

Trafford Metropolitan Borough

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Landscape Strategy

September 2004

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1. Introduction -The purpose of supplementary planning guidance (SPG)

- 1.1. The supplementary planning guidance provides further guidance to that contained in the Unitary Development Plan to help prospective developers and land managers in considering landscape issues in determining appropriate land use and development and to raise public awareness.
- 1.2. The SPG will assist Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council in making decisions on individual planning applications, and will be used to promote good practice.
- 1.3. The assessment considers all areas of open land outside the built up area, which comprises approximately 45% of the Borough as shown on the plan of Landscape Character Areas on page 8.
- 1.4. The landscape assessment document includes:
 - Methodology
 - Character assessments for seven landscape types including: -
 - Key Characteristics
 - Landscape Character
 - Pressures on the landscape
 - Strategy and policy guidelines
 - Map
 - Appendices
- 1.5. As part of the landscape assessment the Council commissioned a landscape consultant to steer the process. The landscape assessment team consisted of Landscape Architects, an Ecologist/Countryside Manager, a Planner and a Geographer backed up by consultation with specialists with local knowledge such as the Local History Library. The process has resulted from the development of methods of assessment which are structured and repeatable, which clearly separate the processes of description and classification from those of evaluation, and which rely on well-argued, professional judgement.

2 Trafford Unitary Development Plan

- 2.1. The Landscape Strategy has been prepared as part of the Council's review of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as advised in the original UDP Public Inquiry Inspectors Report. This report recommended that an assessment of the boundaries of the Areas of Special Landscape Value and Landscape Improvement Areas be carried out and defined in accordance with the principles advocated by the Countryside Agency (formerly the Countryside Commission) in the publication "Landscape Assessment Guidance" (1993).
- 2.2. This supplementary planning guidance is intended to supplement Proposal ENV17 of the UDP. The Environment Chapter of the UDP sets out the overall strategy for the improvement and protection of both the built and natural environment. The protection and improvement of the environment of Trafford had been a consistent objective of the Council since its inception. In particular the package of measures in the Environment Chapter follow two particular themes: to make and keep Trafford an attractive place in which to live, work and invest and in particular, by protecting and improving the quality of its environment and by providing the best possible choice of jobs, services and amenities; to protect and enhance the contribution that Trafford countryside and other open space makes to its landscape quality and to the needs of leisure, recreation, farming, forestry and wildlife.
- 2.3. Policies and Proposals in the UDP seek to:
 - v Protect and improve the urban and countryside assets and enhance the qualities of Trafford's environment;
 - v Enhance the appearance and utility of those areas and features that detract from the environmental quality of the Borough;

- v Encourage better quality, environmentally more sensitive development; and minimise the sources and impacts of pollution.
- 2.4. Proposal ENV17 “Protection of Landscape Character”, identifies the seven landscape types within Trafford’s open land outside the urban areas, their qualities and characteristics and measures to ensure that they are conserved, enhanced and restored.

Proposal ENV17 states:

The Council will protect, promote and enhance the distinctive landscape character and quality of the areas identified on the Proposals Map. Where development is acceptable in principle, the Council will apply the following criteria in assessing the suitability of proposals in relation to the landscape type and character of their setting:

1. The appropriateness of design and construction materials with regard to local/regional building traditions.
2. The degree and quality of landscaping.
3. The impact on the landscape quality of the immediate area and the wider setting and on features of importance to wildlife.

Justification

- 2.5 *The quality and character of the Borough’s Landscape Types differs. Some areas have retained their original characteristics whilst the character of others has changed or has been affected by development. The Council wishes to ensure that the characteristics of each of the Borough’s landscape types is preserved and enhanced when it is considering development proposals that may come forward within them.*
- 2.6 *The Council has completed a Landscape Assessment of the Borough’s open land and has identified seven different landscape types that it wishes to seek to preserve and enhance by means of this Proposal. The seven Landscape Types are: -*

- **Wooded Claylands** - Timperley Wedge and open areas adjacent to River Bollin
- **Wooded Estate lands** - centred around the Dunham Massey Estate
- **Settled Sandlands** - Dunham and Warburton
- **Mossland** - Carrington Moss
- **River Meadowlands** – low-lying areas of the River Bollin and Mersey
- **Wooded River Valley** - east section of the River Bollin from M56 to A56
- **Urban River Valley** - Manchester Ship Canal and canalised River Mersey

3 National and Local Planning Policy

- 3.1. The approach adopted by the Council in Proposal ENV17 reflects advice from Central Government and its agencies. The Government’s policies for the countryside are set out in the White Paper ‘Rural England: A Nation Committed to a Living Countryside’ (1995), which is based on ensuring the rural prosperity and protection and enhancement of the character of the countryside.
- 3.2. PPG 1 General Policies and Principles, recognises the role of the planning system in guiding appropriate development and the need to protect the natural and built environment. The policy adopted does not prevent development but rather requires development to respect and complement the quality of the landscape as suggested in Annex A, “Policies should be based on a proper assessment of the character of the surrounding built and natural environment, and should take account of the defining characteristics of each local area, for example local or regional building traditions and materials”. This is further highlighted in PPG 3 Housing, which states that consideration of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to any immediate neighbouring buildings, but the townscape and landscape of the wider locality.

- 3.3. PPG 7 the Countryside, Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development highlights the importance of the countryside areas and that “the priority is to find new ways of enriching the quality of the whole of the countryside whilst accommodating appropriate development, in order to complement the protection which designations offer”. The approaches to analysing landscape character are specifically referred to in paragraph 2.14. Paragraph 2.15 recognises that the character approach ensures that development respects or enhances the distinctive character of the land and built environment.
- 3.4. In addition PPG 2 Green Belts stresses that development in the Green Belt (as the study area is primarily green belt) should not impair the visual qualities of the Green Belt. The Green Belt should not be “injured” by proposals for development within or conspicuous from it, which, although they would not prejudice the purposes of including land in Green Belts, might visually be detrimental by reason of their siting, materials or design.
- 3.5. Government Circular 1/97 gives local planning authorities policy guidance on the use of planning obligations in approving development. The planning obligations may “enhance the quality of development”, but “must be relevant to planning and directly related to the proposed development”. The use of planning obligations may be appropriate to enforce landscape improvements to alleviate the impact of development.
- 3.6. PPG 12 specifically refers to local authorities being required when drawing up their development plan to include land use policies and proposals for the improvement of the physical environment. Policies and proposals should aim to protect and enhance the environment regarded as being high quality and to improve poor environment.
- 3.7. The direction in which Government advice is leading local authorities has developed over a period of time. Such advice is reflected in Regional Planning Guidance 13 (March 2003) which provides the regional context for the UDP. The guidance contains policies supporting the approach proposed in the UDP. Chapter 8 of the RPG sets out the policy framework to which local authorities should have regard to promoting conservation and enhancement. Policy ER1 advises planning authorities to “*conserve and enhance, wherever possible, regional and local distinctiveness and variety, by reassessing local designations in the light of The Countryside Agency’s Countryside Character initiative supported by local landscape assessments.*” and in ER2 to “*ensure that all new development makes every effort to avoid damage to the landscape and, where possible, enhances it*”
- 3.8. Proposals to protect and conserve areas of open land were contained in the Greater Manchester Structure Plan (1981), Mersey Valley Local Plan (1986), Timperley Brook Local Plan (1986) and Broadheath Sinderland Local Plan (1987). The protection and enhancement of the landscape quality of the Borough was further reflected in the Secretary of State’s Strategic Guidance for Greater Manchester (1989).
- 3.9. The assessment of the landscape character of Trafford has broadly followed the guidelines advocated by the Countryside Agency – CCP332 Assessment and Conservation of the landscape character: the Warwickshire Landscapes Project Approach and CCP423 Landscape Assessment Guidance (1993). The Landscape Strategy for Trafford complements the Countryside Agency’s work to identify and map the character of England (Countryside Character Volume 2: North West 1998).

4 Legislation

- 4.1. The Landscape Strategy takes account of the following legislation in detailing policy guidelines:
 - Countryside Act 1968
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
 - Hedgerow Regulations 1997
 - Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
 - The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994

5 Methodology

5.1 There are 5 stages of the landscape assessment process. These are:

1. Define the purpose of the study
2. Collation and analysis of information leading to classification and description of landscape types
3. Analysis and evaluation
4. Strategy statement and policy guidelines
5. Monitoring

Details of these 5 stages can be found in Appendix 1.

5.2 The term 'landscape' embraces both the nature of the land itself - the terrestrial environment, including its natural features as modified by human activities - and the way in which we perceive it. Human perception in turn encompasses both the way in which we perceive the land's aesthetic qualities (patterns, colours, sounds, and smells) and the associations we attribute to particular locations.

5.3 Landscape character is influenced by a range of natural (physical and biological) and cultural factors, that determine the way in which the land has evolved. The visual dimension of the landscape is a reflection of the way in which these components interact to create the qualities of scale, form and enclosure which viewers actually experience. The assessment of landscape character is concerned not only with identifying and describing these features, but perhaps more importantly, with understanding the way in which they combine to create the distinctive patterns that contribute to particular scenes.

5.4 There is now a well established and widely accepted step by step approach to the assessment of landscape character, leading to the production of a map and written descriptions of the different landscape types and/or character areas that occur within the assessment area.

6 Character Assessment

6.1 Each landscape type is identified on the map below (see page 8) Appendix 2 contains the detailed results of the analysis under the headings listed below. -

Key Characteristics

- Important features found throughout the area.

Landscape Character

- Description of the geographical area and the features which contribute to the character, including physical, historical and cultural influences.

Pressures in the Landscape

- Description of changes or development which threatens the landscape character. Includes a summary of key issues.

Strategy Statement

- A short paragraph outlining the vision for each of the landscape types. May involve conservation, restoration or enhancement of the landscape (or a combination of these).

