: Offerton - Poise Brook	Low-Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
LCA I: Hazel Grove – High Lane	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High
LCA J: Marple Bridge	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
LCA K: Mellor Moor	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
LCA L: Ludworth Moor	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate High

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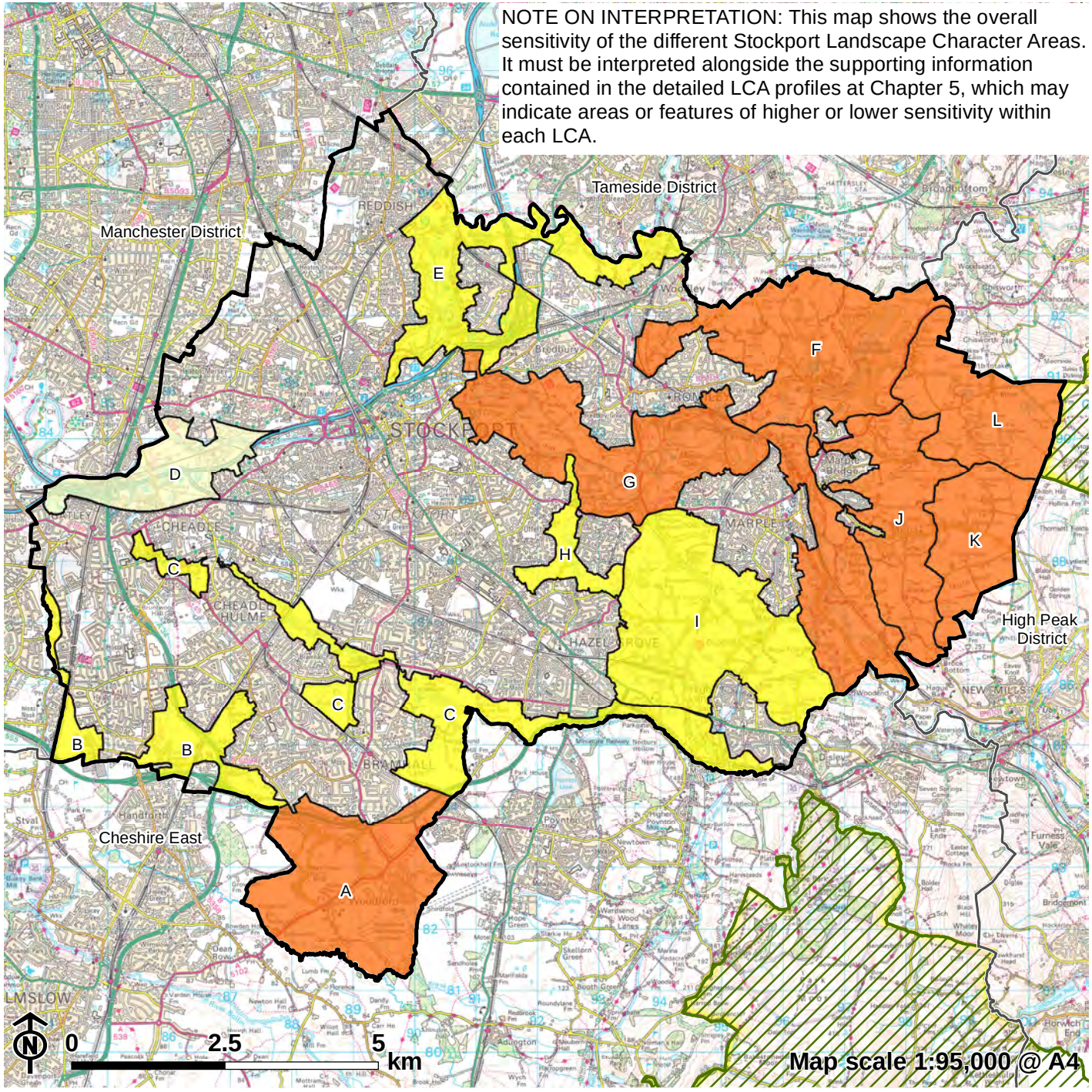
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Figure 5.1: Landscape Sensitivity to Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)



Stockport Borough boundary

Neighbouring Local Authority boundary

Peak District National Park

Landscape Character Area

A. Woodford
B. Heald Green Fringe
C. Ladybrook Valley
D. River Mersey
E. Tame Valley and Brinnington East
F. Etherow Parklands
G. Goyt Valley
H. Offerton - Poise Brook
I. Hazel Grove - High Lane
J. Marple Bridge
K. Mellor Moor
L. Ludworth Moor

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Low
Low-Moderate
Moderate
Moderate-High
High

Source: OS, NE

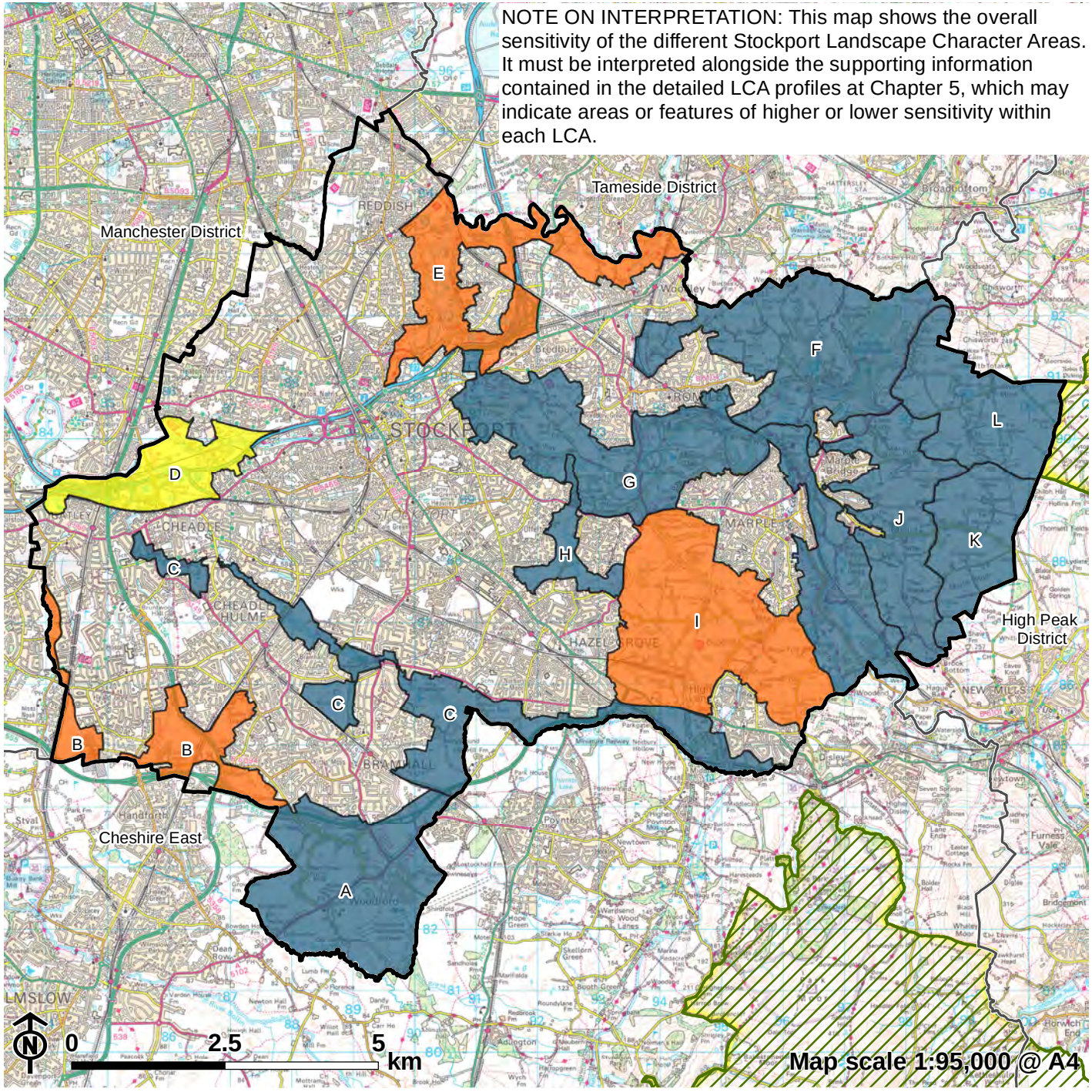
Stockport Sensitivity Assessment Addendum

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

LUC

Figure 5.2: Landscape Sensitivity to Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)

NOTE ON INTERPRETATION: This map shows the overall sensitivity of the different Stockport Landscape Character Areas. It must be interpreted alongside the supporting information contained in the detailed LCA profiles at Chapter 5, which may indicate areas or features of higher or lower sensitivity within each LCA.



Stockport Borough boundary

Neighbouring Local Authority boundary

Peak District National Park

Landscape Character Area

A. Woodford
B. Heald Green Fringe
C. Ladybrook Valley
D. River Mersey
E. Tame Valley and Brinnington East
F. Etherow Parklands
G. Goyt Valley
H. Offerton - Poise Brook
I. Hazel Grove - High Lane
J. Marple Bridge
K. Mellor Moor
L. Ludworth Moor

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Low
Low-Moderate
Moderate
Moderate-High
High

STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Source: OS, NE

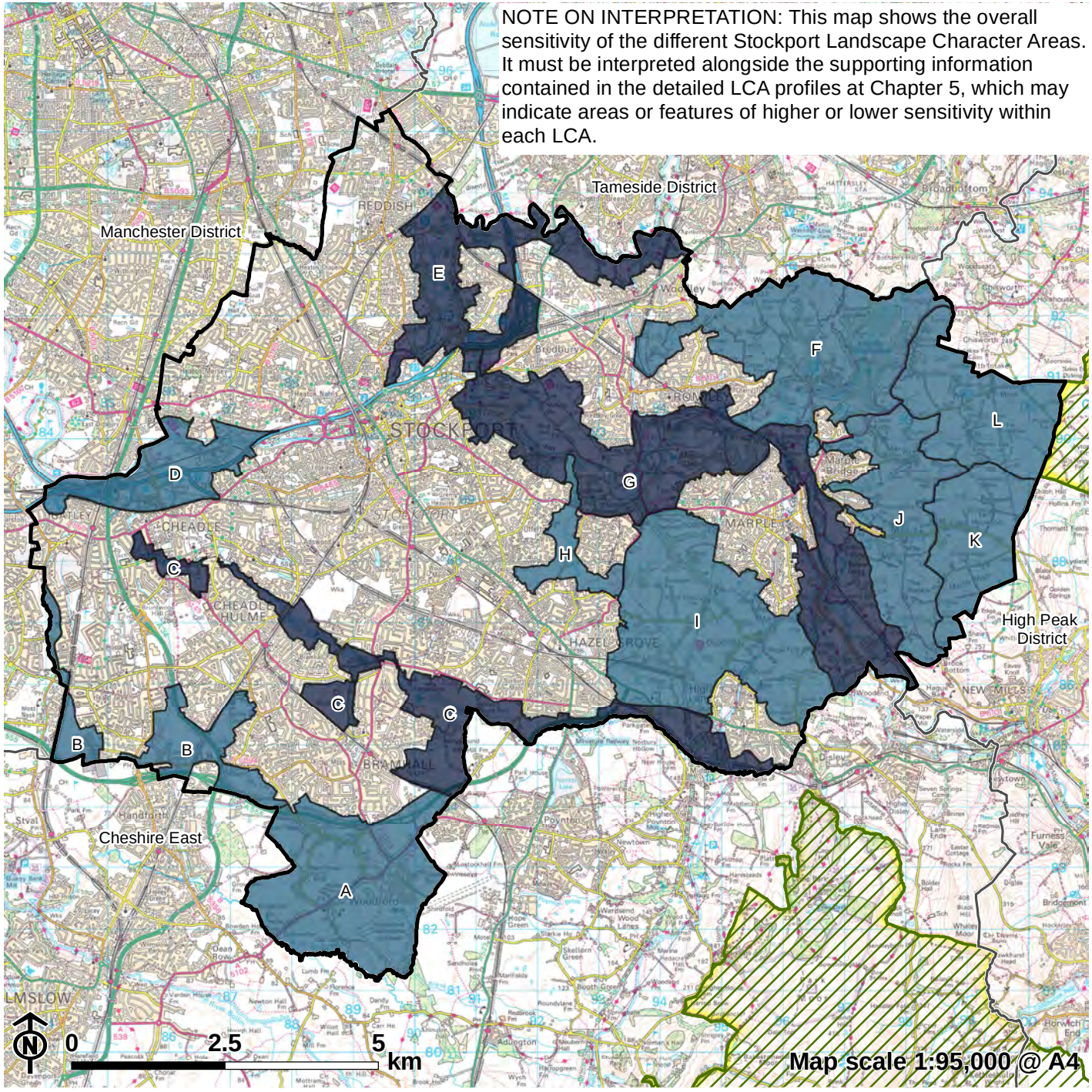
Stockport Sensitivity Assessment Addendum

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

LUC

Figure 5.3: Landscape Sensitivity to Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)

NOTE ON INTERPRETATION: This map shows the overall sensitivity of the different Stockport Landscape Character Areas. It must be interpreted alongside the supporting information contained in the detailed LCA profiles at Chapter 5, which may indicate areas or features of higher or lower sensitivity within each LCA.