Policy Guidelines

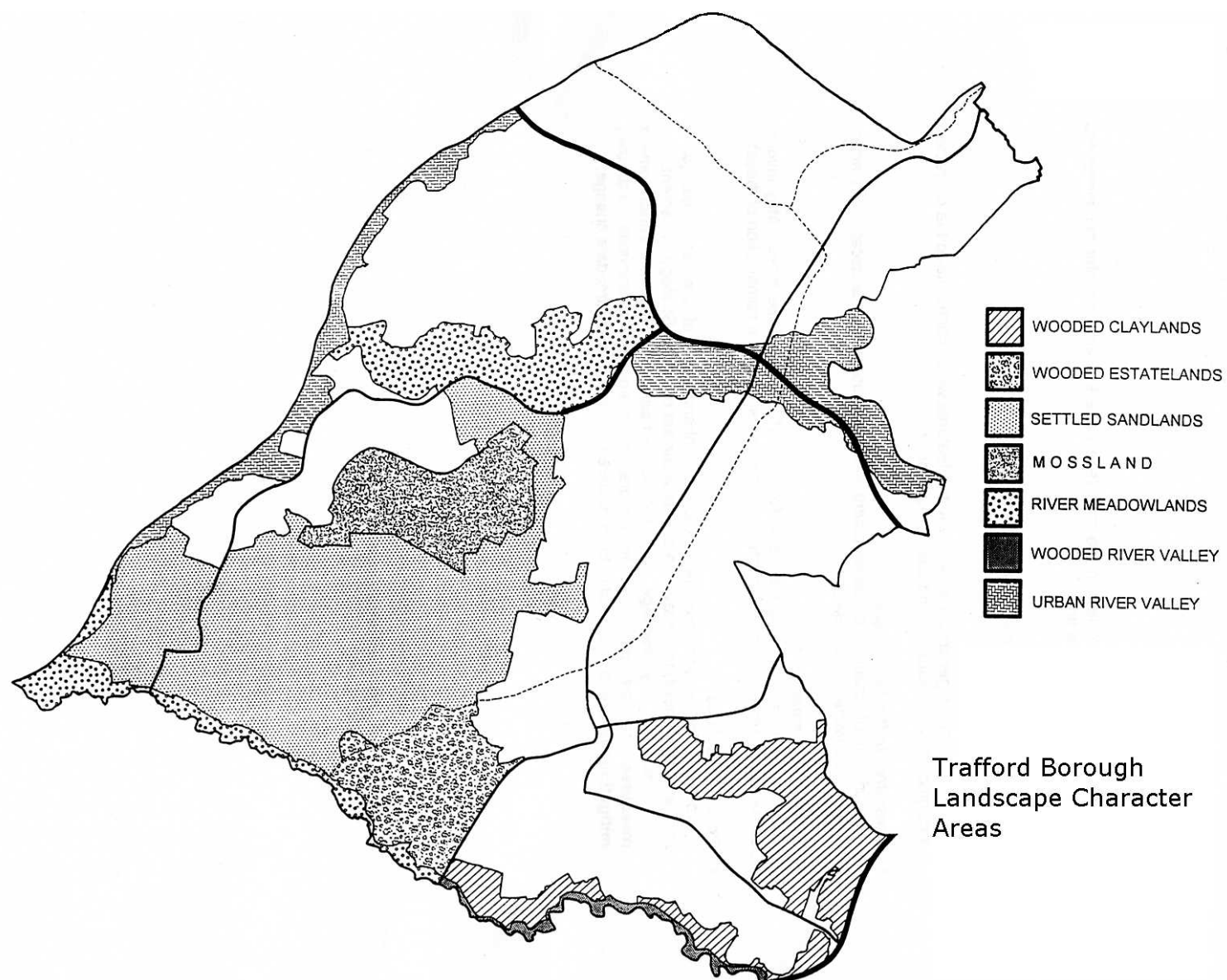
- Proposals for conservation, restoration or enhancement of the landscape (or a combination of these) to achieve the overall vision set out in the Strategy Statement.

These address key heritage and nature conservation issues, enhancement measures that are necessary to restore, or strengthen countryside character, mitigation measures that need to be considered in order to accommodate change.

6.2 Each landscape type is summarised in the table below under the headings of:

- **Key characteristics,**
- **Pressures**
- **Policy guidelines.**

The table allows a quick reference but for more information and a full description of each Landscape Character see Appendix 2.



LANDSCAPE TYPE	1.1 KEY FEATURES	1.1.1.1.1 PRESSURES	POLICY GUIDELINES
Wooded Claylands	<p>A gently rolling topography dissected by narrow, often steep sided valleys</p> <p>An ancient wooded landscape characterised by densely scattered hedgerow oaks and irregularly shaped mature woodland</p> <p>A predominantly pastoral landscape</p> <p>Views are typically restricted by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and development, which create the impression of a small to medium scale enclosed landscape</p> <p>Scattered marl pits within field areas</p> <p>A piecemeal enclosure pattern with an irregular pattern of small to medium sized fields and narrow winding lanes</p> <p>A dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and occasional rural dwellings</p>	<p>A gradual sub-division and piecemeal encroachment into the rural areas.</p> <p>Diversification in agricultural areas.</p> <p>Development pressure/poorly designed development.</p> <p>Continued loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.</p> <p>Severance of links with adjacent areas of similar landscape character.</p> <p>Increased recreational pressure on the woodland areas.</p> <p>Loss of marl pit ponds within the landscape.</p>	<p>Conserve, enhance and strengthen the traditional landscape pattern. Particular opportunities for hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be looked for.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the wooded landscape character encouraging access and sensitive recreational use.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance other topographical features encouraging ecological diversity and recreation.</p> <p>Protect and enhance the quality of ponds using traditional management. Look to create new ponds.</p> <p>Enhance the ecological diversity of recreational facilities e.g. provide new planting and leave uncut areas of grass and wildflowers.</p> <p>Protect, retain and strengthen the pattern of roads and lanes taking account of traditional features and linking the highway design to the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Protect and retain the built and historic features and pattern of settlement</p>

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY FEATURES	PRESSURES	POLICY GUIDELINES
Wooded Estate lands	<p>Trees create a wooded planned appearance and are visually prominent, particularly within the grounds of Dunham Hall and as scattered coverts throughout the area</p> <p>A rolling landform of agricultural fields associated with Dunham Hall, with rising ground to the east</p> <p>A medium to large scale landscape, views open and extensive from the rising ground and more restricted where tree groups occur</p> <p>Unsettled except the small cluster development of Dunham Town, otherwise the area is dominated by Dunham Hall and associated estate lands</p> <p>Fairly straight, albeit sometimes winding country lanes, often demarcated with hedgerows and associated with the planned structure of the original Estate lands</p>	<p>Change to landscape character.</p> <p>Development threatens the original pattern, use of the vernacular, the existing scale of the landscape and land use within the character area.</p> <p>Recreational visitor pressure on the Parkland, Park features, woods and adjoining land.</p>	<p>Conserve and protect existing and planned woodland and trees particularly where the land is grazed and encourage new planting of native species.</p> <p>Conserve the arable farmland pattern of geometric strips enclosed by low hedgerows and manage using traditional techniques</p> <p>Conserve the historic buildings and character of the Parkland and village ensuring high quality design.</p> <p>Conserve the visual unity of the rural area and enhance this in the integration of appropriate uses.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the vernacular style, scale and location using traditional material appropriate to the area.</p> <p>Enhance the ecological diversity of Dunham New Park e.g. new planting, uncut grass and wildflowers.</p>

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY FEATURES	PRESSURES	POLICY GUIDELINES
Settled Sandlands	<p>Dominant agricultural land use, arable with some pasture</p> <p>Medium to large sized fields, generally defined by hedgerows and prominent hedgerow trees</p> <p>Generally low-lying, gently rolling topography, particularly down to the River Bollin floodplain</p> <p>Dispersed farmsteads throughout, linked by meandering country lanes with two main cluster settlements at Dunham Woodhouses and Warburton</p> <p>The vernacular style, particularly in farm buildings, with their traditional use of materials, is a distinguishing visual feature</p> <p>Small, isolated blocks of woodland</p> <p>The presence of several watercourses and ponds</p>	<p>Development on the fringes of the area.</p> <p>Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.</p> <p>The loss of traditional style buildings. New building and modern details that are out of character with the vernacular.</p> <p>Loss and degradation of woodland.</p>	<p>Conserve, restore and maintain the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees encouraging new planting and traditional management. Assessment of ancient hedgerows should be done</p> <p>Conserve the visual unity particularly in relation to views and the impact of existing and new power lines</p> <p>Conserve the rural character of the area ensuring development integrates with the landscape and is of appropriate scale and design. Opportunities to screen existing buildings should be encouraged.</p> <p>Conserve and maintain the historic settlement patterns in new development. Encourage the extension of conservation areas where appropriate.</p> <p>Conserve the vernacular style retaining traditional feature in walls, gates etc.</p> <p>Conserve the pattern of roads retaining traditional features and encouraging more landscape opportunities.</p> <p>Conserve and restore woodlands, including Ancient Woodlands in particular the opportunities to enhance Coroners Wood.</p> <p>Conserve, restore and enhance ecological features in particular the quality of ponds and enhancement of ditches.</p>

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY FEATURES	PRESSURES	POLICY GUIDELINES
Mossland	<p>Flat topography associated with relic mossland</p> <p>Dominant arable agricultural land use within a planned enclosure system and conspicuous drainage ditches around field areas</p> <p>A rectilinear network of tracks around large scale fields, usually without fences and often emphasised by scrub-like vegetation and trees</p> <p>A lack of built development</p> <p>A large scale landscape, with open views, especially to rural areas to the south</p>	<p>Development threatens the intrinsic scale and survival of the Mossland Character</p> <p>Power lines create a significant visual intrusion within the area.</p> <p>Planting to screen development undermining the traditional landscape pattern.</p> <p>Loss of ecological habitats and species associated with agricultural intensification.</p>	<p>Conserve the mossland character. Agricultural use should be encouraged as a way to maintain the traditional pattern.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the structure and appearance of the Mossland 'Rides' exploring opportunities for new planting and access.</p> <p>Restore traditional ecological habitats including ditches, field boundaries, grassland management and establishment of wildflowers next to these.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the visual unity of the open aspect and views, mitigating the impact of existing and new power lines. The screening around the Petro Chemical works should be encouraged.</p>

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY FEATURES	PRESSURES	POLICY GUIDELINES
River Meadowlands	<p>Low-lying topography associated with a flat alluvial floodplain</p> <p>Meandering watercourse, not visually prominent due to the slightly sunken position within the flat topography</p> <p>Medium scale pastoral landscape with patches of wet grassland</p> <p>Semi-regular enclosure pattern marked by thorn hedgerows and post and wire fences</p> <p>Open often distant views along the floodplain, views north and south controlled by the rising ground beyond the floodplain</p> <p>Secluded character with the occasional building</p> <p>Marginal aquatic vegetation with occasional fringing trees and scrub</p>	<p>Urban encroachment particularly the scale of change in land uses, adversely affecting the landscape pattern.</p> <p>Development severing the visual unity of the river meadowlands.</p> <p>Changes to topography resulting from development affects the intrinsic landscape character of the floodplain.</p> <p>Loss of hedgerows resulting in changes to the enclosure pattern and ecological diversity.</p> <p>The spread of invasive species particularly along watercourses, due to a lack of management.</p>	<p>Conserve and enhance the landscape character by encouraging agricultural land use. Formal recreation use is inappropriate but enhancement of access should be encouraged.</p> <p>Conserve, restore and enhance hedgerows and hedgerow trees encouraging new planting with traditional species and traditional management.</p> <p>Conserve the river channel and its ecological diversity enhancing meandering river channels, aquatic and marginal habitats and eradicating alien species</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the visual unity of the river valley corridors</p> <p>Conserve desirable built features for heritage value</p>

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY FEATURES	PRESSURES	POLICY GUIDELINES
Wooded River Valley	<p>A well defined river valley, characterised by a narrow alluvial floodplain, flanked by steep valley sides</p> <p>A meandering river, generally in a sunken position and fringed by groups of trees</p> <p>Predominantly pastoral land use</p> <p>A concentration of linear bands of woodland and scrub on the steeper slopes and occasionally along field boundaries</p> <p>Views framed by rising ground and/or trees along the edge of the valley, which create a small scale landscape</p> <p>A quiet secluded character with few roads or buildings</p>	<p>Increased public usage from nearby residential areas on adjacent woodlands.</p> <p>Changes in land use within the valley due to the proximity of adjacent urban areas.</p> <p>The narrow, linear, small-scale valley is vulnerable and sensitive to change and further development.</p> <p>The existing transport infrastructure and any further proposals would further sever the river valley character.</p>	<p>Conserve the landscape character of the area, ensuring new development if appropriate is of suitable scale and location and assess treated sensitively.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance woodland looking for opportunities to provide new woodland and to encourage controlled access. The condition of existing woodlands should be assessed.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance ecological diversity in new development and encourage appropriate management techniques for existing and proposed habitats within the area.</p>