Stockport Borough boundary

Neighbouring Local Authority boundary

Peak District National Park

Landscape Character Area

A. Woodford
B. Heald Green Fringe
C. Ladybrook Valley
D. River Mersey
E. Tame Valley and Brinnington East
F. Etherow Parklands
G. Goyt Valley
H. Offerton - Poise Brook
I. Hazel Grove - High Lane
J. Marple Bridge
K. Mellor Moor
L. Ludworth Moor

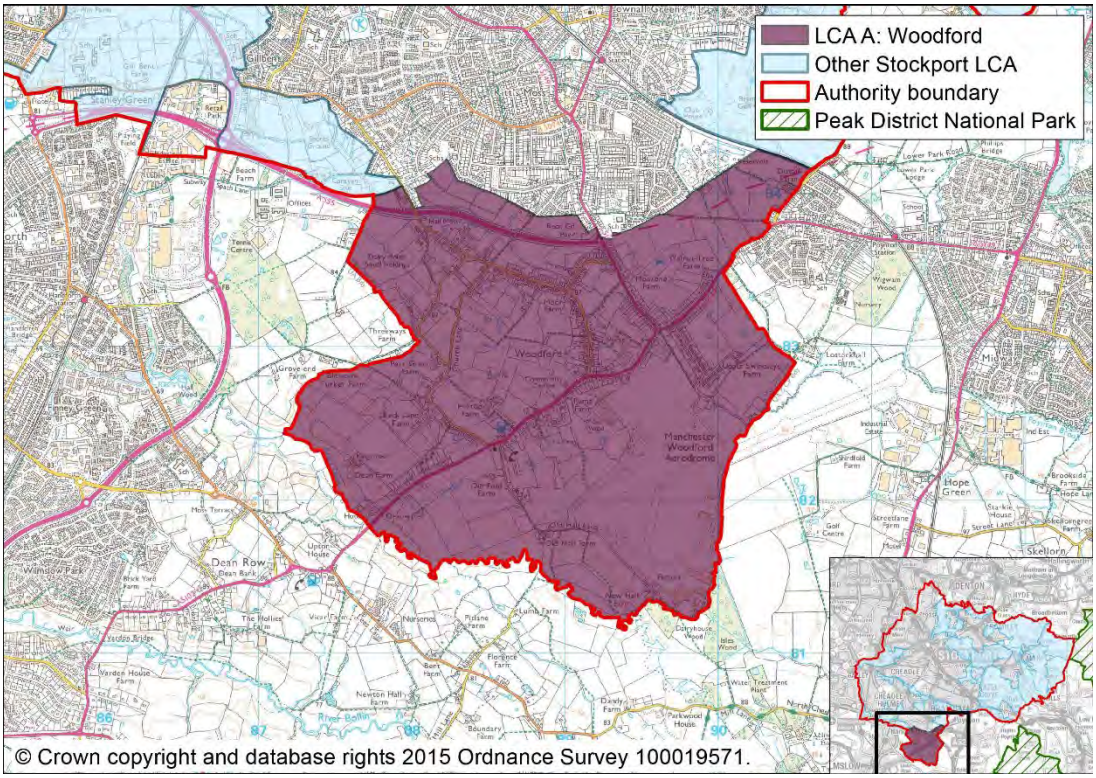
Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Low
Low-Moderate
Moderate
Moderate-High
High

STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Source: OS, NE

LCA A: Woodford



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.2 LCA A: Woodford. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018 with the exception of Woodford Garden Village which is outlined below.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Gently rolling topography between 80 and 95m AOD. ■ Aerodrome site characterised by its flat open landform, enclosed to the south by an elevated ridgeline before dropping down to the Dean valley. ■ Agricultural land enclosed by a mix of medium- and large-scale fields. ■ Small-scale landscape features include hedgerows, individual trees and housing.
Natural character	■ The former aerodrome site occupies a significant proportion of the southern LCA. ■ In-between roads and linear development is a mixture of pasture, pony paddocks, golf courses and amenity grassland. ■ Natural character limited to hedgerows, individual trees, field ponds and small woodland blocks.
Historic landscape character	■ Famous associations with the Avro factory, opened in 1925 as a production centre for military aircraft (now a heritage museum).

	■ A scattering of Listed Buildings, such as Grade II red-brick estate farm buildings and local landmark of Christ Church. ■ Piecemeal medium-scale fields of 19th and 20th century origin, along with more recent enlarged fields. ■ The HLC indicates some earlier irregular enclosures remain west of the former aerodrome.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ Regular field pattern, with rectangular fields. ■ Amalgamation has created larger fields in places; conversely sub-division into pony paddocks is a feature of the rural landscape. ■ Agricultural land under improved pasture; a mixture of dairying, sheep farming and pony paddocks. ■ South-eastern half of the LCA dominated by the former Woodford aerodrome with high fencing which is under re-development for housing (Woodford Garden Village)[13]. ■ Other land uses include golf courses and patches of amenity grassland around schools. ■ Roy Chadwick Road is located along the eastern boundary of this LCA[14]
Views and visual character including skylines	■ Views from elevated land in the south to the wooded slopes of the Bollin Valley and the distinctive ridgeline of Alderley Edge rising beyond (both locally designated for their landscape value). ■ Horizons formed by the Peak District National Park in clear conditions, including Lyme Park, Kinder Scout, Shutlingsloe, Saddleworth Moor and Macclesfield Forest. ■ Contrasting views characterised by dense urban development to the north (Bramhall). ■ The LCA is characterised by low, generally flat skylines marked by trees, woodland and housing.
Access and recreation	■ Public footpaths provide access from settlement into the surrounding countryside. ■ Amenity uses associated with golf courses and school playing pitches.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ Pockets of relative tranquillity found away from the main roads and settlement. ■ Tranquillity broken by the thundering sound of planes travelling to/from the nearby Manchester Airport.

[13] The construction of Woodford Garden Village is progressing. This development was already considered within the 2018 landscape character assessment. The progress of construction of this development is not determined to change the landscape sensitivity of this LCA.
[14] Roy Chadwick Way (Poynton Relief Road) opened in March 2023 and is a new addition to the baseline since the 2018 study was published.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.3 LCA A: Woodford. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)			**M**		
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- The ridgeline and slopes of the Dean Valley in the south of the LCA would be sensitive to all scales of wind energy development due to the visual relationship with locally designated landscapes in Cheshire East.
- Existing built form throughout LCA and major road corridor to the north (A555 Eastern Link Road). Sensitivity is reduced in the northern section of the LCA in proximity to this infrastructure.
- Views both in and out of the LCA would be more sensitive to the small and medium wind turbines due to their larger impact on the skyline in comparison to micro turbines.
- Sensitivity to micro turbines is reduced in proximity to woodland blocks which would provide screening opportunities.
- The landscape is less sensitive to micro turbines as this LCA generally comprises small-scale landscape features which would be dominated by the larger scale development of small and medium turbines.

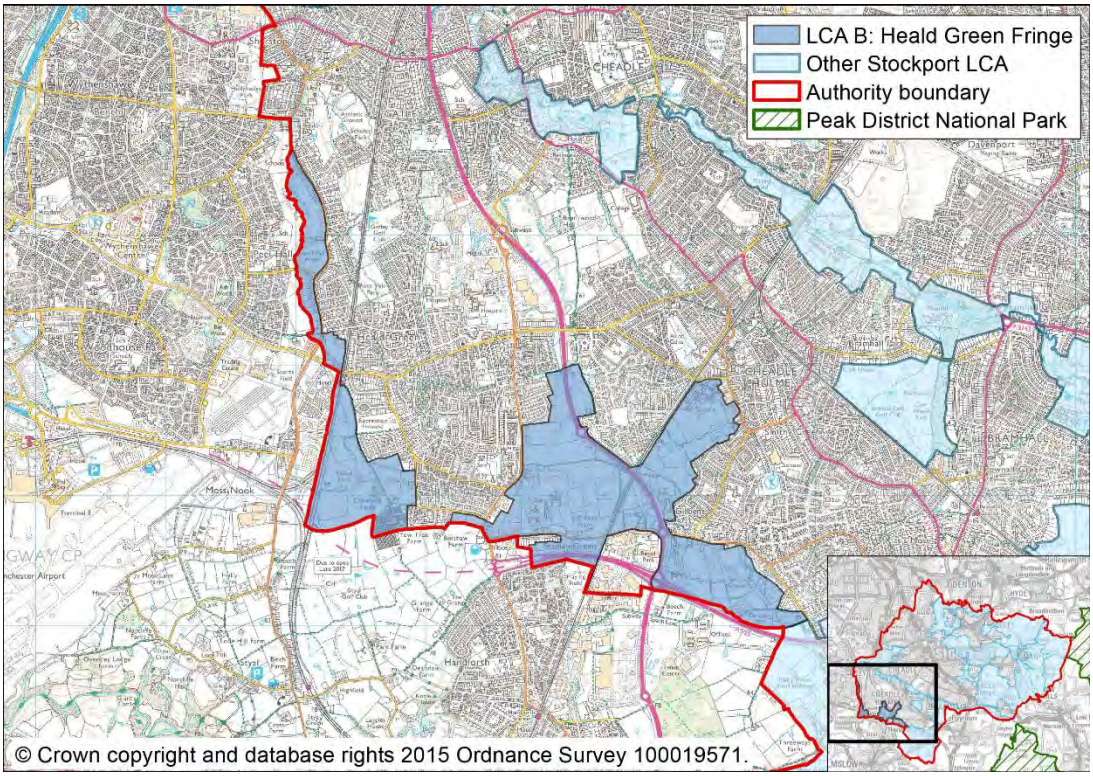
Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

- The prominent slope and ridgeline above the Dean Valley, with strong visual connections with the Bollin Valley and Alderley Edge in Cheshire East.
- Views afforded to the Peak District National Park, including Lyme Park, Kinder Scout, Shutlingsloe, Saddleworth Moor and Macclesfield Forest.
- Skylines frequently marked by trees (including important veteran specimens) and woodland, helping screen views of development.
- Key role the LCA plays in providing a traditionally farmed, countryside setting to development, including the southern edge of Bramhall and linear development at Woodford.
- Pockets of relative tranquillity away from main roads and settlement.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoid siting any development on the prominent, elevated slopes and ridgeline above the River Dean in the south of the LCA – intervisible with locally designated landscapes in Cheshire East.
- Conserve long views towards the Peak District National Park to the south-east and east.
- Site where skylines are flatter and wooded.
- Protect the LCA's relative sense of tranquillity away from main roads and linear development. Site turbines to make use of the existing woodland blocks for screening purposes, particularly to the west of Woodford Garden Village (which is still under construction at the time of writing).
- Encourage buffer planting alongside major roads and the railway to create visual screening.

LCA B: Heald Green Fringe



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.4 LCA B: Heald Green Fringe. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018 with the exception of the construction of new residential development and school facilities.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Simple, generally flat landform which is gently undulating in some areas. ■ Some gentle slopes associated with small streams including Gatley Brook. ■ Large structures including industrial glasshouses and adjacent retail park buildings detract from the small scale of the fields.
Natural character	■ Mature hedgerow and in-field oak standards, linking to the hedgerow network and small woodland blocks, create locally valued habitat networks and wooded skylines. ■ Linear belts of woodland buffer the Crewe-Manchester railway line and the A34. ■ Larger areas of broadleaved woodland are located in proximity to care home facilities, parks and sports grounds. ■ Frequent field ponds form locally important landscape and ecological features. ■ A pond and meadow at Heald Green is a Site of Biological Importance.

Historic landscape character	■ A small number of Grade II Listed Buildings, including the red-brick Griffin farmhouse, Stanley Hall, Cheadle Hulme School and a 17th century timber-framed house on a stone plinth. ■ Farmland mainly comprising piecemeal enclosures from the post medieval period, some of which have suffered 20th century boundary loss.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ Irregular, small-scale field pattern particularly to the centre of the LCA. ■ Some evidence of amalgamation of these small fields to the north west. ■ Grasses fields with evidence of grazing. ■ A large number of sports pitches throughout LCA. ■ Development is generally of 20th century origin with schools[15], care homes, and linear residential development in the west and static caravans/chalets near Manchester rugby ground. ■ Some modern residential development under construction (at the time of writing) at Wilmslow Road. ■ Some 19th century farm settlement is dotted through the landscape and along the B5094. ■ Industrial-scale greenhouses are associated with a commercial plant nursery in the west. ■ Prominent commercial development is found along the A34; visible in the middle ground.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ The landscape is not visually prominent, although parts are overlooked form the adjacent urban development. ■ The Peak District National Park is perceptible from the B5358 looking eastwards, with prominent commercial development along the A34 visible in the middle ground. There are also views south over Cheshire East. ■ Individual trees across the landscape combine with occasional small deciduous woodland blocks to produce wooded skylines. Trees also provide a sense of enclosure and generally restrict views.
Access and recreation	■ A network of public footpaths provides access to the landscape from nearby settlements. ■ Recreational facilities in the LCA include Cheadle Hulme Cricket Club, Grove Park Squash Club and Manchester Rugby Club. ■ National Cycle Network Route 558 follows the B5166.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ The landscape is strongly associated with surrounding urban development. ■ Busy main roads, such as the A34, A555, B5358 and B5166, create sound and movement in the landscape.

[15] School and associated facilities at Stanley Road is under construction (at time of writing), however this development type was characteristic of the LCA in 2018 and so this change is not determined to change the sensitivity of the landscape.

	■ Pockets of relative tranquillity are found away from main roads and settlement, though this is broken by the thundering sounds of low planes travelling to/from Manchester Airport.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.5 LCA B: Heald Green Fringe. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)		**L-M**			
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)			**M**		
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- This LCA is less sensitive to micro and small wind size turbine development due to its small-scale landscape patterns and the larger scale medium turbines would be in contrast to this.
- The northern edge of the LCA would be more sensitive to all turbines due to its smaller scale residential development, historic field patterns and valuable green space. The landscape to the south would be less sensitive due to the influence of infrastructure in this area.
- The areas adjacent to Gatley Brook are more sensitive due to the steeper slopes.
- Landscape surrounding the Industrial-scale greenhouses are less sensitive to wind development.