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY FEATURES	PRESSURES	POLICY GUIDELINES
Urban River Valley	<p>The presence of the Manchester Ship Canal and the canalised part of the River Mersey, views of these watercourses are limited. Both these stretches of water are operational and working waterways</p> <p>Generally low lying areas associated with the floodplain</p> <p>Mixed land use, with a significant amount used for recreation in the Mersey Valley</p> <p>A fairly dense communication network with motorways, roads and railways producing a number of bridged crossings</p> <p>Scrub vegetation and natural regeneration often adjacent to the watercourse, otherwise few trees or woodland</p> <p>Lack of field pattern or boundaries</p> <p>Few distinguishing built features, a secluded character in parts</p>	<p>Urban land use changes, threaten to completely remove the original characteristics of this area.</p> <p>The disappearance of built features, worthy of retention.</p> <p>Pressure from urban development threatens the ecologically sensitive areas.</p> <p>Power line alignments create an extension to the urban framework.</p> <p>Transportation routes have reduced the visual unity and rural appearance.</p>	<p>Conserve the features of the river valley/canal corridor with development where appropriate taking this into account. Look for opportunities to conserve the features</p> <p>Restore and enhance the physical and visual unity. Development should not lead to its further loss and opportunities to develop a framework of open spaces should be encouraged. Features such as new planting, and habitat enhancement and creation should be encouraged</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the historical features of the area such as the Warburton Toll Bridge, Irlam Locks, Barton Swing Bridge, the Bollin Aqueduct and Manchester Ship Canal where this does not prejudice the commercial and operational requirements of the waterway. Opportunities to improve the setting and appearance of these features should be encouraged.</p> <p>Conserve and promote the ecological areas. Development should conserve and enhance ecological diversity and opportunities to enhance existing sites and ecological corridor and measures to control access should be encouraged.</p> <p>Enhance ecological diversity and appearance of the river bank</p>

7 Implementation

7.1 This Landscape Strategy is designed to act as a catalyst for positive landscape change. It highlights the principal forces for landscape change and anticipates their potential implications for landscape character. It also provides guidance to help accommodate change in a positive way. There is an emphasis on the potential for landscape enhancement and on finding opportunities to strengthen distinctive character through the design and management of new and existing landscapes. This guidance is not intended to be prescriptive, but provides a starting point for action.

7.2 The Strategy guidelines serve little purpose without effective action; the strategy sets out ways in which the guidelines can be translated into effective action through policy, advice or change on the ground by all those involved in shaping the landscape.

7.3 Experience elsewhere suggests that there is a wide range of applications and uses for landscape character assessment. The Landscape Strategy is designed to guide judgements and decisions on landscape issues by analysing local forces for change and their implications for the landscape, and by recommending ways to bring about positive landscape change.

7.4 The principal applications and beneficiaries include:

Design guidance and development control process

- The guidelines will be valuable in assessing the likely impact of development within the rural area. They will also be of benefit for each landscape type in minimising possible adverse impacts, mitigation measures and compensation, therefore making a positive contribution to the maintenance or improvement of landscape character and quality. The detailed design guidelines will be used to define the context of all forms of development, which will be essential when preparing briefs for developments and design guidelines, e.g. landscape, trees and hedgerows.
- The strategy will contribute to evidence at public inquiries and will be used in the development of village design statements. There will also be opportunities, through planning gain, for landscape enhancement, for example in the form of new tree planting, habitat creation and the provision of new and improved open spaces.

7.5 Developers

- Developers will be able to use the guidelines in the Strategy to assist in the creation of high quality schemes for proposed developments within the rural area. Such development should reflect the value of the local identity and use the characteristics of settlement patterns, using local building materials where possible.

7.6 Land Managers

- The strategy can be used by landowners and land managers to make informed decisions on land management issues. It will assist in targeting funds to achieve optimum landscape benefit and provide a benchmark for future monitoring of landscape change, improving awareness of landscape issues through promotion and interpretation.

7.7 Community Awareness

- The strategy will contribute towards raising awareness among the public, enable them to make an informed contribution to the process and take action themselves.
- The Strategy will encourage local community initiatives, enhancing people's appreciation and understanding of local landscape character through Village Design Statements, Parish Maps and studies associated with the Local Heritage Initiative.

- Through such projects there is scope to offer communities more practical involvement in local landscape interpretation and management schemes.

7.8 Strategy Development

- The Landscape Strategy will be used to develop specific strategy and actions plans for the Borough. For example, Trafford's Action for Nature Plan will guide the work to conserve and improve the natural environment of Trafford. The Action Plan has key areas, including site protection and development; habitat and species management; awareness raising; community involvement; data co-ordination and resource procurement.
- The Strategy will also provide the framework for emerging strategies and action plans for the Countryside, Trees and Woodlands, Parks and Open Spaces and other Greenspaces.

7.9 Resource Procurement

- The strategy will provide a framework for those responsible for the allocation of a wide range of grants to prioritise and target action to implement the Strategy.
- Everyone, who owns, has an interest in, or a statutory responsibility towards land has an important part to play in implementing the Strategy. The Strategy and those responsible for its development and monitoring recognise this and will build on the work that is already being done by agencies, organisations, voluntary groups and individuals.
- Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the Strategy sets out mechanisms by which the guidelines can be implemented to achieve the its aims.

8 Monitoring

- 8.1 Progress on the implementation will be monitored and the SPG will be reviewed in five years.

9 Further advice and guidance

This SPG documents is one a series of SPG drawn up and approved by the Council. For more information contact the Planning and Development Team in the Regeneration Service. (See below) Further SPG being developed which may be of relevance includes:

- Crime and Security
- Affordable Housing
- Developer Contributions to The Red Rose Forest
- Informal/children's Playing space and Outdoor Sports facilities Provision and commuted sums
- New Residential Development

In addition the following are planning guidance is already available from Building and Planning Control: -

PG 1 New Residential Development, 1994 £3.90

PG 2 House Extensions, 1994 £5.70

PG 3 Houses in Multiple Occupation, 1992 £2.10

PG 4 Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes for the elderly, 1986 (Revised 1991) £2.50

PG 5 Day Nurseries and Playgroups, 1990 (Revised 1991). £2.40

PG 6 Use of Residential Property for Business Purposes, 1993 £3.30

PG 7 The Downs, The Devisdale, Bowdon, Ashley Heath £7.20

PG 8 South Hale Conservation Areas, 1996£3.50

PG 9 Residential Development in Brooklands 1994 £5.10
 PG10 Historic Buildings - Sash Windows free
 PG11 Historic buildings - Exterior Doors free
 PG12 Industrial Development, 1994 £5.10
 PG13 Hot Food Take Away Shops, 1993 £3.60
 PG14 Advertisements, 1995 £5.10
 PG15 Satellite Dishes, 1991 £3.00
 PG16 Noise Standards, 1995 £1.80
 PG17 Shop Fronts, 1993 £4.50
 PG18 Fencing, 1995 £5.10
 PG19 Car Boot Sales, 1995 £1.50
 PG20 Service Uses in Trafford Park, 1997 £1.20
 PG21 Adverts: Trafford Centre, 1997 £2.10 Car Parking Standards, 1994 (amended 1995) free

10 Other useful documents: -

Trafford Countryside Strategy 1991

Draft Warburton Village Design Statement - 2003

Trafford Unitary Development Plan -Revised Deposit Consultation – November 2001.

Circular 1/97 – Planning Obligations-department of the Environment – January 1997.

Red Rose Forest Plan - August 1994

Red Rose Forest Plan Supplementary review - 2000

Documents in Preparation

- Action for Nature
- Trees and Woodland Strategy

11 Contacts

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council: -
 Strategic Planning and Developments
 Regeneration Service,
 Trafford Town Hall
 Talbot Road
 Stretford
 M32 OYT
 Tel: 0161 912 4770

Parks and Countryside Service
 PO Box 113
 Bridgewater House
 Manchester Road
 Carrington
 M31 4WR
 0161 912 5506

Planning and Building Control
 PO Box 96
 Waterside House
 Sale Waterside

Sale
M33 7ZF
Tel 0161 912 3215

APPENDIX 1 - DETAILED STAGES IN THE METHODOLOGY

Stage 1: Define the Purpose of the Study

This is to assess the landscape of open land, outside the built up area of Trafford, in order to guide the planning process.

Stage 2: Collation and Analysis of Information

The process of landscape character assessment involves 3 parts - a combination of desk study, field survey and classification into landscape types.

i) Desk Study

The primary function of the desk study is to systematically divide the study area into units of land, within which the physical, biological and historical elements occur in repeating patterns and share certain characteristics. These units of land are the building blocks of the landscape and they form the framework on which all subsequent evaluation and decision making is based.

The first step is to collate all the relevant, readily available information for the study area, and its immediate surroundings, onto a series of simplified map overlays. These include:

Physiography - a combined contour/geological (solid + drift) overlay derived from 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey and Geological Survey maps divided initially into broad physiographic units (e.g. sandlands, mosslands, etc.).

Vegetation and land use - a combined soils/farm type overlay derived from 1:250,000 Soil Survey. By overlaying the soils and farm type information these units are then subdivided, where appropriate, to distinguish the ecological character and inherent capability of the land.

Cultural pattern - a combined settlement pattern/tree cover overlay derived from 1:25,000 and early edition 1" O.S. maps used as a framework for understanding and mapping the historic pattern of land use and settlement.

This results in a map of the study area, at a scale of 1:25,000, divided into a series of discrete land description units.

The systematic analysis of map overlays enables broad patterns to be distinguished, which in turn makes it possible to begin to understand the relationship between these different variables. This greatly assists in the understanding of how a particular landscape has developed and is the key to assessing landscape character.

Each land description unit is further sub-divided into land cover / land management parcels before going out into the field, in order to assess the condition of the landscape more effectively. This allows features such as commons, rural settlements, parkland, or areas of disturbed land to be individually recorded and assessed during the field survey. These land cover / land management parcels are defined primarily on the basis of current land use, but also take into account historic features, such as relic deer parks where these can still be recognised in the present day landscape. This 'birds-eye' view of the land provides a structured framework for the next step in the assessment process - the field survey.

ii) Field Survey

Field survey provides essential information about the visual dimension of the landscape that cannot be gained from the desk study. The function of the field survey is to assess the aesthetic qualities of the landscape, identify the key characteristics that contribute to local distinctiveness and to gather information about the condition of the landscape.

The desk study describes the basic character of the land and the more intangible aesthetic aspects of the landscape, such as scale; form and enclosure were considered as part of the field survey. These are the qualities which are most apparent to viewers on the ground, and are usually controlled by

either topography, or the surface pattern of vegetation and land use, which assists in the definition of the land description units identified by the process of overlay mapping as a basis for defining landscape types. This is the rationale, which underpins definition of landscape types.

iii) Classification and Description

On completion of the field survey the next task is to re-assess the desk study and group the land description units into discrete areas to define the landscape types. This is a repetitive process, based on a combination of known facts, informed consensus and professional judgement.