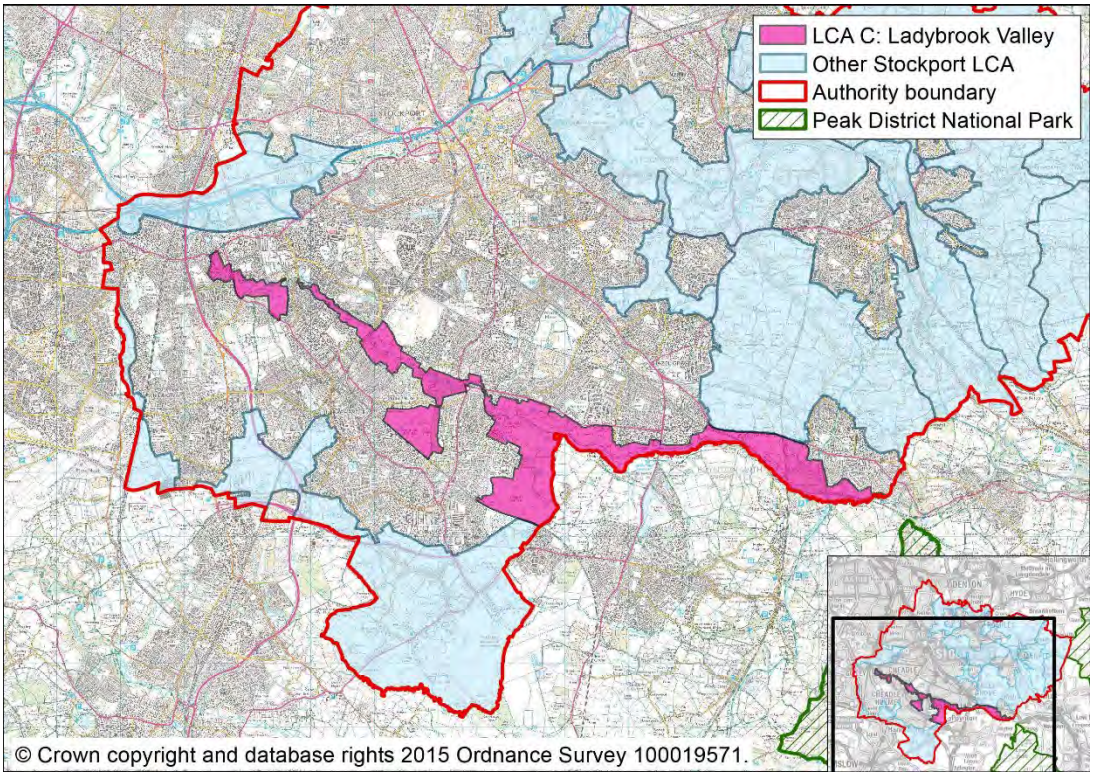
Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

- Intermittent views to the uplands of the Peak District National Park to the east/south-east and over the countryside of Cheshire East (to the south – including the National Trust's Styal Estate).
- Pockets of relative tranquillity away from main roads and settlement.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Conserve the setting of the historic buildings within the landscape, particularly those which are Grade II Listed.
- Encourage buffer planting alongside major roads and the railway to create visual screening.
- Ensure that views to the Peak District National Park and south to the countryside of Cheshire East are conserved.
- Protect the LCA's relative sense of tranquillity away from main roads and areas of linear development.

LCA C: Ladybrook Valley



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.6 LCA C: Ladybrook Valley. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018 with the exception of the completion and further integration of the A555 Eastern Link Road into the landscape.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Gently sloping valley topography associated with Micker Brook, Ladybrook and Norbury Brook. In localised areas adjacent to the watercourses, slopes are steeper and more dramatic. Other parts of the valley appear flat, particularly in the west. ■ Some areas are small-scale and enclosed as a result of the intimate valley topography and woodland cover e.g., north of Cheadle Hulme. Others appear larger scale due lower woodland cover, low fences and hedgerows creating an open landscape, particularly to the east of Bramhall.
Natural character	■ Linear belts of broadleaved woodland located alongside the brooks and trails, including ancient woodland at Bramhall & Carr Woods, Happy Valley Local Nature Reserve and Norbury Brook & Middlewood (all also Sites of Biological Importance). ■ Dense areas of broadleaved with some coniferous woodland surround Bramall Hall, Happy Valley Nature Reserve and close to Middlewood Station in the east of the LCA. Mature hedgerows and in-field oak

	standards link to the woodland network. Mature trees are also associated with golf courses. ■ Brooks, streams, ponds and lowland meadows provide wildlife interest.
Historic landscape character	■ The Grade I listed Bramall Hall, a timber-framed Tudor manor house, is surrounded by ornamental parkland, estate woodland and several Grade II listed buildings. The park is a Conservation Area. ■ There are a number of other listed structures including the prominent Grade II red-bricked Seven Arches viaduct, the Macclesfield Canal (a Conservation Area) and the disused railway line (now the Middlewich Way) provide evidence of the area's industrial past and a sense of time-depth. There is also an earthwork in Bramhall Park Golf Club.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ The western valley is surrounded by urban development. East of Bramhall, the valley abuts the open countryside of Cheshire East to the south. ■ There is some urban development in the west of the valley, however for the most part it is sparsely settled with scattered farms and large houses/halls located along the valley. ■ The valley provides part of the setting to Cheadle Village Conservation Area. ■ The landscape is generally comprised small-scale irregular fields which are intimate and enclosed, with the exception of some amalgamation and loss of boundaries. ■ A number of golf courses also contribute to the enclosed landscape. ■ The A555 Eastern Link Road forms a barrier between the centre and east of the LCA[16].
Views and visual character including skylines	■ The valley is not visually prominent yet is overlooked from adjacent urban areas. From within the valley the Seven Arches Viaduct is a prominent skyline feature. ■ Where woodland cover allows, views are funnelled along the valley and include the surrounding urban development. ■ In the eastern part of the valley, the landscape is more open with views south into Cheshire East and the Peak District National Park. ■ There are existing examples of vertical features in the landscape, such as pylons to the east of the LCA.
Access and recreation	■ A network of public footpaths provides access from adjacent settlements into the valley, which is traced by the Ladybrook Nature Interest Trail. The Cheshire Ring Canal walk and Middlewood Way (mixed-use trail) cross through the eastern LCA, providing opportunities for informal recreation. ■ Several parklands are located in the valley, including Brookfields Park, Bramhall Park, The Corral and Brookside Park.

[16] Due to roadside planting having established since the 2018 report in the past 5 years, the road is slightly better integrated into the landscape than when it was under construction. However, this is not deemed to materially change the character of the LCA.

	■ There are a number of golf courses including Bramhall Park Golf Club, Bramhall Golf Club and Cheadle Golf Club. A number of playing fields are also located in the valley.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ A network of public footpaths provides access from adjacent settlements into the valley, which is traced by the Ladybrook Nature Interest Trail. The Cheshire Ring Canal walk and Middlewood Way (mixed-use trail) cross through the eastern LCA, providing opportunities for informal recreation. ■ Several parklands are located in the valley, including Brookfields Park, Bramhall Park, The Corral and Brookside Park. ■ There are a number of golf courses including Bramhall Park Golf Club, Bramhall Golf Club and Cheadle Golf Club. A number of playing fields are also located in the valley. ■ Some areas within the LCA display a strong sense of enclosure due to woodland cover and incised topography. ■ Railway lines and major roads cross through the landscape and introduce noise and movement which detracts from tranquillity. The A555 relief road contributes to this[17]. ■ Perceptual qualities are varied along the length of the valley. An enclosed and urban character in the north of the valley contrasts with a sense of openness in the south/east with views to the Cheshire countryside to the south and Peak District National Park to the east.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.7 LCA C: Ladybrook Valley. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)		**L-M**			
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)					**H**
Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
■ The narrow, wooded parts of the valley in the west are likely to have higher levels of sensitivity to all wind turbines, due to the historic parkland character at Bramall Hall. ■ The valley east of Bramhall is not as sensitive due to the less dramatic landform and urban influences on the landscape. ■ Landscapes influenced by larger scale infrastructure, such as school buildings, commercial or agricultural buildings and polytunnels and road infrastructure are less sensitive to wind development. ■ The high level of woodland cover and enclosure allows for the screening of micro wind turbines and so these areas are less sensitive to micro turbine development.					

[17] This road was noted as being constructed at the time of the 2018 report. This road is now complete and in operation.

- The small-scale and intimate landscape of this LCA is highly sensitive to the medium turbines as this larger scale development would contrast with it.
- There are existing examples of vertical infrastructure (pylons) of a similar height to small wind turbines and so areas influenced by these existing features are less sensitive to small wind turbines. However, care should be taken to avoid cumulative impacts of these features.
- The landscape surrounding Bramhall Hall, the viaduct and Conservation Area would be highly sensitive to landscape change from all sizes of wind turbines, as they could alter the setting of this historic landscape.
- Areas of high recreational value are more sensitive and it should be ensured that access is retained.

Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

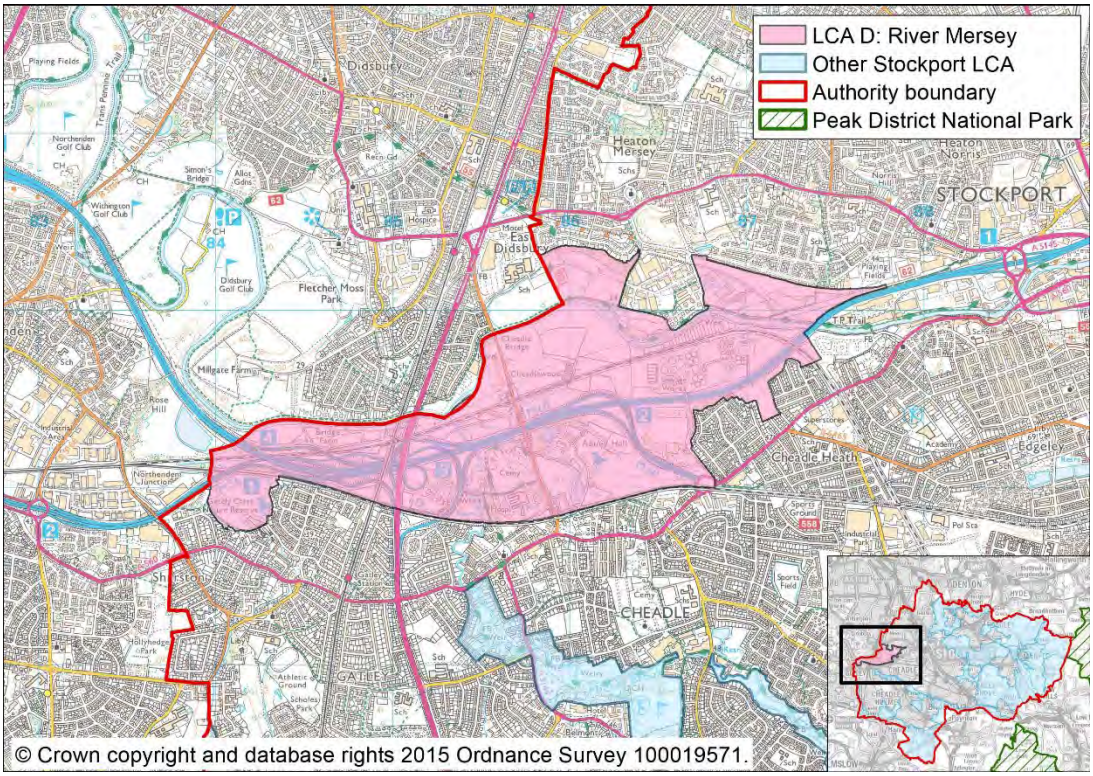
- The intricate valley landform and steep slopes associated with the river, which contrast with broad areas of floodplain on the valley floor.
- Historic landscapes and their component features which give the valley a strong sense of time-depth, particularly Bramall Hall (a Grade I Listed Building) and its surrounding park and garden, designated as a Conservation Area.
- Features alluding to the industrial past of the area are also important, including Macclesfield Canal and the Seven Arches Viaduct.
- The sense of escape from surrounding urban areas, with relatively high levels of tranquillity and naturalistic qualities.
- Important views out of the valley south into Cheshire East (including the Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation and the Grade II* Registered Lyme Park) and glimpses of the Peak District National Park.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoid development on the valley sides, where wind turbines would be very prominent from within the valley. Development within highly visible, open areas should also be avoided.
- Utilise the high level of existing woodland and enclose of fields to screen wind development where possible, which would be particularly effective for screening micro turbines.
- Ensure that the setting and integrity of the historic landscapes and heritage features within the valley is respected and retained by avoiding placing wind turbines in close proximity to or in important views to or from these landscapes.
- Ensure that the relative sense of tranquillity and naturalistic quality of the landscape is retained by avoiding placing wind turbines in the more open and tranquil areas, such as the south east.
- Protect and promote the important views out of the valley into Cheshire East (including the Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation Area and the Grade II* Registered Lyme Park) and glimpses of the Peak District National Park.
- Ensure any new development does not adversely affect the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, including its beautiful views, undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies, and the vital benefits that flow beyond its landscape boundary[18].
- Maintain recreational access across the LCA and consider the impact new turbines would have on users' experiences when using these routes.
- Respect the character and setting of Bramall Hall, the viaduct and Conservation Area.

[18] Summarised from the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28

LCA D: River Mersey



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.8 LCA D: River Mersey. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018 with the exception of the introduction of photovoltaic panels and new residential development.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ A very gently undulating / flat river plain landscape lying at around 40m AOD. The River Mersey meanders through the LCA, with streams and ponds draining into the Mersey from the wider landscape. ■ Dominated by large-scale transport infrastructure fragmenting the landscape; the M60 motorway and M56 interchange, the A34, a functional railway line and two disused railway lines. ■ Elsewhere, land cover consists of piecemeal large-scale fields. Frequent trees/woodland in the landscape creates a sense of enclosure.
Natural character	■ Pasture with intact 19th century hawthorn hedges. Rough grassland is found along the railway line. ■ High level of broadleaved woodland cover, particularly adjacent to and south of the M60/M56, along the railway line (with scrub), and in the east of the LCA at Mersey Vale Nature Park and along the river. ■ Nature conservation importance of the river as well as woodland, wetland and grassland habitats reflected in LNR/SBI designations at Gatley Carrs, Abney Hall, Mersey Vale Nature Park and Parrs Wood.

Historic landscape character	■ Remaining sense of time depth despite overriding influence of infrastructure, including the 19th century parkland surrounding the red brick Grade II* Abney Hall. Other historic buildings include the former convalescence Barnes Hospital (Grade II), Grade II Hartdale House, and the Grade II 18th century Cheadle Wood Farmhouse. ■ Industrial heritage associated with the former Cheadle Bleach Works with prominent mill chimney and associated leats. ■ A small part of Cheadle Conservation Area extends into the south of the LCA and the river also forms part of the setting to Heaton Mersey Conservation Area.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ The LCA itself is lightly settled, with residential development limited to the Cheadle Bleach Works redevelopment and new residential properties at Barnes Village[19]. It is enclosed to the north, east and south by dense urban development. ■ Landscape is divided by road infrastructure including the M60 road corridor. ■ The field pattern is fragmented by infrastructure. Large-scale and irregular pasture is characteristic of the north however there are limited fields in the south, which is instead dominated by woodland. ■ Stockport Waste Water Treatment Works is located within this LCA, alongside which are photovoltaic panels.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ There are funnelled views along the river from within the valley. ■ The landscape is not visually prominent from surrounding areas. ■ Views to and from the landscape are generally limited by tree bands alongside infrastructure. ■ The former Bleach Works Chimney is a prominent skyline feature. A pylon line crossing the northern part of the LCA is also a dominant feature.
Access and recreation	■ The Transpennine Trail (which links Liverpool to Hull) follows an old railway line adjacent to the course of the River Mersey east of Parrs Wood, passing through Mersey Vale Nature Reserve. The Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail links to the Ladybrook Valley, skirting the edge of Abney Hall Park. National Cycle Route 62 and a number of bridleways also cross through this area. ■ Amenity open space is associated with Abney Hall Park, Gatley Carrs Local Nature Reserve and Mersey Vale Country Park. These spaces are popular for informal recreation including walking and dog walking.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ Pockets of relative tranquillity within areas of dense woodland, although this is broken by overwhelming noise from the nearby transport infrastructure. ■ The landscape has a suburban character with sports pitches, sewage works and overhead power lines.

[19] Construction of properties at the Barnes Village development has been completed since the 2018 study was published.

	■ Noise and movement from motorway and railway contrasts with birdsong. The road noise is overwhelming in some parts of the landscape, including near Abney Hall.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.9 LCA D: River Mersey. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)	**L**				
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)		**L-M**			
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- The flat landform and the lack of visual prominence of this LCA from surrounding areas reduces the sensitivity of the landscape to wind development.
- The prominence of existing infrastructure, including the sewage works and pylons, along the river corridor to the east reduces its sensitivity to wind energy development.
- Sensitivity is also reduced in proximity to the M60 corridor where traffic noises reduces the tranquillity of this landscape. Pockets of relative tranquillity with the landscape are more sensitive due to their rarity in this LCA.
- Existing vertical infrastructure (pylons and chimney stack) of a similar height to small wind turbines already influences the skyline of this LCA in places and therefore the LCA is less sensitive to small wind turbines in these areas. However, care should be taken to avoid cumulative impacts of these features.
- Abney Hall parkland would be highly sensitive to landscape change from all sizes of wind turbines, as they could alter the setting of this historic landscape.
- The presence of the photovoltaic panels is an example of renewable energy infrastructure existing in this LCA which reduces the sensitivity, particularly to smaller scale turbines, in this localised area.
- The high level of woodland cover allows for the screening of micro wind turbines and so these areas are less sensitive to micro turbine development.
- Due to the LCAs narrow and small size, the scale is not well-suited to accommodating larger wind turbines without undue effects on landscape character and visual amenity,

Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

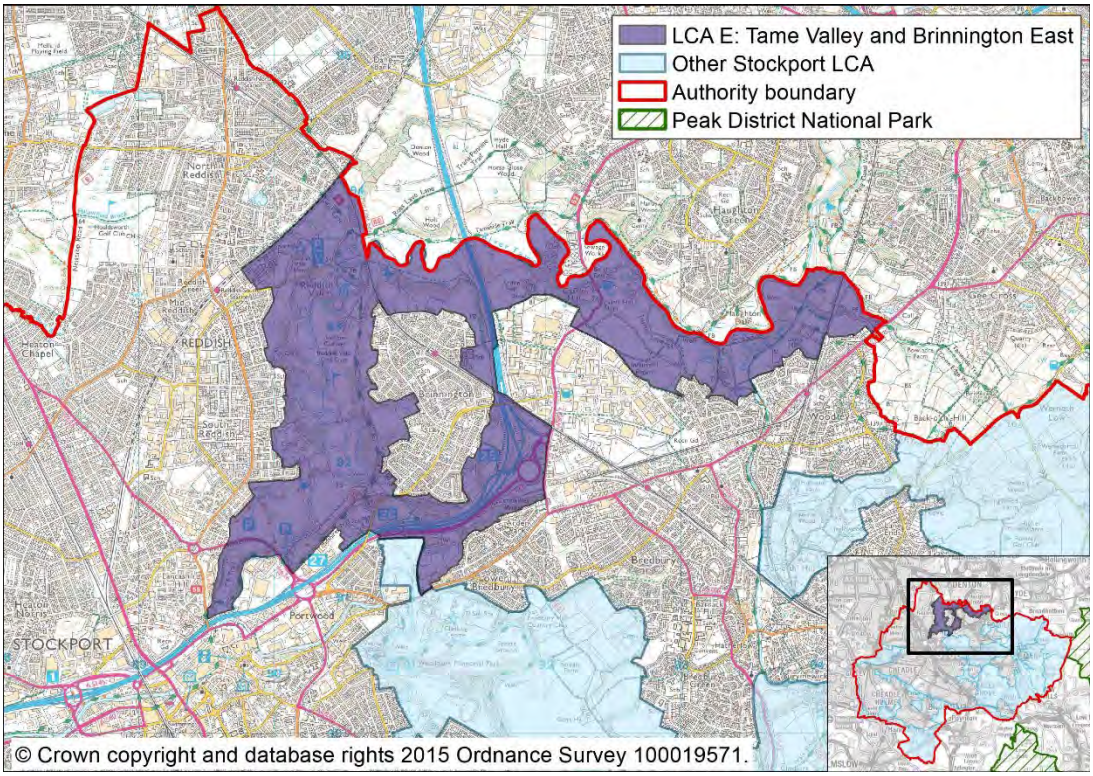
- Pockets of relative tranquillity with the landscape, despite the nearby major transport infrastructure.
- Historic features within the landscape including Grade II* Abney Hall and Grade II Barnes Hospital which contribute to the sense of time-depth, in addition to features relating to industrial heritage.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Respect the integrity and setting of the historic features within the landscape including the 19th century parkland associated with the Grade II* Abney Hall.
- Utilise existing woodland cover to visually screen new development.

- Retain pockets of relative tranquillity throughout the landscape and reduce the audial and visual impact and intrusion of major roads through encouraging planting on the embankments.
- Ensure that the landscape remains accessible for recreation and enhance provision where possible.

LCA E: Tame Valley and Brinnington East



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.10 LCA E: Tame Valley and Brinnington East. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018 with the exception of a new local nature reserve designation, minor updates to the National Cycle Network and new residential development.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Valley profile associated with the River Tame featuring steep-sided banks in areas and gently undulating valley floor. ■ Topography generally ranges from 45 to 80m AOD and rises steeply to 130m AOD in the east. ■ Semi-regular fields of variable scale with tree lines boundaries which are more prominent in the east.
Natural character	■ Reddish Vale Country Park and LNR covers a large proportion of the valley in the west, with meadows, shrub, wetlands, dense woodland and the River Tame. ■ Crookilley Woods LNR is located between Bredbury and the M56 corridor[20].

[20] Crookilley Woods LNR has been designated since the 2018 report was published.

	■ River Tame associated with linear woodland belts (many SBIs), smaller in-field woodland blocks, mill ponds, riverside meadows and areas of shrubland. ■ The Peak Forest Canal is designated as a SBI. ■ Pasture, pony paddocks[21] and amenity land found across the area.
Historic landscape character	■ Semi-regular fields are largely post-medieval piecemeal enclosures with agglomerated 20th century fields to the east. ■ A scattering of Grade II listed buildings, including the Tame Viaduct, Arden Hall overlooking the Tame, and Castle Hill Farmhouse. ■ Evidence of past industry include the Grade II listed Meadow Mill, Unity Mill, dams and weirs along the river, and the Peak Forest Canal (Conservation Area with Grade II bridge).
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ Valley mostly unsettled with a scattering of farms, cottages and 20th century properties. ■ Residential development on former Castle Hill School and on land off Blackberry Lane encroaches into the LCA and pushes the urban edge of Brinnington into the LCA. ■ Other land uses include schools and associated recreation grounds, Reddish Vale Golf Course and Denton Sewage Works. ■ Just outside the LCA, Bredbury Park industrial estate has a close influence on the central part of the valley. ■ Semi-regular fields of variable scale however the golf course and Reddish Vale Park are more natural in their form and follow the meanders of the river. ■ Large-scale commercial and industrial development located near Tiviot Way and along M60 corridor.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ Dense woodland belts visually screen and separate surrounding settlements and retain the countryside views. ■ The Tame Viaduct is a prominent feature along the skyline in the west. ■ Views are available along the river valley where there are breaks in the woodland. ■ Contrasting views are characterised by high rise flats in Brinnington rising above the wooded horizon line which screens much of the urban settlement. ■ Tower blocks in Tameside visible from higher ground near Bredbury Business Park. ■ An overhead line runs through Reddish Vale Country Park.
Access and recreation	■ Reddish Vale Country Park[22] is a valued recreational resource on the doorstep of urban communities, with opportunity for informal recreation and fishing.

[21] New stables built on Mill Lane since 2018 however this is small-scale and visually contained.
[22] Minor changes to the landscape and layout of Reddish Vale Farm since 2018 however this is still contained within the original footprint.

	■ A network of public footpaths provides access from settlement into the countryside of this valley, particularly in the south from the centre of Stockport. ■ A network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle trails pass along the valley and link adjoining settlements. Routes include the Transpennine Trail, Midshires Way and National Cycle Route 162[23]. ■ Other amenity uses include a number of sports pitches, golf course and recreation facilities at Brinnington Park.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ Woodland belts create a strong sense of visual enclosure as well as screening surrounding houses. ■ Strong sense of being within a countryside setting. ■ Tranquillity broken by high levels of traffic along the M60 and both train lines that cut through this LCA. Intermittent air traffic noise also has an impact. ■ Litter and fly-tipping on edge of roads and Bredbury Park Industrial Estate evoke a sense of neglect.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.11 LCA E Tame Valley and Brinnington East. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)		**L-M**			
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)			**M**		
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)					**H**

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- The LCA is particularly sensitive to medium turbines due to the high woodland cover and small scale enclosed nature of the landscape. This small-scale landscape would contrast with the medium sized wind turbines.
- Although the LCA is very sensitive to change in general due to its high biodiversity and recreational values, the small-scale footprint of micro and small turbines would not likely directly impact this if carefully sited and measures were taken to avoid the most sensitive areas and retain access.
- Sensitivity to micro turbines is reduced in proximity to woodland blocks which would provide screening opportunities, as long as care was taken to not impact the valued habitats.
- Sensitivity is higher on elevated locations that are overlooked.
- Areas which have strong rural qualities and relative levels of tranquillity are more sensitive to development, where there is a strong sense of being in a countryside setting.
- Landscapes surrounding the large commercial and industrial development are less sensitive to wind energy development and are more likely to accommodate wind turbines due to the similar scale. It should be noted that

[23] A new NCR link has been added along Tiviot Way since the 2018 report was published.

the visual influence of Bredbury Industrial Estate is lost close to the boundary of the LCA where the rural qualities of the valley tend to become quickly apparent.

- The tower blocks and existing pylons are existing vertical features within the landscape which reduce sensitivity in areas where these are prominent.

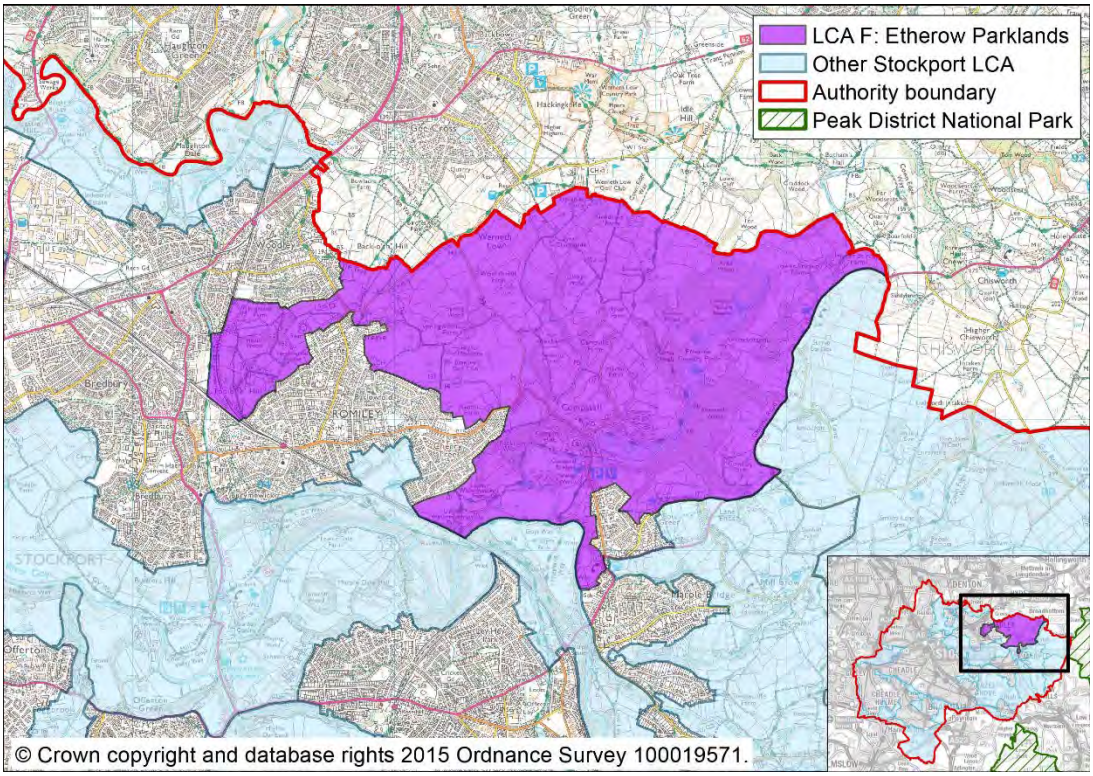
Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

- The distinct valley profile of the Tame, with steep-sided wooded banks.
- Reddish Vale Country Park and Local Nature Reserve, supporting a rich wildlife habitat and providing a valued local community destination, recreational facility and access to a countryside setting.
- Valued bands of broadleaved woodlands including areas of ancient woodland and several SBIs; creating distinctive wooded skylines.
- Important relicts from past industry, including the Peak Forest Canal (Conservation Area with Grade II bridge) and the landmark Grade II Tame Viaduct – an important focal point in the west.
- A number of mill ponds and fisheries serve important ecological and recreational roles.
- Strong rural qualities and relative levels of tranquillity despite the close proximity of development and major transport infrastructure.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoid siting any development in more elevated locations that are overlooked, as well as the steep valley slopes.
- Utilise the valley landform and extensive woodland cover to integrate new development into the landscape.
- Avoid siting development that would lead to a loss or fragmentation of the landscape's SBI-designated habitats, and those found within Reddish Vale Local Nature Reserve.
- Maintain views to the Grade II Tame Viaduct, and protect its role as a key focal point in the western valley.
- Maintain recreational access across the LCA and consider the impact new turbines would have on users' experiences when using these routes.
- Avoid interrupting views towards the distinctive wooded skylines.
- Protect the LCA's relative sense of tranquillity and unsettled character away from major infrastructure and existing urban/industrial development on its fringes.