The character assessment of Trafford identified 7 landscape types (areas with a consistent character):

Wooded Claylands - Timperley Wedge and open areas adjacent to River Bollin

Wooded Estate lands - centred around the Dunham Massey Estate

Settled Sandlands - Dunham and Warburton

Mossland - Carrington Moss

River Meadowlands – low-lying areas of the River Bollin and Mersey

Wooded River Valley - east section of the River Bollin from M56 to A56

Urban River Valley - Manchester Ship Canal and canalised River Mersey

Stage 3: Analysis and Evaluation

The elements of each landscape type were analysed for significance, vulnerability and sensitivity (see Appendix 2) with consideration given to the overall condition of the landscape and pressures, which threaten the landscape character.

Stage 4: Strategic vision/Policy formulation

Following Stage 3 (Analysis and Evaluation) a strategy statement is prepared for each landscape type. This guides all future management and land use changes.

From the strategy statement, proposals for conservation, restoration or enhancement of the landscape (or a combination of these) are developed, to achieve the overall vision.

The strategy statement and policy guidelines provide the way forward for future decision making processes for planning and countryside management.

Stage 5: Monitoring

The preparation of the Landscape Strategy will focus attention and effort, but this is only the beginning. It is essential that the process continue: the Strategy will be reviewed and kept up to date by monitoring the performance of the effectiveness of the policies within each of the landscape types. This forms an important part of this process. The monitoring process will enable the Strategy and actions associated with it to maintain momentum and ensure a partnership approach to achieving a more secure future for the landscape and the communities that live within it

APPENDIX 2 DETAILED CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Wooded Claylands

Key Characteristics

- v A gently rolling topography dissected by narrow, often steep sided valleys
- v An ancient wooded landscape characterised by densely scattered hedgerow oaks and irregularly shaped mature woodland
- v A predominantly pastoral landscape
- v Views are typically restricted by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and development, which create the impression of a small to medium scale enclosed landscape
- v Scattered marl pits within field areas
- v A piecemeal enclosure pattern with an irregular pattern of small to medium sized fields and narrow winding lanes
- v A dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and occasional rural dwellings

Landscape Character

The Wooded Claylands occupy what have become fringe areas on Trafford's boundaries. They thread a green finger between the developing areas of Hale and Bowdon to the north and the wooded river valley to the south and skirt the borough's boundary along the M56 motorway before weaving their way between Hale, Altrincham, Timperley and Manchester. The area shares many characteristics with rural areas south of the M56 motorway (referred to as the Cheshire Plain in desk studies), especially around Manchester Airport and Ashley.

The area is generally low-lying or gently rolling, with predominantly pastoral land use. Land use is more mixed in the north of the area, where arable farming, market gardening and golf courses occur. In this northern area the landscape is more open and the scale larger. Golf courses, sports and playing facilities are located on the edges. The predominant character is that of small scale winding country lanes, often framed by trees and punctuated by dispersed and scattered farmsteads, the exception being the M56 motorway.

Despite the truncated sections of woodland which remain from the original landscape, the traditional pattern of grass pasture still exists and is particularly strong around Davenport Green and Bowdon. There are scattered marl pit ponds within the fields around Davenport Green, which although not visually prominent, are important both for their ecological value and as a typical characteristic feature throughout the region.

Field boundaries are often well defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees, being generally of hawthorn and mechanically clipped. These are important both as an ecological and visual feature. In some instances where the hedges are trimmed very low, open and distant views are maintained. However, trees within the hedgerows effectively reduce the apparent scale of the area by restricting views. It is this pattern of hedgerow and hedgerow trees that is characteristic of this area.

Tree cover varies throughout the area. Most notably the Ancient Woodlands of Watch Hill, Bentley and Tomfield Banks, have irregular outlines which thread through the cloughs and hollows in these remnant rural areas which help to create the well-wooded appearance adjacent to the wooded river valley. Alongside these there are several woodland blocks, including Hanging Bank Covert, Flaxhigh Covert, Humphrey's Wood and Davenport Green Wood, which are valuable in ecological terms and were perhaps originally planted as shelter for the grazing of animals.

Trees within the hedgerows alongside the country lanes, are characteristic features. These mature trees, such as those along Brookes Drive, and the woodland blocks are visible on the old maps, dating back over a 100 years. Both Fairywell and Timperley Brooks would originally have had a line of vegetation marking their route, some areas of scrub, shrub and trees still remain.

Physical Influences

The topography consists of gently rolling or flat landform, varying between 30 - 60 m AOD, with land gradually falling towards the River Bollin, whilst the higher points of 60m AOD occur on the areas' south-eastern boundary around Davenport Green and fall in a westerly direction towards Altrincham. A network of minor watercourses, including the Fairywell and Timperley Brooks drains the area.

The underlying solid geology is overlain with a thick mantle of boulder clay, with occasional pockets of glacial sands and gravels. The boulder clay gives rise to poorly draining soils, which explains the predominance of pasture over arable land use in this area.

Historical and Cultural Influences

Traditionally a pastoral landscape marked with scattered farmsteads developed. This has changed in the last century where demand for fresh food has led to the development of market gardening, close to the urban areas. Elsewhere the historic Mote and Bailey at Watch Hill is protected, through its status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (See Section 3.6 Wooded River Valley). The area comprises several Grade II Listed buildings, generally farmsteads dating from between the 17th to 18th Centuries. These are notable for their use of timber framework, brick and brick nogging, with slate and sometimes thatched roofs.

There is a predominance of narrow country lanes, which follow the field boundaries. Brookes Drive is the exception to this with its strong linear features or gently curving alignment, considered by some to be the entrance to a country residence.

Pressures in the Landscape

The close proximity of the Wooded Claylands to the urban areas proves the greatest threat to the rural areas, by encroaching urban development. This manifests itself in a number of ways, as detailed below: -

A gradual sub-division and piecemeal encroachment into the rural areas.

The Wooded Claylands have gradually changed to reflect the demands from the adjacent urban areas. Piecemeal development has enabled a proliferation of recreational land uses. Such uses in these locations characterise the beginnings of urban encroachment. The increase of the small changes in use magnifies to such an extent that the original landscape character is weakened and the original pattern becomes blurred.

Diversification in agricultural areas.

Diversification of land use in the agricultural areas changes the visual outlook and landscape pattern, giving rise to a larger scale of fields, uncharacteristic of traditionally pastoral land use.

Development pressure/poorly designed development.

Development has resulted in small pockets of residential properties, using modern day materials, which disregard the vernacular style. Equally modern day farming techniques necessitate large-scale outbuildings, which are out of scale and often do not utilise traditional materials.

Continued loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

Changes in grazing practices have resulted in the loss or non-replacement of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, as boundaries are replaced with post and wire fences, fundamentally changing one of the underlying characteristic features of this area with resulting affects on the ecology and visual appearance.

Severance of links with adjacent areas of similar landscape character.

The M56 motorway, which lies close to Trafford's boundary in the south, creates a bold demarcation between land to the north and the south and weakens the relationship with land of similar landscape character to the south (Cheshire Plain).

Increased recreational pressure on the woodland areas.

These often fringe the encroaching urban areas and this use results in degradation and loss of the woodland vegetation.

Loss of marl pit ponds within the landscape.

Change in agricultural practices has led to a general decline in marl pit ponds, which characterise the rural areas around Davenport Green. These are valuable in that they do comprise a part of the essential fabric to this area as well as enable the diversification of wildlife habitats.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The characterising features of the rural area include the irregular and piecemeal enclosure pattern of fields, demarcated by hedgerows and hedgerow trees, the wooded blocks and dispersed settlement along the winding country lanes. These should be conserved, enhanced and strengthened.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Conserve, enhance and strengthen the traditional landscape pattern

The hedgerows and hedgerow trees are one of the principle characteristics of the area.

Guidelines:

- v Development should conserve existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- v Opportunities to strengthen and enhance existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be encouraged.
- v Opportunities for new hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be encouraged.
- v Hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be of traditional species and managed in a manner, which reflects the original landscape pattern.

2. Conserve and enhance the wooded landscape character

The wooded landscape of the area, including Ancient Woodlands are characteristic of the area.

Guidelines:

- v All new development should conserve and where appropriate enhance Ancient Woodland and other existing woodland.
- v New woodland should reflect the scale and nature of the landscape character and be of appropriate species.
- v Opportunities to enhance existing woodlands, including potential access where appropriate, should be encouraged.
- v Recreational use of woodlands should be managed to conserve sensitive areas.

3. Conserve and enhance other topographical features

The rural pattern of field size, shape and gently rolling topography is characteristic of this area. The watercourses retain their original alignments and are important for their ecological and visual value.

Guidelines:

- v Development should conserve and enhance the existing topographical features.
- v Opportunities to enhance existing watercourses should be encouraged
 - for ecological diversity
 - for recreation.

4. **Protect and enhance the quality of ponds**

Ponds are important for their ecological value and are a typical characteristic feature of the area.

Guidelines:

- v Development should protect and enhance the existing quality of ponds.
- v Opportunities for new ponds to be created should be encouraged.
- v Use of traditional methods, materials and management techniques should be encouraged.

5. **Enhance the ecological diversity of recreational facilities**

Recreational facilities in the area are often of poor ecological value.

Guidelines:

- v Development should enhance the ecological value of the area.
- v Opportunities to improve existing recreational facilities for ecological value should be encouraged, to include where appropriate:
 - identification of areas for new planting
 - enhancement of existing planting areas
 - improve watercourses
 - Provide uncut areas of grass and wildflowers.

6. **Protect, retain and strengthen the pattern of roads and lanes**

The narrow winding roads and lanes, demarcated with hedgerows are characteristic of the area.

Guidelines:

- v Where improvements to existing highways are proposed the traditional features should be retained.
- v Greater attention is given to linking highway detail design to surrounding landscape pattern, to maintain the character.

7. **Protect and retain the built and historic features and pattern of settlement**

The dispersed pattern of buildings, scale of buildings and use of traditional materials is an important component of the landscape.

Guidelines:

- v Development should take account of the historic features of the landscape.
- v Opportunities to protect and retain the built and historic features should be encouraged.
- v Development should complement the scale, design and use of traditional building materials.
- v Development should reinforce and strengthen the landscape pattern of the area.
- v Landscape works that are part of new development should be of appropriate topography and traditional species.

WOODED ESTATELANDS

Key Characteristics

- v Trees create a wooded planned appearance and are visually prominent, particularly within the grounds of Dunham Hall and as scattered coverts throughout the area
- v A rolling landform of agricultural fields associated with Dunham Hall, with rising ground to the east
- v A medium to large scale landscape, views open and extensive from the rising ground and more restricted where tree groups occur
- v Unsettled except the small cluster development of Dunham Town, otherwise the area is dominated by Dunham Hall and associated estate lands
- v Fairly straight, albeit sometimes winding country lanes, often demarcated with hedgerows and associated with the planned structure of the original Estate lands

Landscape Character

This landscape type extends from the River Bollin floodplain to the south, to the Bridgewater Canal to the north and west. The residential development of Bowdon, and Altrincham forms the boundary to the north and east. Despite the Bridgewater Canal severing the original landform and field pattern to the west, views continue to flow to the Settled Sandlands area beyond. To the south a retaining wall not only marks the boundary to the estate, but also creates a strong and characteristic boundary between the wooded estate lands and the River Bollin floodplain.

The area appears predominantly wooded, due to the extent of tree cover associated with Dunham Park, Dunham New Park and the scattered and isolated coverts and woodlands throughout the area. There are however, a variety of land uses, such as the golf course and the agricultural areas of the planned estate land, although it is the woodland and tree cover which combine to integrate these uses.

Dunham Park is managed as a Deer Park with formal avenues of trees and grass, predominantly grazed. Many of the built features such as walls and fences are maintained with traditional materials. There are also formal gardens associated with the Hall, including formal stretches of water and formal gardens.

The scattered woodlands and coverts comprise semi-natural woodland, some with pools or ponds, which provide important ecological habitats throughout the area.

Well maintained agricultural land forms an important part of the landscape. The geometric strips, known as open fields, are evidence of the remnants of the medieval communal field system. The fields are now enclosed (late 1800's), predominantly by mechanically clipped hawthorn hedgerows with scattered hedgerow trees. The hedgerows are well maintained and kept fairly low.

Dunham Town village spreads out along School Lane. A golf course has been built within the well-wooded landscape of Dunham New Park, which sits atop the steep rise of Oldfield Brow.

Physical Influences

The solid geology of the area consists generally of Lower Keuper Marl and Keuper Waterstone, covered by a drift geology of glacial sands and gravel, which provides free draining loamy brown soils. It is an area which topographically is low-lying to the south (adjacent to the River Bollin) and to the north (adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal), between 20-30m. The land rises to the north and east around Dunham New Park, to between 60-70m. It is this rise which affords the long and extensive views to the north and west.

Historical and Cultural Influences

Evidence suggests that the area was occupied in the Bronze Age, with remains from burial mounds and crop marks suggesting likely farmsteads. It is the historical background of the manorial hall and medieval estate that has dominated and continues to influence the settlement pattern and land use in this area.

Historical evidence dating back to Domesday suggests that Dunham was classified as a manorial estate. The estate was powerful throughout the region, buying and claiming agricultural land and mossland, which increased the wealth of the estate and thus exerted more influence over the adjoining areas. It is the management of the estate that has created the over-riding pattern upon this region, from the medieval period to the present.

Medieval lords from the Hall controlled development, creating the estate grounds and village. The latter took the local family name (now Dunham Town) and was home to employees connected with the Park and estate surrounds. Agricultural practices concentrated employees in the village, rather than to a pattern of scattered and isolated farmsteads. Today many of these buildings are notable for their age, historic association, arrangement, building style and use of traditional materials.

The road system is simple, established partly along a ridgeline (Charcoal Road), or around the original open-field enclosure pattern. There are fairly straight roads, which become intricate through Dunham Town.

Around the late 1800's the open-fields typical of the managed estate land were enclosed by hedges, which changed the visual outlook of the field pattern. The construction of the Bridgewater Canal in 1765 also changed the visual outlook by severing the original field pattern. However, the canal followed the natural contours and bridges were small in scale and built in traditional materials, minimising the visual intrusion.

In 1976 the 10th and last Earl of Stamford bequeathed Dunham Massey to the National Trust, which continues to manage the estate. Dunham Town is a Conservation Area and many of the buildings and features associated with the Hall are listed.

Pressures in the Landscape

Change to landscape character.

The major landowner in this area is the National Trust. Estate land management has afforded some protection and reduced the impact upon the landscape pattern, that may have otherwise occurred.

Dunham New Park Golf Course due to its recreational use differs from the original landscape pattern.

Development threatens the original pattern, use of the vernacular, the existing scale of the landscape and land use within the character area.

There are pressures for development, which threaten to gradually reduce the extent of the character area and weaken the original characteristics, by a direct change of land use and/or by the use of the non-vernacular.

Recreational visitor pressure on the Parkland, Park features, woods and adjoining land.

The attraction of the area to visitors creates pressure from increased traffic and parking, particularly along the narrow, winding lanes.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The characterising features include: the planned woodlands and trees which create the framed views of the medium-large scale landscape; the historic parkland and estate land; the agricultural pattern; and the settlement at Dunham Town. These should be conserved.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Conserve and protect existing and planned woodland and trees

Woodland and trees are an important landscape characteristic.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should retain and enhance existing woodland and trees.
- ✓ Opportunities to manage existing and planned woodlands should be encouraged.
- ✓ Traditional species, native to the area, should be used.
- ✓ Measures should be taken to protect woodland and trees where the land is grazed.

2. Conserve the arable farmland pattern

The regular geometric strips, enclosed by low hedgerows are a traditional characteristic.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should retain the existing field pattern and hedgerows.
- ✓ Opportunities to continue traditional farming practices should be encouraged.
- ✓ Opportunities to manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees using traditional techniques and traditional species should be encouraged.

3. Conserve the historic buildings and character of the Parkland and village

The Parkland, estate buildings and Dunham Town are key features in this landscape.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should be of a high quality design.
- ✓ Traditional materials should be used where appropriate, to conserve the historic character of the area.
- ✓ Opportunities to retain the historic character of existing buildings should be encouraged.

4. Conserve the visual unity of the rural area

The visual unity of the rural area is important.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development within the Parkland, estate land and Dunham New Park should conserve the visual unity.
- ✓ Opportunities to integrate acceptable uses within the estate land, Parkland and Dunham New Park should enhance the visual unity of the area.

5. Conserve and enhance the vernacular style

The vernacular style contributes to this area's identity.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should be in a style, scale and location appropriate to the area.
- ✓ Traditional materials should be used to complement the vernacular style of the area.

6. Enhance the ecological diversity of Dunham New Park

The mature woodland and trees in the Park are an important component of the area, but the ecological diversity is limited.

Guidelines:

- v Development should enhance ecological value
- v Opportunities to increase ecological diversity should be explored, including:
 - new areas for planting
 - enhancement of existing planting
 - uncut grass areas
 - Wildflower areas.

SETTLED SANDLANDS

Key Characteristics

- v Dominant agricultural land use, arable with some pasture
- v Medium to large sized fields, generally defined by hedgerows and prominent hedgerow trees
- v Generally low-lying, gently rolling topography, particularly down to the River Bollin floodplain
- v Dispersed farmsteads throughout, linked by meandering country lanes with two main cluster settlements at Dunham Woodhouses and Warburton
- v The vernacular style, particularly in farm buildings, with their traditional use of materials, is a distinguishing visual feature
- v Small, isolated blocks of woodland
- v The presence of several watercourses and ponds

Landscape Character

The Settled Sandlands form an extensive wedge of landscape between the urban areas of Ashton-on-Mersey and Broadheath to the east, Partington to the west and around the Mossland area on its northwestern boundary. The River Bollin lies immediately to the south and the River Mersey immediately north, whilst the Ship Canal forms the western boundary south of Partington.

The area consists of good quality agricultural land, supporting both arable and pasture. The semi-regular pattern of medium sized fields is well defined by hawthorn hedgerows with a high proportion of hedgerow trees, predominantly Oak and Ash. These hedgerow trees and hedgerows around the farmsteads and country lanes are visually prominent throughout the area and contribute to the appearance of the rural area. Although low-lying the land begins to roll gently southwards beyond Sinderland Brook and in particular down to the River Bollin floodplain. The combination of the rolling landscape and unwooded nature of the rural landscape creates extensive views to the south, east and west.

The Settled Sandlands consists of 3 subdivisions, which display the general characteristics but have subtle differences

i) Warburton Park Farm/Mossland Fringe

This area has a number of marl pit ponds which are characteristic to this area and which were used to improve the fertility of the surrounding fields. There are isolated pockets of remnant coverts and woods, most of which provide a valuable range of woodland and wetland habitats, essential for

wildlife diversity. Some of these woodlands are linear, as they are associated with Red Brook and Sinderland Brook. Coroners Wood, an Ancient Woodland along Red Brook, provides a visual boundary between the built up area of Partington and the rural areas around Warburton.

ii) Warburton

Fields are generally smaller with more irregular boundaries. There are several ponds throughout the area that provide ecological diversity, some perhaps coincide with the location of the former Warburton moss. The ponds were used in conjunction with the drainage ditches found in the area to assist in the control of water levels.

iii) Dunham Massey

Fields are more regular in size and shape, bounded by well-maintained hawthorn hedgerows, with some post and wire fencing to the north at Carrington where horse grazing has become prevalent. Few areas of woodland occur allowing extensive views across the other areas of the Settled Sandlands.

Physical Influences

Permo-Triassic Marls and Sandstones which are masked by a thick covering of fluvio-glacial sands and gravels underlie the whole area. The drift deposits have weathered to form free draining sandy brown soils, which provide a good agricultural land (Grade 2 classification), throughout this area.

Topographically much of the area lies around the 20m level, with land rising gradually towards the Dunham Estate at 25m and falling towards Warburton and the former River Mersey catchment area. Dunham Road marks a ridgeline between Dunham and Warburton, which permits extensive views, to the River Bollin and beyond.

Three watercourses run through the area, namely Red, Sinderland and Caldwell Brooks. The latter drains in a northerly direction into Sinderland Brook, from the higher ground in the south. Generally the land drains from an east to west direction, flowing into the Ship Canal (formerly the River Mersey).

The area immediately adjacent to and east of Warburton Village was formerly Mossland. This has affected the type and location of settlement and farming patterns. Present day drainage systems have enabled the transformation to the rich and ordered landscape of productive fields.

Historical & Cultural Influences

Settlement is thought to have developed originally around the Warburton area, with a manorial estate and its associated Deer Park and open fields (for grazing). The settlement pattern remained such for many centuries, with a likely increase in the number of farms around the 18th and 19th centuries. At this time the demand for farming grew as the demand for food from urban areas increased. Isolated farmsteads began to emerge; changing the pattern from that associated with a manorial estate to that of dispersed and centralised holdings. This was followed by bringing into production and enclosure of the mossland and farmland areas, east of Warburton Park Farm.

The mossland area, known as Warburton Moss has long since disappeared, although Warburton Lane and Moss Lane (its name denoting its mossland relationship) are likely indicators of its previous extent. The number of drainage ditches and the manner of enclosure indicate its piecemeal encroachment and development. It is perhaps the enclosure of this agricultural area, around the mid 18th century, which has visual significance today, providing the strong characterising features of hedgerow shrubs and trees in the present landscape.

Parish boundaries, both past and present, have also helped to shape the landscape pattern. Conflicts arose over boundaries between the Warburton and Dunham Estates, both wanted to own and exploit the rich agricultural mossland or water meadows. The result of these conflicts has no doubt influenced the present road and field pattern and the scale and type of farming activities. Similarly the development at Partington remains close to the Warburton parish boundary, but not beyond.

The dispersed farmsteads and cluster settlements of Warburton and Dunham Woodhouses are generally well integrated into the surrounding landscape, due to their small scale, use of traditional materials and abundance of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

There are two Conservation Areas at Warburton and Dunham Woodhouses. Many of the farm buildings in this area are Grade II Listed. Within the Warburton Conservation Area is the Grade I Listed building St. Werburg's Church, perhaps of Pre-Conquest origin.

The former Heatley to Skelton Junction Railway, now part of the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT), passes to the south of the Warburton area. It severs the field pattern, but generally does not visually impose upon the landscape. The cut, straight alignment is not emphasised by parallel bands of vegetation, but is marked by sporadic and naturally recolonising clumps of shrubs and grassland vegetation.