LCA F: Etherow Parklands



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.12 LCA F: Etherow Parklands. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Steep valley system associated with the River Etherow, carved by brooks and minor watercourses to create a complex, strongly undulating landform. ■ Elevation ranges from 90m AOD in the valley bottom to 249m AOD at Werneth Low on the northern border with Tameside. ■ Landform scale varies, from small-scale/enclosed within the valley system to open and expansive along the northern ridgeline. ■ Landform superimposed by irregular small to medium-scale field patterns. ■ Woodland, trees, hedgerows and field boundaries form frequent small-scale landscape elements.
Natural character	■ Agricultural land is predominantly sheep-grazed rough and semi-improved pastures along with pony paddocks. ■ Large tracts of ancient and semi-natural broadleaved woodland bordering the Etherow (Etherow Country Park SBI and LNR).

	■ Nationally designated woodland, wetland and open water habitats at Compstall Nature Reserve SSSI. ■ Other SBI-designated broadleaved woodlands tracing tributary streams, including ancient woodland at Benfield Clough. ■ A mature hedgerow network connects with woodlands to create a well-wooded landscape. ■ Habitats, including the river and its tributaries, form part of a wider ecological network linking to the Goyt Valley and Tameside.
Historic landscape character	■ Mixed field origins, including post-medieval piecemeal enclosures and assarts, regular Parliamentary enclosures and 20th century agglomerated fields. ■ Compstall Conservation Area occupies a significant area, with mill buildings, workers' cottages and former mill pond. ■ The early 19th century Compstall Bridge, St Paul's Church and Church Houses Post Office are all Grade II Listed. ■ A number of vernacular farm buildings and barns are also Grade II Listed across the wider landscape.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ The eastern edge of Compstall includes a 20th century housing estate, but the settlement is nestled within the tight valley of the Etherow, surrounded by woodland. ■ Elsewhere development is limited to dispersed historic farms and cottages. ■ Field pattern is varied with scales ranging from small to medium with some evidence of field amalgamation to the north.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ Expansive views from the Werneth Low ridgeline in the north over urban development in Tameside and Greater Manchester; tower blocks and mill chimneys punctuating skylines. ■ Views south include the distant hills above Lyme Park in the Peak District National Park; the National Park also features in eastward views. ■ Undeveloped skylines are marked by trees and bands of woodland. ■ Steep slopes, hedgerows and bands of woodland contain views within the valley system. ■ An existing micro wind turbine and solar panel are located near to Etherow Country Park visitor centre.
Access and recreation	■ A rural network of hedged lanes, farm and forest tracks is supplemented by footpaths including the Midshires Way. ■ Etherow Country Park is a well-used recreational destination for nearby communities, with 'gateway' and visitor centre at Compstall. This includes easy walking trails and water-based activities, including model boat sailing and wildlife watching.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ A rural haven with valued relative levels of tranquillity, standing in contrast to urban development on its immediate doorstep.

	■ Romiley Golf Course is located to the west, forming a transition to the adjacent urban fringe. ■ Rural qualities eroded by creeping suburbanisation and associated land uses. ■ An overhead line runs through the LCA near to Compstall however this is an intrusive element and is not in keeping with the surrounding landscape character.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.13 LCA F: Etherow Parklands. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)			**M**		
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- The steep valley system and strongly undulating landform is highly sensitive to any scale of wind development, however there are pockets of land which could use existing woodland cover for its screening properties and potentially accommodate micro wind turbines.
- The most elevated parts of the landscape, including Werneth Low, the adjacent ridgeline and Top-o-th'Hill, would be highly sensitive to any sizes of wind turbines, due these locations' visual prominence (including in long views from the Peak District National Park) and undeveloped character.
- There is an example of existing micro turbine development within this LCA, which is sited in an enclosed area and provides precedent for further micro scale turbines if sited appropriately.
- Although there are examples of vertical features existing in the landscape which are of a similar height to small wind turbines, these are incongruous to the surrounding landscape and introduction of further elements of this scale would further encourage this detrimental effect.
- The setting of Compstall Conservation area is highly sensitive to wind turbines, as are the remaining areas of historic field enclosures.

Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

- The highly prominent open ridgeline forming the northern edge of the LCA, rising to Werneth Low, overlooking the urban expanse of Tameside and Greater Manchester.
- The landscape's visual connections with the Cheshire (distant views to the hills above Lyme Park) and Derbyshire parts of the Peak District National Park - south and east respectively.
- The small-scale/ enclosed nature of the complex valley system of the Etherow.
- Time depth provided by post-medieval piecemeal enclosures, assarts and listed vernacular buildings across the landscape.
- Key role the LCA plays in the character and setting of Compstall Conservation Area, a former mill village set within woodland and nestled within the tight valley landform of the Etherow.

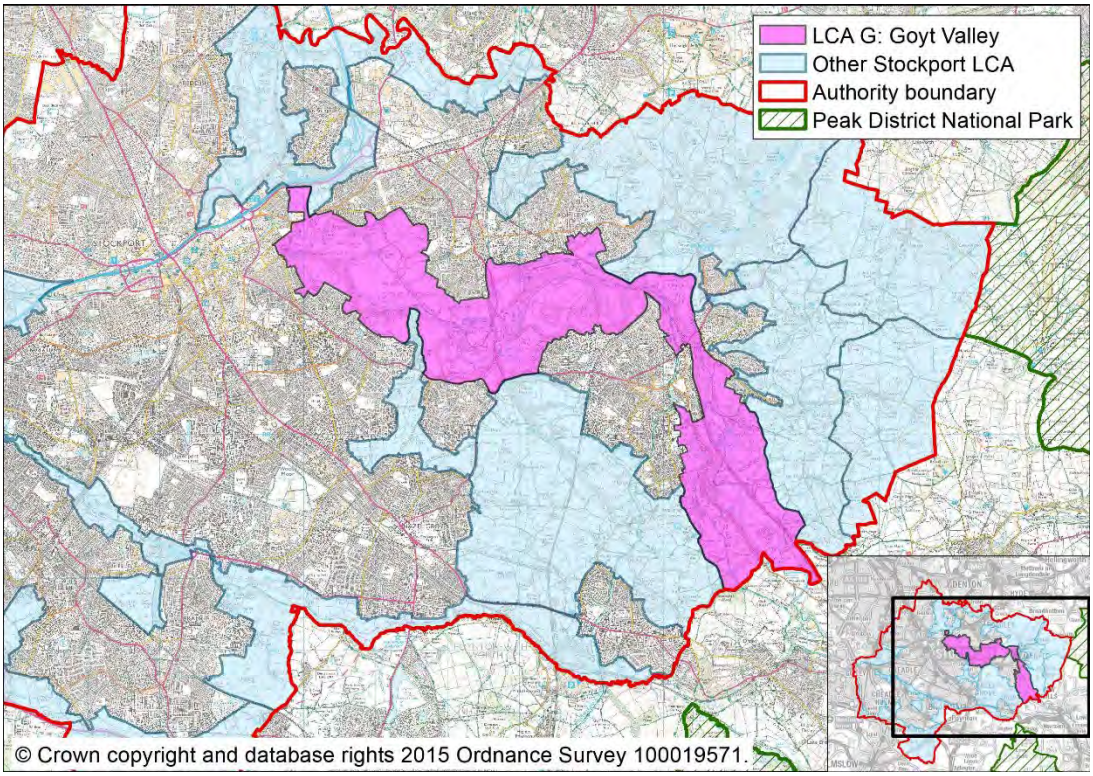
- Overriding rural qualities with dispersed and sparse settlement away from urban areas in the west and south.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoid siting any wind turbines on the highly prominent, elevated ridgeline in the north of the LCA, including Werneth Low. This ridgeline forms a rural backdrop and containment to expansive urban development at Tameside and Greater Manchester.
- Protect the landscape's contribution to the character and setting of Compstall Conservation Areas and its mill heritage.
- Protect the wider LCA's overriding sense of tranquillity.
- Conserve expansive views from elevated land to the distinctive remote hills of the Peak District National Park, including the Lyme Park estate south of Stockport.
- Ensure any new development does not adversely affect the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, including its beautiful views, undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies, and the vital benefits that flow beyond its landscape boundary[24].

[24] Summarised from the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28

LCA G: Goyt Valley



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.14 LCA G: Goyt Valley. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018 with the exception of minor alterations to properties and the addition of a Local Nature Reserve designation.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Dominated by the River Goyt Valley, its profile rising from 50 to 100m AOD in the western extent. In the east, there is a rise from 90 to 210m AOD from the River Goyt to Marpleridge. ■ Varied in scale, with wide open areas on the floodplain contrasting with intimate woodlands and small-scale fields on the valley slopes.
Natural character	■ A mix of arable and pastoral land in the centre of the LCA, with pastures forming a transition to a more Peak Fringe character in the east. ■ High coverage of broadleaved and ancient woodland, with almost continuous woodland cover along the river and its tributaries. Woodland is also associated with parks, the canal and the Hope Valley railway line. ■ Numerous locally designated wildlife sites, with extensive SBI coverage and LNRs at Woodland Park, Poise Brook, Chadkirk Country Estate and Tangshutts LNR[25] .

[25] Tangshutts LNR has been designated since the 2018 report was published.

	■ Isolated areas of semi-improved grassland, lowland fens and lowland meadows found throughout. ■ The river system itself forms an important ecological corridor.
Historic landscape character	■ Numerous heritage assets, including the Goyt Aqueduct (Grade I Listed and a Scheduled Monument) The Peak Forest Canal is a Conservation Area, with a number of Listed bridges and locks. ■ Vernon Park is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, which includes the Grade II Listed Stockport Museum. ■ The eastern valley includes land within Chadkirk, Marple Bridge and All Saints (Marple) Conservation Areas. ■ Agricultural land is largely piecemeal fields of post-medieval to 19th century in origin, although many have been subject to 20th century amalgamation.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ Although contained by urban development, the valley itself is sparsely settled, with scattered farms and halls[26]. In the eastern part of the valley there is linear development along roads, including Strines and Mill Green. ■ The valley is an important part of the landscape setting to a number of Conservation Areas including Chadkirk, Marple Bridge, All Saints (Marple) and Peak Forest Canal. ■ Field pattern is varied across the LCA, with evidence of amalgamation to the south of Bredbury and more intimate and enclosed landscapes particularly to the south of the river. ■ Stockport Hydro, a renewable energy scheme at Otterspool Weir, is located within this LCA.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ Prominent views to/from urban development on adjacent upper valley slopes. ■ Viewpoint at Ridgefold looking east across the valley towards the uplands of the Peak District National Park. ■ Views are generally funnelled along the valley, and woodland on the upper valley slopes creates wooded skylines from within the valley. ■ The Goyt Viaduct forms a landmark feature on the skyline from within the valley. A pylon line running along the valley is a detracting skyline feature. ■ On the floodplain, views tend to be open. Dense woodland can restrict views in other places and also acts to create wooded skylines.
Access and recreation	■ The valley is a valued recreational destination for the surrounding urban areas, with multiple rights of way[27] linking to/from the settlements. ■ Linked by numerous recreational routes including the Midshires Way, Cown Edge Way, Etherow Goyt Valley Way and the Peak Forest Canal towpath. National Cycle Route 55 also provides access.

[26] Small development has occurred within these areas since 2018, however these are very minor alterations which are barely noticeable in the wider LCA.
[27] Very small length of public right of way added to the west of Marple since 2018.

	■ Many parks and recreation grounds, including Vernon, Woodbank, Brabyns and Roman Lakes parks and Chadkirk Country Estate.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ The landscape is generally rural and tranquil, with the sound of flowing water experienced from river crossings. This contrasts with views to adjacent urban development and traffic noise from adjacent roads. ■ Upper slopes in the east convey an upland fringe character with wind-sculpted trees, stone walls and a sense of exposure. ■ Experiential qualities vary depending on topography and land cover. Often, there is a sense of enclosure due to tree cover, with a more open character south of Marple/Hawk Green. ■ A number of suburban influences, including masts, sewage works and an electricity substation with associated overhead lines.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.15 LCA G: Goyt Valley. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)			**M**		
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)					**H**

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- The steep valley slopes and open areas of the valley floor which are visually prominent from adjacent areas (particularly the areas adjacent to Marple and those featuring in views from the Peak District National Park) would be particularly sensitive to all wind energy scenarios.
- Although still highly sensitive, the more enclosed landscapes, surrounded by woodland blocks, particularly to the south of the river and around the sewage works are less sensitive to micro and small wind energy development due to screening properties of woodland. This is particularly where they are already influenced by vertical infrastructure of a similar scale (pylons and masts).
- Landscapes where there are views towards the Peak District National Park and also towards the Goyt Viaduct, are more sensitive and interrupting these views should be avoided.
- Landscape surrounding the Conservation Areas and the Registered Park and Garden are more sensitive to all wind energy scenarios.
- Areas of high recreational value are more sensitive and it should be ensured that access is retained.

Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

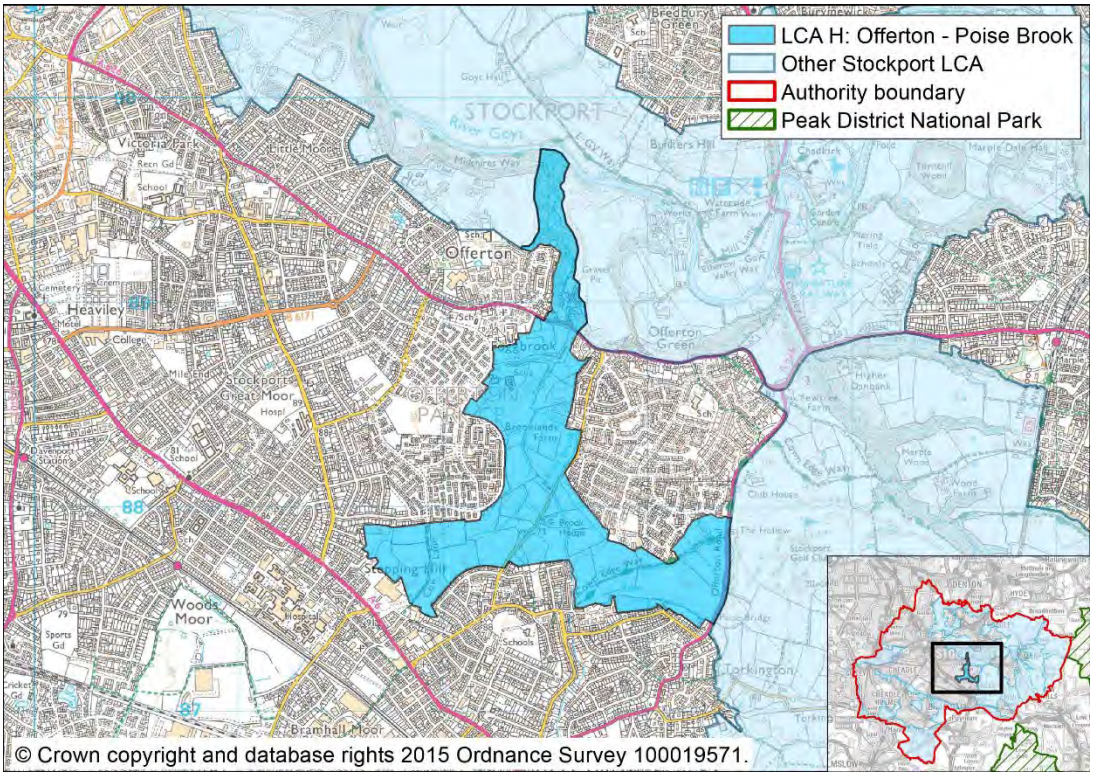
- The steep slopes associated with the dramatic valley landform carved by the winding river.
- Evidence of the valley's industrial heritage with features including the Grade I Listed Goyt Aqueduct.
- Picturesque setting and sense of place provided to nearby urban areas including historic Conservation Areas at Chadkirk, Marple Bridge, All Saints (Marple) and Peak Forest Canal.

- The distinctive visual character, with views funnelled down the valley. From the viewpoint at Ridgefold there are views over the Goyt Valley looking toward the Pennine Uplands, including areas within the Peak District National Park.
- A sense of relative tranquillity amongst dense areas of urban development.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoiding siting development in areas where it will be visually prominent including areas on steep slopes and open areas of valley floor.
- Ensure that the picturesque setting the valley provides to numerous Conservation Areas in the surrounding urban areas is retained.
- Development in this area should not interfere with the distinct visual character of the valley, with views funnelled along the river and important views in and out, including from the viewpoint at Ridgefold looking towards the Pennine Uplands (including areas within the Peak District National Park).
- Consider siting wind turbines in the pockets of enclosed landscape where existing woodland blocks can contain and screen them.
- Maintain recreational access across the LCA and consider the impact new turbines would have on users' experiences when using these routes.

LCA H: Offerton - Poise Brook



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.16 LCA H: Offerton - Poise Brook. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Gently undulating landscape drained by Poise Brook and minor watercourses, forming a tributary of the River Goyt to the north. Elevation ranges from 70m AOD within the valley floor up to 90m AOD at the perimeter where the landscape meets urban development. In the north of the LCA, there are some steeper slopes found within Offerton Wood. ■ Piecemeal small- and medium-scale fields of post-medieval origin, with some boundary changes since the mid-19th century to accommodate residential development. Semi-regular field pattern, with sub-division by fencing apparent in places. Traditional boundaries are hedges, with some gappy sections filled by fencing.
Natural character	■ Poise Brook is part of a wider SBI and LNR valued for its ancient woodland and wetland habitats. It connects directly with further locally designated habitats within the adjacent Goyt Valley (LCA G). ■ Just to the south, woodland at Foggbrook is also designated as SBI. ■ Mature in-field and hedgerow trees contribute to natural character. Areas of wetland amongst the agricultural land are important for bird species.

Historic landscape character	■ The Grade II Halliday Hill Farmhouse is located in the north of the LCA adjacent to the gravel pit in the Goyt Valley. Grade II Offerton Farmhouse is just outside of the area. ■ 19th century mill reservoir and weir located in the south of the LCA – although the mill has been demolished, the reservoir remains as a legacy of the area's industrial heritage. ■ The HLC indicates that the fields within this area are primarily post-medieval piecemeal enclosures, with several 20th century alterations including allotments, parks/recreational grounds, schools, and a riding school.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ The LCA includes small, traditional farms dating from the 19th century surrounded by modern outbuildings. ■ The LCA is enclosed by 20th century housing estates and by A road corridors. ■ The primary land use in this area is improved pasture, including areas used for keeping horses. ■ Small- to medium-scale, semi regular field pattern. Some evidence of amalgamation but generally boundaries are still intact and historic.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ In areas which are densely wooded, there is a sense of visual enclosure. This is particularly the case in the north of the LCA within Offerton Wood. ■ From within the valley there are prominent views of adjacent urban development which overlook this landscape. ■ The skylines within this area are not prominent. Adjacent rows of houses and mature trees are usually visible on skylines. A pylon line in the east of the LCA is a dominant skyline feature. ■ From the upper slopes there are long views over the valley to the uplands of the Peak District National Park.
Access and recreation	■ Public footpaths provide access between settlements through the agricultural land and are also popular with dog walkers. Routes include the Cown Edge Way and Cow Lane which are used by people travelling between urban areas and for horsiculture. ■ Some parts of the landscape are relatively inaccessible. ■ This LCA is a valued open space for local people, with numerous recreation grounds and parks.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ Sense of enclosure within the woodland which also has high levels of relative tranquillity and provides a sense of escape from nearby urban areas. ■ Urban fringe influences are evident within the landscape, including areas of horsiculture which have resulted in the replacement of hedgerows with fences. ■ Traffic noise from nearby major roads is distant and is not a prominent characteristic. Naturalistic sounds including birdsong are experienced throughout the landscape.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.17 LCA H: Offerton - Poise Brook. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)		**L-M**			
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- This LCA is a valuable open green space but is already influenced by development on its edges. However, these are generally low density residential areas, which could only accommodate micro sized turbines. Areas impacted by existing larger infrastructure such as the supermarket in the south west are less sensitive to small wind turbines.
- There are existing examples of vertical infrastructure (pylons) of a similar height to small wind turbines in the south east of the LCA. Areas influenced by these existing features are less sensitive to small wind turbines. However, care should be taken to avoid cumulative impacts of these features.
- The landscape is less sensitive to micro turbines as this LCA generally comprises small-scale landscape features which would be dominated by the larger scale development of medium turbines.
- Sensitivity to micro turbines is reduced in proximity to woodland blocks which would provide screening opportunities, however, care should be taken to avoid disturbing the tranquillity associated with these wooded areas and areas which are not influenced by the urban fringe, such as in the intimate wooded valley in the north, are more sensitive.
- Views towards the Peak District National Park are more sensitive to wind energy development and should not be interrupted.

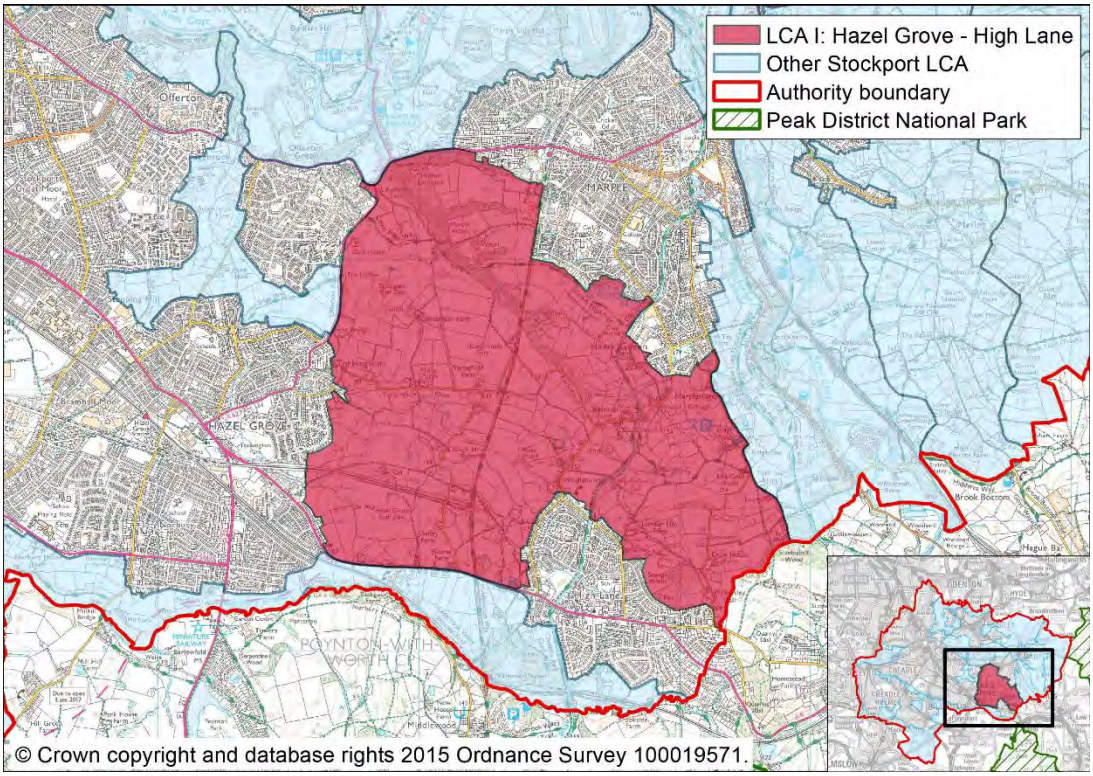
Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

- The small-scale, intimate valley landform – particularly in the north of the LCA.
- Areas of relative tranquillity which provide a sense of escape from the surrounding urban areas and opportunities for recreation.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoid development on the sloping land, where it would be prominent from within the landscape and from adjacent urban areas.
- Ensure that extensive views over the valley from the higher slopes (which include the Pennine Fringe/Peak District National Park) are retained.
- Use existing enclosure to screen turbines where possible.

LCA I: Hazel Grove – High Lane



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.18 LCA I: Hazel Grove – High Lane. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018 with the exception of the further integration of the A555 Eastern Link Road to the south west corner of the LCA.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Gently rolling topography rising from 90m in the west to over 200m AOD at Ridge Fold in the east. ■ Steeper slopes are associated with a number of brooks across LCA. ■ Agricultural land is enclosed within a mix of small- to medium-scale fields. ■ Small-scale landscape features include hedgerows, individual trees and farmhouses.
Natural character	■ Natural character comprises of hedgerows, mature individual trees, linear belts of trees (sections of which are ancient woodland) field ponds, brooks, grasslands (some of which are SBIs) reservoirs and the Macclesfield Canal.
Historic landscape character	■ There are a scattering of Listed Buildings including Grade II listed farmhouses and bridges along Macclesfield Canal (a Conservation Area). ■ Fields are of post-medieval, piecemeal origin forming semi-regular, small-medium-scale patterns.

	■ 20th century field amalgamation has occurred in places.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ The agricultural land within the LCA is primarily used for pasture. ■ A number of golf courses occupy a significant proportion of the LCA. ■ A number of farms are scattered along access minor roads and tracks. ■ Other settlement features in isolation, including individual large, detached housing, bungalows and converted farmhouses. ■ The LCA is fringed by the settlements of Torkington, Marple, High Lane and Bosden Farm with 20th century mixed housing developments on their periphery. The LCA provides an undeveloped, rural backdrop to these urban areas. ■ The A555 Eastern Link Road is located in the south west corner of the LCA[28].
Views and visual character including skylines	■ Long distance views across the undulating topography from localised high points with vantage points across the Goyt Valley from Marpleridge in the east to the Peak District National Park. There are also views of the Stockport and Greater Manchester skylines. ■ Vantages typically capture agricultural settlement and farming with linear wooded or hedgerow field boundaries. Pylons are a common sight above the woodland canopy. ■ Adjacent settlement is generally well screened by woodland, strengthening the rural character of the landscape.
Access and recreation	■ An extensive public rights of way network provides good connectivity across the landscape to surrounding settlement. Prominent access routes include the mixed-use Middlewood Way, Cheshire Ring Canal Walk and Cown Edge Way. ■ Amenity uses associated with golf courses, sports pitches and riding schools.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ The LCA is devoid of any major vehicular routes or significant development, creating a quiet and rural environment in-keeping with the agricultural setting., however these perceptual qualities are reduced in proximity to the south west and north west where A roads border the LCA.Long distance views over the expansive, gently undulating agricultural land are available over low level hedgerows along boundaries creating a strong sense of openness. ■ This contrasts with a sense of enclosure afforded by woodland along some routes, including the Middlewood Way.

[28] The junction of the A6 and the A555 Eastern Link Road was newly built / under construction when the 2018 study was published. Due to planting and reinstation of the landscape surrounding it, the road is better integrated into the landscape. This establishment has improved the condition of the surrounding landscape but due to the small-scale of change it is not deemed to materially change the character or sensitivity of the LCA.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.19 LCA I: Hazel Grove – High Lane. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)		**L-M**			
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)			**M**		
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- To the north and centre of the LCA, the landscape is open and rural in character and is not particularly influenced by existing development which increases sensitivity to all wind turbines in this area. However, the landscape condition to the south of the railway line is poorer and is influenced by existing development, such as the road junction and so sensitivity is reduced here.
- Landform and the woodland blocks do provide some opportunities for micro turbines to due to the screening properties.
- Towards Marple Ridge the gradient of the land becomes steeper and this elevated part of the LCA would be more sensitive to all wind energy development as it is visually prominent from the undulating farmland setting below.
- The landscape surrounding the conservation area is more sensitive to wind energy development as it provides the setting to the historic landscape feature and has important views out from it which could be interrupted.
- Long distance views and localise high points are sensitive, particularly towards the Peak District National Park.
- Pylons are common in this LCA, which are existing examples of vertical infrastructure a similar height to small wind turbines. Areas influenced by these existing features are less sensitive to small wind turbines. However, care should be taken to avoid cumulative impacts of these features.

Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

- The open rural character with long distance views, particularly from Macclesfield Canal (Conservation Area) and Marple Ridge towards the skyline of Stockport and Greater Manchester and the Peak District National Park.
- The attractive, undeveloped backdrop that the landscape provides to adjacent urban areas.
- Localised changes in the undulating topography emphasising the character of various brooks that cross the landscape.
- Key role the landscape plays in providing a setting for Macclesfield Canal as a Conservation Area and its associated Grade II Listed bridges.
- The historic farmhouses (including some Grade II Listed Buildings) that provide a distinctive vernacular across the skyline above the network of hedgerow boundaries.
- The key role the landscape plays in providing a setting for the moated site adjacent to Broadoak Farm, which is nationally recognised as a Scheduled Monument.
- The relatively peaceful atmosphere with only distant traffic noise given the lack of major access routes and expansive nature of the landscape, with the exception of localised noise to the south west and north west edges of the LCA

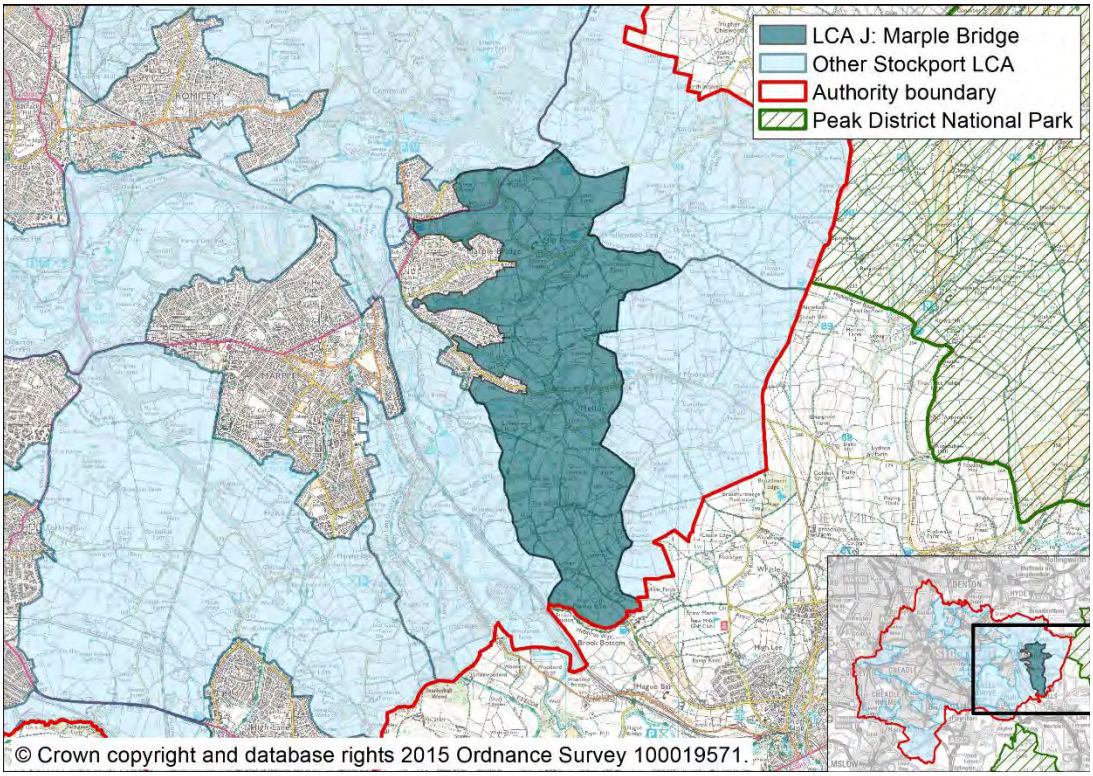
Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Utilise the undulating topography to integrate any development into the landscape. Avoid development on areas with locally distinct landform, including the slopes associated with the brooks which cross the landscape.

- Avoid areas which are open and expansive in character and make use of more enclosed pockets of land and areas of poorer condition.
- Ensure that the respects the integrity of and the setting the landscape provides to the numerous heritage features within the landscape including the Broadoak Farm moated site (Scheduled Monument) and Macclesfield Canal.
- Retain the sense of relative tranquillity.
- Any development in this area should not interfere with the visual unity and views, including the long distance views from higher ground to the Stockport and Greater Manchester skyline and towards the Peak District National Park.
- Ensure any new development does not adversely affect the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, including its beautiful views, undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies, and the vital benefits that flow beyond its landscape boundary[29].

[29] Summarised from the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28

LCA J: Marple Bridge



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.20 LCA J: Marple Bridge. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Complex small to medium-scale landform carved by several stream valleys draining into the River Goyt to the west. ■ Land generally increases steeply in elevation towards the east, ranging from approximately 100m AOD on the edge of Marple Bridge to over 300m above Capstone.
Natural character	■ A pastoral landscape with a mixture of semi-improved and improved grassland. ■ Bands of broadleaved and ancient woodland tracing streams and tributaries, linking to the hedgerow and boundary tree network. A number are Sites of Biological Interest. ■ Other valued habitats include streams, meadows, seasonally wet pastures and purple moor grass/rush pasture.
Historic landscape character	■ The HLC shows a mixture of field origins, including piecemeal enclosures of post-medieval origin dividing by traditional dry stone walls and hedgerows, and 20th century agglomerated fields.

	■ Conservation Areas at Mill Brow, Mellor and Brook Bottom (extending into High Peak Borough) with a number of Grade II listed buildings, including vernacular farmhouses and cottages. ■ The Church of St Thomas (Grade II) occupies an elevated position above Mellor village, with 14th century origins. ■ Two disused quarries are evidence for the area's rich geological and industrial heritage.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ A mixture of field sizes from medium- to large-scale, primarily pasture. ■ Linear, ribbon development spreads out of Marple Bridge along roads, including the settlements of Lane Ends, Mill Brow and Mellor. ■ Elsewhere is a dispersed pattern of farmsteads linked by tracks. ■ Elevated land in the east forms a setting to valley settlement.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ Elevated land in the east forms a rural backdrop to valley settlement and a transition to the higher Peak Fringe landscape beyond. ■ This higher ground also affords long views towards back to the urban areas of Stockport and Greater Manchester. ■ There is also intervisibility with higher land in Mellor Moor (LCA K) and Ludworth Moor (LCA L) from open hill summits – with the Peak District National Park beyond.
Access and recreation	■ Fields are crossed by a number of public footpaths and bridleways, including the Cown Edge Way. ■ A number of public rights of way connect the landscape with Marple Bridge.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ Strong rural qualities with an attractive patchwork of rolling pastures and woodlands, despite the proximity of urban areas. ■ In the south, Mellor and Townscliffe Golf Club introduces a recreational, planned land use into an otherwise rural, traditionally farmed landscape.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.21 LCA J: Marple Bridge. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)			**M**		
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity					
■ The complex and steep landform is highly sensitive to wind energy development.					

- The higher ground in the east of the LCA, upper tributary valley slopes and ridges would be highly sensitive to all wind energy development scenarios due to their visual prominence and important role as a rural, undeveloped backdrop to existing development and transition landscape to the Higher Peak beyond.
- Landscape surrounding the conservation areas and the Church of St Thomas are sensitive to all types of wind energy development. Development in the setting of these areas and views, particularly in elevated locations, should be avoided.
- Long distance views are sensitive to any type of wind energy development, however views towards urban skylines are less sensitive than views towards the Peak District National Park.
- Areas which have a particular sense of time depth are more sensitive to wind energy development.

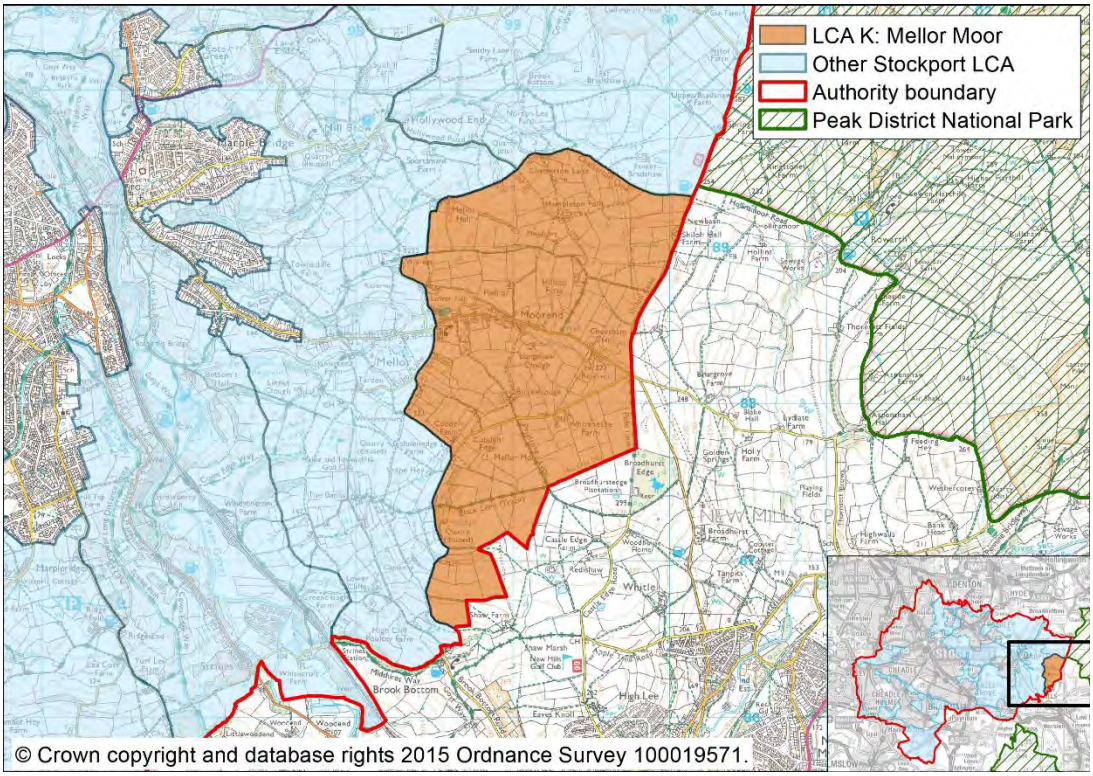
Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

- The complex, small- to medium-scale landform carved by a number of tributary valleys of the Goyt with steep, visible slopes and intervening ridges.
- Visually prominent ridgeline and rising ground in the east of the LCA, forming a backdrop to valley settlement and character transition to the Peak Fringe beyond.
- Areas of irregular piecemeal enclosures of post-medieval origin and disused quarries providing a sense of time depth.
- Land within and areas that form a setting to the Conservation Areas at Mill Brow, Mellor and Brook Bottom.
- Grade II Listed buildings, including vernacular farmhouses and cottages and the Church of St Thomas, which forms an important local landmark and focal point above Mellor village.
- Extensive views from elevated land in the east to the urban areas of Stockport and wider Greater Manchester at lower elevations to the west.
- Intervisibility with the Peak Fringe landscapes in the east of the borough (LCA K: Mellor Moor and L: Ludworth Moor).
- Strong rural qualities despite the proximity of development at Marple Bridge.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoid steeper, more prominent slopes particularly in the east of the LCA.
- Respect the character and setting of the Conservation Areas at Mill Brow, Mellor and Brook Bottom, as well as Grade II listed buildings within the landscape.
- Conserve undeveloped skylines and ensure new development does not affect the appreciation of the landmark St Thomas' church above Mellor village.
- Protect long, uninterrupted views from higher ground over Marple Bridge and beyond to Greater Manchester, as well as open horizons marked by the Pennine Fringe landscapes (Mellor Moor and Ludworth Moor), with the Peak District beyond.
- Maintain the sparsely settled, rural character of the wider landscape and its role as a backdrop to Marple Bridge and eastern Stockport.
- Take advantage of the screening effects of existing woodland and hedgerows when siting wind turbines. This would be particularly effective and important when siting micro wind turbines.

LCA K: Mellor Moor



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.22 LCA K: Mellor Moor. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Elevated, rolling landscape rising steeply up in an east/southeasterly direction, reaching a maximum of 327m AOD . ■ An open, large-scale landscape overlain by a medium-large field pattern. ■ A more enclosed scale is associated with the landscape around Moorend. ■ Occasional wind-swept trees form small-scale features across higher ground; buildings provide a human-scale at Moorend.
Natural character	■ An agricultural landscape of semi-improved pasture fields. ■ Semi-natural habitats largely limited to small bands and blocks of broadleaved woodland, linking to boundary trees, ponds and some areas of rush pasture/purple moor grass of importance to birds. ■ SBI-designated meadows at Mellor Moor and relict heathland at Cobden Cross. ■ Important habitat connections with and 'stepping stones' to those found within the nearby Peak District National Park and High Peak.

Historic landscape character	■ Strong pattern of rectilinear 18th/19th century Parliamentary enclosures and moorland intakes divided by gritstone walls. ■ Earlier irregular assarts are found around Birchenough Farm and 20th century agglomerated fields occur in places. ■ The majority of Mellor/Moor End Conservation Area falls within the LCA. It also forms a backdrop to Brook Bottom Conservation Area. ■ Grade II* 17th century Mellor Hall and Mellor Hall Farmhouse, situated on a ridgeline in the north of the LCA (bordering LCA L). ■ Other Grade II listed buildings dispersed across the landscape including traditional stone-built farmhouses. ■ Disused quarry at Cobden Cross revealing area's industrial and geological heritage.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ Moorend village takes a linear roadside form in the centre of the LCA, enclosed by slopes either side and integrated by woodland. ■ Elsewhere settlement comprises dispersed farmsteads and cottages with strong gritstone vernacular. ■ LCA forms part of the rural backdrop to settled low-lying areas to the west; Marple Bridge, Marple, Stockport and Greater Manchester beyond. ■ Medium- to large-scale and irregular field pattern.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ Grade II* Mellor Hall and Mellor Hall Farmhouse situated on an elevated ridgeline. ■ Along with Mellor Hall, elevated land at Cobden Edge features views to the Grade II St Thomas Church above Mellor (LCA J). ■ Individual trees along field and road boundaries punctuate undeveloped skylines. ■ Elevation affords panoramic views west over Marple Bridge Marple, Stockport and Greater Manchester beyond. ■ Land to the east affords views into Derbyshire and the Peak District National Park. ■ A single 9m micro turbine is located at Bogguard Road, within this LCA. ■ Pylons are prominent across this LCA.
Access and recreation	■ A network of tracks connects farms and properties, linking to public footpaths crossing through farmland. ■ The area offers opportunities for open air recreation in a rural context for nearby communities.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ A strongly rural landscape with traditional Peak fringe qualities emphasised by unifying gritstone buildings and stone walls. ■ High levels of tranquillity and perceptions of relative isolation, particularly at higher elevations. ■ Good landscape condition with maintained and intact stone walls.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.23 LCA K: Mellor Moor. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)			**M**		
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- The areas which are open and elevated are more highly sensitive to all wind energy development however there are pockets of land which are more enclosed near Moorend which are less sensitive to micro and small turbines.
- Inter-visibility and character connections with the Peak District National Park, and role of the LCA as an undeveloped rural backdrop to urban development, increases the sensitivity of this LCA to all wind energy development.
- Pylons are common in this LCA, which are existing examples of vertical infrastructure a similar height to small wind turbines. Areas influenced by these existing features are less sensitive to small wind turbines. However, care should be taken to avoid cumulative impacts of these features.
- The presence of an existing micro turbine (9m) reduces the sensitivity of the LCA to micro turbines slightly in this location.
- The landscape surrounding Mellor / Moorend conservation area and Mellor Hall is more sensitive. Development in the setting of and in views to and from these areas should be avoided.
- Views towards St Thomas's Church (LCA J) and panoramic views east and west are more sensitive to all types of wind energy development, particularly towards the Peak District National Park.
- Areas of high tranquillity and relative isolation, particularly at high elevations, are highly sensitive to all types of wind energy development.
- Areas which have a strong time depth, around distinctive historic fields, are more sensitive to all types of wind energy development.

Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

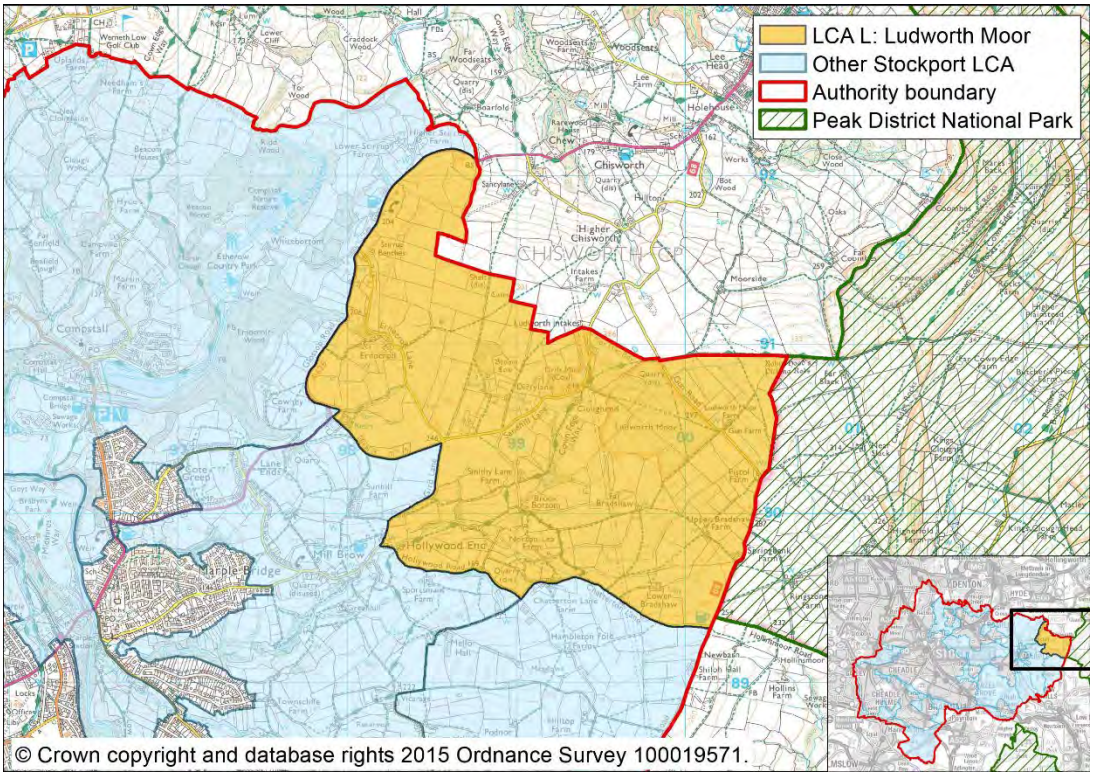
- Its elevated, open character with prominent (largely undeveloped) skylines forming a backdrop to views from valley settlements and the wider Greater Manchester conurbation.
- The landscape's visual and character connections with Derbyshire and the Peak District National Park to the east and north-east.
- Time depth provided by 18th/19th century intakes, Parliamentary enclosures, and historic irregular assarts near Birchenough Farm – traditionally enclosed by a distinctive network of dry stone walls.
- Key role the landscape plays in the character and setting of Mellor/Moor End and Brook Bottom Conservation Areas.
- Strong historic vernacular of stone-built farmhouses and cottages (a number which are Grade II Listed), and the landmark Grade II* Mellor Hall and Farmhouse.
- Overriding rural qualities with dispersed and sparse settlement.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoid siting any development on the highly prominent, elevated and undeveloped land (e.g., Mellor Moor to the east) which forms part of the transition and wider setting of the National Park.
- Protect the landscape's role as a rural backdrop to urban development to the west, including Marple Bridge, Marple, Stockport and Greater Manchester beyond. Conserve expansive views from this LCA across adjacent landscapes.
- Conserve open, undeveloped skylines often marked by trees, ensuring new development does not affect the appreciation of views to Mellor Hall and Farmhouse (Grade II*) and St Thomas Church (Grade II in LCA J).
- Protect the landscape's contribution to the character and setting of Mellor/Moor End and Brook Bottom Conservation Areas.
- Ensure any new development does not adversely affect the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, including its beautiful views, undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies, and the vital benefits that flow beyond its landscape boundary[30].
- Protect the LCA's overriding sense of remoteness and traditional upland qualities with a dispersed pattern of stone-built farms and cottages.

[30] Summarised from the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28

LCA L: Ludworth Moor



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Table 5.24 LCA L: Ludworth Moor. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Note: The findings of desk based and site based analysis indicate there have been no notable changes in the landscape baseline since 2018 with the exception of minor alterations to existing development.

Criteria	Description
Physical character (including topography and scale)	■ Landform generally sloping up to the north-east, carved by an east-west flowing valley draining from the higher ground. ■ Elevation ranges from approximately 170m in the valley bottom to over 300m on the boundary with the Peak District National Park. ■ Open, large-scale landform overlain by a medium-large field pattern. ■ Trees, stone walls and buildings create contrasting small-scale features.
Natural character	■ Land use largely semi-improved pastures used for traditional sheep grazing. ■ Rich texture of upland habitats, including upland heathland, bracken, semi-natural grassland, rush pasture/purple moor grass, scrub, wetlands (including ponds) and woodland. ■ Ludworth Moor SBI includes grassland, heathland and bog. The intakes north of the moor are nationally designated as a geological SSSI. ■ Bands of broadleaved and mixed woodland tracing watercourses, linking with boundary trees and tree clumps.

	■ Important habitat connections with and 'stepping stones' to those found within the nearby Peak District National Park and High Peak.
Historic landscape character	■ 18th and 19th century moorland intakes create regular patterns across higher land. ■ More irregular post-medieval piecemeal enclosures and 20th century enlarged fields found elsewhere. ■ Brown Low Scheduled Monument is largely concealed by woodland. ■ A Scheduled cairn is located in an elevated position at Ludworth Intakes. ■ Robin Hood's Picking Rods Scheduled Monument is located just outside the boundary of the LCA, in the north-eastern corner,; the remains of a Mercian cross. ■ A disused coal mine, shafts, quarries and place names including Dirtylane and Smithy Lane indicate the LCA's industrial heritage. ■ On the border with LCA J, the 17th century Mellor Hall and Mellor Hall Farmhouse is Grade II* listed.
Landcover and built environment (including field and settlement patterns)	■ Scattered pattern of farms and dispersed cottages[31] linked by minor roads and tracks, the buildings often screened by shelterbelts. ■ Landscape forms part of the elevated, rural backdrop to valley settlements (Marple and Marple Bridge), transitioning to the Peak District National Park immediately behind. ■ Medium- to large-scale field pattern which ranges from irregular on lower landform to regular on higher landform and of an upland pastoral landscape.
Views and visual character including skylines	■ Expansive views afforded over the settled Goyt Valley to the west, including Marple Bridge, Stockport and distant views of Greater Manchester (including tall tower blocks) beyond. ■ Views south and east defined by the dramatic high moorland of the Peak District National Park. ■ An elevated, sweeping landscape creating open skylines often marked by trees/bands of woodland. ■ Overhead pylons cut through the centre of the LCA, contrasting from the undeveloped nature of the landscape. ■ The nationally designated cairn at Ludworth Intakes occupies an elevated skyline position.
Access and recreation	■ Public footpaths cross fields, linking farms and cottages. ■ The Cown Edge Way traces the main valley from Hollywood End up and across Ludworth Moor.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	■ The landscape evokes a strongly rural, remote and 'Peak District' feel with gritstone walls, traditional farms, sheep grazed pastures and rough moorland.

[31] Minor alterations to Holly Head (extension and new barn buildings) since the 2018 report was published, however this is barely noticeable within the larger scale of the LCA and is not out of character for the area.

	■ These qualities are broken locally by pylon lines/overhead wires cutting through the centre of the landscape. ■ Condition within this LCA is variable, boundaries are variable in management.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to development scenarios

Table 5.25 LCA L: Ludworth Moor. Landscape Sensitivity to Development Scenarios

Wind development scenario	Sensitivity				
Micro Wind Turbines (25m to blade tip)			**M**		
Small Wind Turbines (50m to blade tip)				**M-H**	
Medium Wind Turbines (75m to blade tip)				**M-H**	

Justification and notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity

- This elevated and expansive landscape is highly sensitive to all types of wind energy development, however due to the undulating valley landscape, there may be pockets of land which could accommodate smaller turbines if sited well.
- The landscape is more sensitive along the higher landform and ridgelines because of the visual relationship with the Peak District. Sensitivity reduces slighting on lower landform in the valley.
- Views, particularly of dramatic high moorland of the Peak District and Ludworth Intakes and are very sensitive to development.
- Presence of localised skyline structures in the form of pylons reduce the sensitivity to small wind turbines. However, care should be taken to avoid cumulative impacts of these features.
- Parts of the landscape which evoke a strong rural and remote feel are more sensitive to development.

Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

- Its elevated, open character with prominent (largely undeveloped) skylines forming a backdrop to views from valley settlements and the wider Greater Manchester conurbation.
- The landscape's visual and character connections with the Peak District National Park, which lies immediately adjacent to the east of the LCA.
- Strong pattern of 18th/19th century intakes and post-medieval piecemeal enclosures marked by traditional dry stone walls.
- The nationally designated heritage assets of Brown Low, a cairn at Ludworth Intakes and distinctive feature of Robin Hood's Picking Rods, located just outside the boundary of the LCA.
- Unifying vernacular of stone-built traditional farms and cottages, with the Grade II* Listed Mellor Hall and Farmhouse on the border with LCA J.
- Strong rural qualities and an overriding sense of isolation and remoteness – unusual in the context of Stockport.

Guidance and opportunities for future development

- Avoid siting any development on the highly prominent, elevated and very sparsely settled land in the east of the LCA (which forms part of the transition and wider setting of the National Park, visible in views from urban areas to the west).

- Conserve open, undeveloped skylines often marked by trees, ensuring new development does not affect the appreciation of the Scheduled cairn at Ludworth Intakes.
- Ensure any new development does not adversely affect the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, including its beautiful views, undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies, and the vital benefits that flow beyond its landscape boundary[32].
- Protect long, uninterrupted views from higher ground over Marple Bridge, Marple and beyond to Stockport and Greater Manchester.
- Protect the overriding sense of isolation, strong sense of time depth and traditional rural qualities associated within the landscape.

[32] Summarised from the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28

Appendix A

Data and Literature Sources

Key Literature Sources

- Stockport Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study. Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, 2018. https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/environment-and-heritage
- An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management. Natural England, 2019. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-sensitivity-assessment
- National Planning Policy Framework. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
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- Climate Change Position Statement. National Parks England, 2019. https://www.nationalparksengland.org.uk/publications-and-documents/policy-position-statements2
- National Character Area Profile 51: Dark Peak. Natural England. http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3684793
- National Character Area Profile 54: Manchester Pennine Fringe. Natural England. http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4631438
- National Character Area Profile 55: Manchester Conurbation. Natural England. http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5989113924681728

- National Character Area Profile 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain. Natural England. http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6076647514046464
- High Peak Borough Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document. High Peak Borough Council, March 2006. https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/article/852/Supplementary-Planning-Documents-SPDs-and-design-guidance
- Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment. Peak District National Park Authority, 2009. https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/landscape-strategy
- Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment. LUC for Cheshire East Council, 2018. https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/heritage_natural_environment/landscape/landscape_character_assessment.aspx
- Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment. Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2018. https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1727/greater-manchester-landscape-character-and-sensitivity-report.pdf

GIS Information: Data Sources

Dataset	Owner
General	
Ordnance Survey 1:25K	Ordnance Survey
Ordnance Survey 1:50K	Ordnance Survey
Vector map local	Ordnance Survey
Administrative boundaries	Ordnance Survey
National Parks	Natural England
Aerial photography	ESRI
Access	
Landscape Character Areas	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
National Character Areas	Natural England
Manchester Green Belt	Greater Manchester Local Authorities
Dark skies	CPRE
Tranquillity	CPRE
Biodiversity and Woodland	
Ancient woodland	Natural England
National Forest Inventory	Forestry Commission
Priority BAP Habitats	Natural England
Local Nature Reserves	Natural England
National Nature Reserves	Natural England
Site of Special Scientific Interest	Natural England
Ramsar	Natural England
Special Protection Area	Natural England
Special Area of Conservation	Natural England
Local Wildlife Site	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Sites of biological importance	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Countryside sites	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Protected species data	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Invasive species data	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Hydrology	
Water courses/lakes	OS OML

Dataset	Owner
Flood Zone 3	Environment Agency
Flood Zone 2	Environment Agency
Heritage	
Listed Buildings	Historic England
Conservation Areas	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered Battlefields	Historic England
Registered Parks and Gardens	Historic England
Scheduled Monuments	Historic England
Historic Landscape Character	Archaeology data service
Geology	
Fault Geology	British Geological Survey
Superficial Geology	British Geological Survey
Bedrock Geology	British Geological Survey
Minerals	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council