The intrinsic value of the character of Warburton and its surrounding areas is actually the age of the landscape, its simplicity, the relatively few changes it has experienced and the retention of century-old landscape patterns.

Pressures in the Landscape

- **Development on the fringes of the area.**

This area comprises one of the largest remaining high quality rural areas within Trafford's Borough. A gradual deterioration in the rural character of the landscape is apparent in areas that abut Partington, Ashton-on-Mersey and Broadheath.

- **Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.**

The loss and degradation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and associated loss of wildlife and ecological habitats, threatens one of the key characterising features of this area. Of particular note are the hedgerows around the Warburton area, which are believed to be the oldest in the Borough.

- **The loss of traditional style buildings. New building and modern details that are out of character with the vernacular.**

The vernacular style is a distinguishing feature and traditional style buildings are either being altered or demolished and replaced with modern buildings which ignore the traditional details, scale and materials. Similarly changes in road alignment, new kerbs, signs and lighting contribute to dilute and therefore weaken the character of this area.

- **Loss and degradation of woodland.**

The recreational pressures from urban areas results in the degradation and loss of heritage and ecology, in particular the Ancient Woodland of Coroner's Wood. In some instances new planting schemes (adjacent to Ashton-on-Mersey) have changed the original land use and pattern and certain species which do not always reflect the native species typical of the region.

- Farming practices have led to a loss of ponds with associated loss of ecological diversity and wildlife habitats.
- Continual proliferation and intensification of power line alignments with their increasing heights and dominating scales, result in visual and physical disturbance.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The characterising features include: the agricultural land use; the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees; the Ancient Woodlands and ponds; the vernacular style and settlement pattern; and the low lying, gently rolling topography with distant and extensive views. This visual unity and landscape character should be conserved, restored and enhanced.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Conserve, restore and maintain the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees

Field pattern, hedgerows and hedgerow trees are the essential fabric of this landscape and provide areas of ecological value.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should conserve and maintain hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- ✓ Opportunities to plant new hedgerows and hedgerow trees where the landscape is fragmented should be encouraged.
- ✓ Hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be planted using traditional species and managed in a traditional manner.
- ✓ Assessment of Ancient hedgerows should be undertaken.

2. Conserve the visual unity.

The low-lying, gently rolling topography reflects the visual unity of the area, which creates views through into adjacent areas.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should not disrupt the visual unity and views.
- ✓ Alternatives to new power lines/pylons should be encouraged.
- ✓ Measures to mitigate the impact of existing power lines/pylons should be encouraged.

3. Conserve the rural character of the area

Development has encroached on the area reducing the visual unity, disrupting the rural character and having a detrimental impact on the landscape pattern.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should integrate in to the landscape pattern, with consideration being given to the landform, design and materials used.
- ✓ Development should reflect a style; scale and location appropriate to the area.
- ✓ Opportunities to mitigate the effects of existing buildings should be encouraged, including where appropriate, screen planting.

4. Conserve and maintain the historic settlement patterns

The dispersed farmsteads and cluster settlements of Dunham Woodhouses and Warburton are important historical settlements.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should be in a style and location appropriate to historic settlements.
- ✓ Opportunities to extend Conservation Areas should be encouraged, where appropriate.

5. Conserve the vernacular style

The details used in the traditional buildings reflect the historic character of the settlements.

Guidelines:

- v Development should retain the vernacular style.
- v Traditional details including walls, fencing, gates, paving and landscape should be retained and enhanced.
- v Opportunities to retain or re-use traditional details should be encouraged.

6. Conserve the pattern of roads

The small winding country lanes which follow field boundaries, demarcated by hedgerows and grass verges are an integral feature of the landscape.

Guidelines:

- v Improvements to highways should retain traditional features.
- v Opportunities to improve the highway details including landscape features should be encouraged.

7. Conserve and restore woodlands, including Ancient Woodlands

Existing woodlands are an integral part of the landscape, which enhance ecological diversity and recreational value of the area.

Guidelines:

- v Development should conserve and restore woodlands.
- v Opportunities to enhance existing woodland should be encouraged.
- v Opportunities to provide new woodlands should be encouraged.
- v Further opportunities to enhance Coroners Wood should be explored.
- v Opportunities to enhance or where appropriate, control access to woodlands should be encouraged.

8. Conserve, restore and enhance ecological features

Ponds, ditches and watercourses are an important component of the landscape providing ecological diversity.

Guidelines:

- v Development should conserve and enhance existing ecological features.
- v Opportunities to improve the quality and pattern of ponds should be encouraged.
- v Opportunities to enhance ditches for increased ecological diversity should be encouraged.

MOSSLANDKey Characteristics

- v Flat topography associated with relic mossland
- v Dominant arable agricultural land use within a planned enclosure system and conspicuous drainage ditches around field areas
- A rectilinear network of tracks around large scale fields, usually without fences and often emphasised by scrub-like vegetation and trees

- v A lack of built development
- v A large scale landscape, with open views, especially to rural areas to the south

Landscape Character

Carrington Moss is situated to the east of Carrington, west of Ashton-on-Mersey, south of the Mersey Valley and north of Dunham and Warburton. It is also adjacent to the large Petro-Chemical works, which overshadow the rural areas and dominate the visual outlook.

The Mossland is fairly self-contained, although its southern sections share the same field size and shape as the adjoining Sandlands. Elsewhere the large scale, geometric field pattern, emphasised by drainage ditches, dominates the appearance of the area. The paths or tracks criss-crossing the area, known as 'Rides', are a distinguishing feature of the Mossland. They are generally widest and most dominant on a north-south alignment,

The Mossland has little tree or shrub vegetation, other than the trees, shrubs and scrub associated with these 'Rides'. This vegetation restrains views by foreshortening the more distant views and focusing views in a linear manner. Some tree planting exists on the boundary, particularly adjacent to the industrial works that creates an effective partial screen.

There are 2 woods on the edge of this area, Birchmoss Covert and Broadoak Wood. Otherwise the body of the Mossland area is used for intensive arable farming. The Mossland has distinctive steep sided ditches marking boundaries to fields and narrow areas of plants between ditch and hedgerow or banking to the 'Ride' or adjacent pathway on which grow herbaceous vegetation.

Physical Influences

The Mossland is generally flat, between approximately 20 to 22m. The geology comprises peat or mossland over fluvio-glacial sands and gravels, which in turn overly the solid Permo-Triassic bedrock. According to archaeological records it is thought that the Mossland began as a lake, left behind at the end of the last Ice Age. As the climate changed the lake became swamp, then mossland. Although the wet peaty soils of the Mossland prove fairly inhospitable in terms of settlement, the humic soils are valuable in terms of agriculture.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The Mossland itself forms perhaps the oldest remaining landscape feature in the Borough. It is invaluable archaeological evidence on how the landscape and climate has changed over the centuries. It is likely that the Mossland became recognised around the Medieval period onwards, firstly as a valuable source of additional food, such as wild fowl and game, secondly as pasture for cattle and thirdly for fuel in the form of dried peat. As well as simple drainage systems the ditches were originally created to define ownership in an otherwise featureless landscape and to demarcate parish or manor boundaries.

More structured drainage and enclosure of the Mossland area occurred later than in the surrounding areas, but had a significant impact by bringing into cultivation large areas of land. Produce from the moss was used to feed the growing population in nearby Manchester. Michael Nevell** states "The reclamation of Carrington Moss in the 1880's was not driven by the desire for more agricultural land, but for somewhere to dump the night soil from Manchester". As Manchester developed, Carrington Moss was offered as a place to dump the soil removed from the City. Material was transported by the Ship Canal, the Bridgewater Canal, by road and railway, some of the latter routes constructed specifically for this purpose. The Moss was later divided into a series of rectangular fields, divided by open drains. A series of crop rotation developed, which has remained.

The Mossland remains unsettled, apart from one isolated farmstead, Swiss Cottage and recently the establishment of a large football training facility. This training facility has been overlaid on the agricultural pattern of the Mossland, which remains important for its agricultural production. The Moss developed the network of grid-like tracks or 'Rides' as field boundaries were established

through one or combination of: - enclosures, field development, to define ownership, or to gain access across the Moss. They are designated as a Local Nature Conservation Sites (L.N.C.S.).

Pressures in the landscape

- **Development threatens the intrinsic scale and survival of the Mossland Character.**

Development within the Mossland continues to prove the greatest threat to the remaining Mossland Character. Over the previous century the Mossland has been reduced to such an extent that its very existence is now in the balance. Recent development has significantly reduced the scale of the remaining Mossland and created built form and land uses, which are not in keeping with the traditional landscape pattern. The result is a fragmentation of the Mossland Area, with remnant pockets of Mossland, particularly to the east of the Manchester United training ground facility.

- **Power lines create a significant visual intrusion within the area.**

Carrington substation has a proliferation of power lines which cross the Mossland. Any additional alignments would increase visual detractions in this area and further emphasise an urban appearance, with respective loss to the Mossland Character.

- **Planting to screen development undermining the traditional landscape pattern.**

Attempts have been made to integrate development into the Mossland area by buffer and screen planting generally located adjacent to the development. In some instances this planting itself is a stark contrast to the traditional landscape pattern, because either the species used are ornamental or alien, or the juxtaposition of the planting is intrusive in the landscape pattern.

- **Loss of ecological habitats and species associated with agricultural intensification.**

Pressure to increase food production has had a significant influence on the agricultural pattern within the Mossland. Originally the ditches would have been emphasised by the presence of grassland and herbaceous species. Recently there has been the tendency to increase the depth of ditches and reduce their widths to maximise arable production. This has resulted in a reduction of ecological habitats and ecological diversity on the edge of field areas, which are traditionally associated with the Mossland area. These are not only of local value, but are important as wildlife corridors to adjacent rural areas.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The characterising features include: the flat topography; agricultural land use; planned layout of rectilinear fields and tracks; the shrub-like vegetation and trees which define the 'Rides'; and visual links to adjacent rural areas. These unique characteristics will be conserved, enhanced and strengthened as far as possible when considering any development proposals.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Conserve the mossland character

The flat topography with its regular, grid-like pattern, parallel ditches and linear vegetation are the key characteristics of the mossland.

Guidelines:

- v Development should as far as possible conserve the mossland character.
- v Opportunities to conserve the land for agricultural purposes should be encouraged to maintain the traditional pattern.

2. Conserve and enhance the structure and appearance of the Mossland 'Rides'

The Rides form an important part of the mosaic pattern of the area, defining areas of farmland and reflecting the traditional vegetation, for ecological and visual diversity.

Guidelines:

- v Development should conserve and where appropriate enhance the structure of the Rides.
- v Opportunities to increase planting to the Rides should be encouraged.
- v Opportunities to soften the impact of new development should be encouraged, including screen planting, where appropriate.
- v Proposed planting should consist of native species, traditional to the area.
- v Opportunities to improve access and the use of traditional details should be encouraged.

3. Restore traditional ecological habitats

The mossland ditches along field boundaries provide important areas of ecological value.

Guidelines:

- v Opportunities to restore ditches and field boundaries should be encouraged.
- v Traditional grassland management techniques should be encouraged.
- v The establishment of traditional wildflowers, next to ditches and fields, should be encouraged.

4. Conserve and enhance the visual unity

The open aspect and views, which extend into the adjacent areas, are important characteristics of the area.

Guidelines:

- v Development should as far as possible conserve and enhance the visual unity of the area.
- v Measures to mitigate the impact of existing or proposed power lines should be encouraged.
- v Opportunities to strengthen foreground planting and screen planting of the Petro-Chemical works should be encouraged.

RIVER MEADOWLANDS

Key Characteristics

- v low-lying topography associated with a flat alluvial floodplain
- v meandering watercourse, not visually prominent due to the slightly sunken position within the flat topography
- v medium scale pastoral landscape with patches of wet grassland
- v semi-regular enclosure pattern marked by thorn hedgerows and post and wire fences
- v open often distant views along the floodplain, views north and south controlled by the rising ground beyond the floodplain
- v secluded character with the occasional building
- v marginal aquatic vegetation with occasional fringing trees and scrub

Landscape Character

The River Meadowlands describes two areas within the Borough, the western sections of both the River Mersey in the north and the River Bollin in the south. These two areas demonstrate similar characteristics, albeit that the Mersey Valley is larger than the Bollin and is located within a more urban context.

The Mersey Meadowlands are enclosed in the north by the urban areas of Urmston and Flixton; in the east by the M60 motorway; in the west by the Ship Canal corridor and the industrial and rural areas of Carrington; and in the south by the urban area of Ashton-on-Mersey. The Carrington Spur Road marks the boundary between the River Meadowlands and the Urban River Valley.

The Bollin Meadowlands mark the southern extent of the Borough, the river itself marking the boundary with Cheshire County Council and Warrington Borough Council. To its north lie the rural and agricultural areas of Warburton and Dunham Massey and the historic hall and woodland areas of Dunham Park. A high, estate brick wall marks the boundary of Dunham Park. To the west the Bollin floodplain widens out until it meets the Ship Canal, whilst to the east the A56 Chester Road marks the boundary between the River Meadowlands and the Wooded River Valley.

The River Meadowlands of the Mersey and Bollin demonstrate similar physiographic, cultural and visual characteristics. The physical nature of the flat, alluvial floodplain, with its associated pastoral land use and only occasional buildings are perhaps the most significant characteristics which distinguish this landscape.

The rivers, which are a key physical element, are not visually prominent, due to their sunken position and the presence of levees, which are parallel to the river course and protect the adjacent areas from flooding. Both the rivers are often marked by the presence of marginal and aquatic vegetation, including willow and hawthorn scrub, herbaceous and rough grassland or aquatic species such as reeds. Due to the rivers periodic flooding woodland areas are uncommon

Bollin Valley -

Agricultural areas adjacent to the Bollin floodplain, are predominantly pasture, but also include arable and rough grassland. Field boundaries comprise a mixture of hedgerows and most often post and wire fences. Many hedgerows are overgrown or remnant, with isolated and scattered hedgerow trees, particularly adjacent to the river. Where post and wire fences occur these increase the visually open aspect and apparent scale of the field areas. Adjacent to the Dunham Estate the landscape assumes a more managed appearance, with pristine post and rail fences and recent Avenue planting emphasising the main pedestrian routes to and from the Park.

Mersey Valley –

Land use in the Mersey floodplain is more mixed than that of the Bollin. Much of the pasture is used for horse grazing, with only a small amount of land now used for arable farming. Few field boundaries remain most comprising post and wire fencing to those fields used for horses. This allows extensive views along the river corridor, with recent planting and changes to topography (often from landfill operations) being the main obstacle to distant views. Recreational uses have become more widespread to the east of the meadowlands with very little access to the west. There are a number of features such as ox-bows created by the River Mersey, which are important in terms of their geomorphologic and ecological value.

Physical Influences

The River Meadowlands are defined by their low-lying topography, rather than the visual presence of the rivers, which are sunken beneath their banks. However, it is the actual presence and location of the rivers, which has determined the areas particular characteristics.

Both the Mersey and the Bollin lie in an alluvial floodplain, formed by the deposition of sediments laid down during periods of intermittent flooding. It is this risk of flooding, with levels for both rivers around 15 to 20m, which has determined the historic pattern of settlement and land use and which continues to limit the extent of built development and access.

Historical and Cultural Influences

Both rivers would have been used for a variety of purposes including - as a source of food; for defence; and as a natural administrative boundary. These would have combined to attract settlement on the higher ground adjoining the river corridor.

The Mersey floodplain is in general surrounded by residential development to the north around Flixton and Urmston, and south at Ashton-on-Mersey. There is evidence to suggest these were ancient settlements, given the ancient medieval churches of St. Michaels at Flixton and St. Martins at Ashton. Although there are farms at the edge of the floodplain, including Dainewell and Ackers Farms, development upon the floodplain is limited. Equally there are a scattering of farms and villages in the Sandlands areas, slightly north and south of the Bollin which have been located on the slightly higher ground.

Both rivers continue to hinder movement north to south since they have limited crossing points. They form a natural boundary and act as an obvious administrative boundary. The Mersey was the old administrative boundary between Lancashire and Cheshire County Councils and today the Bollin is Trafford's boundary with Cheshire C.C.

The rivers act as drainage receptors, which take water into the Ship Canal and ultimately out, to sea. Current strategies on drainage no longer favour canalisation of riverbanks, to minimise the risk of flooding. This could otherwise threaten the Mersey's natural course.

Warburton and Bollington mills (constructed in the 1800's) lie within the floodplain of the River Bollin and were designed to make specific use of the water. The latter is Grade II Listed and has been well preserved - its origins are said to be linked to the Dunham Estate. The mill at Warburton lies within the Borough of Warrington; this is not a Listed Building. Both the original mill buildings have been converted to provide housing, with additional housing development around the mill at Warburton.

Other than these, built features consist of the Grade II Listed Bridgewater Canal Aqueduct, and the former Heatley to Skelton Railway, now a recreational route.

Pressures in the landscape

v Urban encroachment particularly the scale of change in land use, adversely affecting the landscape pattern.

The most significant pressure to River Meadowlands and especially the Mersey Valley, is the encroachment of urban development. This is mainly development associated with recreational land use, such as sports fields and pitches, but also includes sewerage farms and landfill operations. It is the scale of change, which threatens to override the traditional landscape pattern, from that of a river valley to one where the agricultural character becomes obscured and possibly associated more with urban development. Should further development occur the traditional floodplain character would be weakened to such an extent that urban influences would dominate, with remnant pockets of wetland remaining.

v Development severing the visual unity of the river meadowlands.

Urban influences in this part of the Bollin Valley are negligible. The Bridgewater Canal Aqueduct, although severing the visual unity of this area, is acceptable as a feature in its own right. The use of traditional materials and the fact that it is only one feature, help to integrate it into the pastoral landscape. In contrast further upstream the noise and sight of constant traffic using the A56 is apparent. Recent changes to the former Warburton Mill, where the floodplain and Mill have been replaced by housing development. This is a concern to the change in pattern in this area, which until recently has retained the visual unity and landscape pattern of the river valley.

v Changes to topography resulting from development affects the intrinsic landscape character of the floodplain.

Landform changes associated with landfill sites have one of the greatest impacts upon the landscape character. These changes include: - raised profiles and bank stabilisation, which destroy the flat river valley; either rough grassland or woodland type planting dominates removal of hedgerows; and

vegetation, which is uncharacteristic of the floodplain. Aquatic and species rich vegetation associated with the river have little opportunity to flourish.

v Loss of hedgerows resulting in changes to the enclosure pattern and ecological diversity.

Change in landform, land use and general lack of management has resulted in the loss of hedgerows. Boundaries are sometimes replaced with post and wire fences. These break the traditional pattern by changing the scale and increasing the openness of the field areas, thus affecting the visual appearance and ecological diversity of the traditional landscape character.

v The spread of invasive species particularly along watercourses, due to a lack of management.

The watercourses and river banks in general are not managed, resulting in the spread of invasive species, which dominate and eradicate those species local to the area and thus reduce the ecological potential of the Character Area.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The characterising features include: the naturally meandering river courses; the semi-regular landscape pattern of the floodplains; hedgerows and hedgerow trees; and views within the valley corridors. These should be conserved and enhanced.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Conserve and enhance the landscape character

The low-lying topography and agricultural pattern are the most important characteristic features of the River Meadowlands.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Agricultural land uses should be encouraged.
- ✓ Development, where appropriate, should conserve the low-lying topography and landscape pattern.
- ✓ Further formal recreational development is considered inappropriate.
- ✓ Opportunities to enhance access, where appropriate, should be encouraged.

2. Conserve, restore and enhance hedgerows and hedgerow trees

Hedgerows and hedgerow trees define the irregular field pattern, characteristic of the area.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should conserve existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- ✓ Opportunities to strengthen and enhance existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be encouraged.
- ✓ Opportunities for new hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be encouraged.
- ✓ Hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be of traditional species and managed using traditional management techniques, which reflect the original landscape pattern.

3. Conserve the river channel and its ecological diversity

The naturally meandering river channel determines the character of the floodplain.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Conserve the geomorphologic and ecological features.
- ✓ Opportunities to enhance ecological diversity of the river channels should be encouraged.
- ✓ Appropriate, traditional management techniques should be encouraged to:
 - enhance ecological diversity including aquatic and marginal habitats
 - Eradicate inappropriate alien species.

4. Conserve and enhance the visual unity of the river valley corridors

Views within the river corridors and distant views to adjacent rural areas are important characteristic features.

Guidelines:

- v Opportunities to integrate previous development into the landscape pattern should be encouraged.
- v Planting should:
 - reflect the traditional landscape pattern
 - promote views within the area and improve distant views
 - Consist of native species traditional to the area.

5. Conserve desirable built features for heritage value

The Bollin Aqueduct and Bollington Mill are important historical and attractive features in the landscape.

Guidelines:

- v Development should conserve and enhance historical features of the area.
- v Opportunities to improve the setting and appearance of these features should be encouraged.

WOODED RIVER VALLEYKey Characteristics

- v A well defined river valley, characterised by a narrow alluvial floodplain, flanked by steep valley sides
- v A meandering river, generally in a sunken position and fringed by groups of trees
- v Predominantly pastoral land use
- v A concentration of linear bands of woodland and scrub on the steeper slopes and occasionally along field boundaries
- v Views framed by rising ground and/or trees along the edge of the valley, which create a small scale landscape
- v A quiet secluded character with few roads or buildings

Landscape Character

The Bollin Valley forms an irregular meandering corridor, through the northern part of the Cheshire Plain. The A56, which is on embankment, provides the boundary between the Wooded River Valley and the River Meadowlands. To the east the M56 motorway marks the administrative boundary of Trafford.

The character of the wooded river valley varies slightly from west to east. To the west the floodplain areas are slightly wider and flatter, and gradually become almost none existent further east, where the flat floodplain alternates from one side of the river to the other with dominating steeper slopes.

The urban areas of Hale and Bowdon encroach upon the river valley in a number of places, although the wooded slopes help to reduce their visual prominence. The river valley has an intimate secluded nature. This is created by the narrow valley bottom, the adjacent rural area, the small scale; meandering course of the river and small wooded areas interspersed with small 'cells' of open space.

Along the river's banks the aquatic vegetation is prominent. On the flatter areas of floodplain grazing land is dominant, whilst shrub vegetation forms the remnant hedgerows, which are both mature and overgrown or mechanically clipped. These form the few field boundaries, which are otherwise often marked by the river itself.

Wooded slopes often enclose the agricultural land. Frequently the ridgeline of the valley is emphasised by copses and coverts, which form the boundary to the adjacent Wooded Claylands. These are important woods because they maintain the integrity, intimacy and apparent seclusion of the river valley.

Further eastwards the wooded nature becomes ever more the dominant visual element, grazing land and golf course fairways are contained and often concealed. This character continues up to and beyond the M56 motorway and into the Cheshire Plain.

Physical Influence

The river is generally sunken within shallow sandy banks, and although not visually prominent contributes to the physical and visual character of the landscape. The flat valley floor is formed from a narrow strip of alluvial drift, which lies directly adjacent to the river. This gives rise to free draining loamy soils, which are subject to flooding.

The alluvial corridor is flanked along much of its length by steep valley sides, where the river has cut through the thick mantle of boulder clay, which covers much of the Cheshire Plain, into the underlying Permo-Triassic rock. The latter consists mainly of soft red mudstones and sandstones, which contribute to the variable erosion of the banks on either side of the river. The land lies between 15 to 20m on the floodplain to between 30 to 40m at the top of the adjacent steep slopes. The Bollin Valley is therefore, a significant physical boundary to movement north and south and provides restrictions to any built development.

Historical and Cultural Influences

Historically the valley floodplain would have been used for grazing and subject to occasional flooding. The adjacent ridgeline and steep valley slopes were once important for strategic observation and defence, as indicated by the scheduled ancient monument at Watch Hill, on the boundary with the Wooded Claylands, at the southern end of Bowdon.

The former Norman castle occupied a strong naturally defended site forming a triangular promontory, with the River Bollin to the south and a deep ravine to the north. The castle remains consist of an earthen mound, called a 'Motte' and to the east a defended enclosure, known as a 'Bailey'. Today these are recognised as one of the most important aspects of Trafford's archaeological past.

The river has long acted as an administrative boundary, and as a boundary to urban development encroaching from Altrincham. There is a marked contrast today between the developed areas to the north and the rural areas, to the south of the river.

The valley itself is largely unsettled, due to the risk of flooding and the nature of the narrow steep sided valley. The only buildings or built features of any note are those that lie along the boundary with adjacent areas, such as Ashley Mill to the south and the occasional farm. Strategic transportation routes north and south cross the floodplain on the A56 and the M56 motorway slip road and the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway at Ashley Heath. Otherwise it is only bridged by the small country lane at Ashley Bridge.

Pressures in the Landscape

- **Increased public usage from nearby residential areas on adjacent woodlands.**
The encroachment of residential and other development on the northern boundary poses one of the greatest threats to the retention of the river valley character. As a result there is increased public use and damage in the wooded areas adjacent.
- **Changes in land use within the valley due to the proximity of adjacent urban areas.**

The golf course development has been absorbed in to the well-wooded landscape. Such recreational use has changed the pattern of the pastoral landscape, through changes to the topography, land use and vegetation. However, any further changes in land use would degrade this sensitive wooded River Valley and irretrievably weaken the rural characteristics of this area.

- **The narrow, linear, small-scale valley is vulnerable and sensitive to change and further development.**

Sewage works are located within the valley, which are not prominent due to their small scale. They do however, change the vegetation pattern by introducing ornamental species which emphasise their presence. Further development would create an imbalance and the strength of the Character Area would be weakened.

- **The existing transport infrastructure and any further proposals would further sever the river valley character.**

In the east the M56 severs the valley and in the west destroys part of the valley where it forms the slip road at Bowdon. The M56 has introduced alien features such as topographical changes, fencing details and the sight and sound of moving traffic, which mark a strong contrast with the valleys key characteristics. Transport routes disrupt the continuity of the river valley.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The small scale, narrow, steep sided, secluded, wooded valley with its naturally meandering course should be conserved.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Conserve the landscape character of the area

The narrow and linear character of the well-wooded river valley with its meandering river course, narrow floodplain and steep valley slopes is sensitive and vulnerable to change.

Guidelines:

- v Conserve the natural appearance of the river valley and its traditional features.
- v New development if appropriate should be of a scale and in a location suitable to the area.
- v Provision of new access through the river valley, where appropriate, should be sensitive to the vulnerable character of the area.

2. Conserve and enhance woodland

Woodlands are an integral part of the landscape, important for ecological and recreational value and provide a buffer to adjacent areas of development.

Guidelines:

- v Development should conserve and enhance woodlands.
- v Opportunities to enhance existing woodlands and provide new woodland should be encouraged.
- v The condition of existing woodlands should be assessed.
- v Where appropriate, opportunities to enhance or control access to woodlands should be encouraged.

3. Conserve and enhance ecological diversity

The valley offers a range of wildlife habitats, which would benefit from conservation and enhancement.

Guidelines:

- v Development should conserve and enhance the ecological diversity of the area.
- v Appropriate management techniques for existing and proposed habitats within the area, should be encouraged.

URBAN RIVER VALLEYKey Characteristics

The presence of the Manchester Ship Canal and the canalised part of the River Mersey, views of these watercourses are limited Both these stretches of water are operational and working waterways

v

- v Generally low lying areas associated with the floodplain
- v Mixed land use, with a significant amount used for recreation in the Mersey
- v A fairly dense communication network with motorways, roads and railways producing a number of bridged crossings
- v Scrub vegetation and natural regeneration often adjacent to the watercourse, otherwise few trees or woodland
- v Lack of field pattern or boundaries
- v Few distinguishing built features, a secluded character in parts

Landscape Character

This description refers to two areas, the Manchester Ship Canal Corridor and the canalised section of the River Mersey (to the east of the Carrington Spur Road and M60). The Ship Canal Corridor contains a narrow strip of land either side of the Canal. The River Mersey area is broadly defined by the extent of the floodplain, which continues into Manchester's boundary.

The character of the two areas has been greatly affected by the proximity of adjacent urban areas. Development adjacent to the Ship Canal extends almost up to the banks. The Ship Canal was borne out of the River Mersey and in this locality the river's former alignment and original topography have been lost. The Ship Canal attracted industrial uses, which have since decreased resulting in remnant landscapes, which appear derelict or in a state of transition. Views of the Canal are limited by the extent and nature of adjacent development.

The land adjacent to the River Mersey is a mosaic of land uses created by development and its proximity to urban areas. These uses include: - water parks, playing fields, golf courses, sewage works and an increase in access within the floodplain. The banks of the river within this character area have been engineered and have an artificial, formal appearance. There is a general lack of field boundaries such as hedges or fencing. The lack of boundaries and flat topography often permit extensive views over the floodplain, sometimes restricted by the regenerating scrub vegetation and tree planting.

Other than localised areas of remnant trees or woods, vegetation is limited to areas where regeneration has occurred or where planting has taken place. Scrub, herbaceous vegetation or

reedbeds create a rich ecological diversity. Some of have been designated as Sites of Biological Importance (S.B.I.).

Physical Influences

The river course and canal corridors are generally associated with low-lying topography, much of which lies between 15 to 20m. The solid geology of the Ship Canal Corridor and Mersey Valley consists of Sandstones, whilst the drift geology comprises predominantly alluvium, with adjacent fluvial-glacial gravels.

The possibility of flooding on the adjacent low-lying floodplain areas in the Urban River Valley continues to limit built development.

In both instances the river or Canal is not conspicuous, unless viewed from adjacent land or from a raised position.

Historical and Cultural Influences

Historically the River Mersey would have meandered through the low-lying topography, draining the outlying areas, offering potential defence and navigation and acting as a physical and administrative boundary. Industrial requirements in the late 19th Century led to the construction of the Ship Canal, to facilitate transportation to and from industrial Manchester. The original course of the Mersey was lost, although some evidence still remains around the agricultural areas of Warburton and derelict areas around Irlam. Although navigation of the Ship Canal remains it is less frequent than its past, but there are frequent reminders of the past industrial era on the adjacent derelict sites.

Drainage strategies of the 1960's and 70's led to further canalisation of the Mersey's banks east of the M60 (formerly M63). The river's meandering course was straightened and the appearance is now one of a series of grassed engineered slopes, which have changed little since their construction. The long linear routes provide recreational value.

Sale and Chorlton Water Parks were originally created from borrow pits for the construction of the M60 in the 1960's and 70's and to provide flood control capacity for the Mersey. They have been developed for recreation in a countryside setting.

The river and canal respectively form the administrative boundary between the adjoining Boroughs of Manchester, Salford and Warrington. Transportation routes which cross the areas are limited to strategic points, to overcome the difficulties of the river, canal and floodplain areas. These include the M60, the A56, the Metrolink and Bridgewater Canal, which cross by means of Aqueducts (Cut Hole and Barfoot), which are Grade II Listed and distinguishing features within this area.

The Mersey floodplain is surrounded by built development, whilst on the floodplain itself development is very limited and has various transportation routes, which cross the valley. Along the Ship Canal the strategic transport routes consist of road and railway crossings. The locks and associated buildings at Irlam and the Barton Swing Bridge and Bridgewater Canal Aqueduct offer striking visual links to the industrial past. The Toll Bridge at Warburton creates a distinguishing landmark where the corridor broadens to form a flat landscape.

Pressures in the Landscape

- **Urban land use changes, threaten to completely remove the original characteristics of this area.**

Changes in land use have removed field boundaries, which has resulted in a large-scale pattern within the landscape. The degree of change to the landform and pattern is such that the landscape character is in a state of transition, where characteristics are blurred. These changes mainly include recreation either side of the Mersey and industry and housing fringing the Ship Canal, with associated changes in topography (especially where landfill sites occur) and vegetation. There is the danger that the remaining remnant open areas within the Mersey Valley could become completely incorporated into the adjacent urban framework.

- **The disappearance of built features, worthy of retention.**

Features worth retaining include the Toll Bridge at Warburton and the Locks at Irlam.

- **Pressure from urban development threatens the ecologically sensitive areas.**

The demand for further development and redevelopment creates conflicts with the areas of ecological diversity and threatens their existence. Often their location on the urban edge makes them vulnerable to misuse and vandalism.

- **Power line alignments create an extension to the urban framework.**

The Ship Canal has narrow, linear tracts of open space, which are often all that remain of the former rural area. Large pylons and their cables striding the landscape frequently dominate these tracts, which accentuate an urban association.

- **Transportation routes have reduced the visual unity and rural appearance.**

Existing transportation routes have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the Mersey Valley. The proposed M60 road widening and extension of the Metrolink to Manchester Airport will further aggravate this. They sever the visual unity of the river's course, by the imposition of their high structures, and destroy an otherwise secluded character by introducing the sight and sound of moving traffic. Attempts to screen the infrastructure may emphasise its presence, through the selection of ornamental species, alien within an otherwise rural context.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The characterising features include the floodplain; notable built features; areas of ecological regeneration; remnant features and the mixed land use. These should be conserved and enhanced. The disparate land use pattern in this area should be visually unified.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Conserve the features of the river valley/canal corridor

The open aspect of the river, canal, its open areas, floodplain and low-lying topography, are the underlying characteristics of the area.

Guidelines:

- v Development, where appropriate, should conserve these original features of the area.
- v Opportunities to conserve these features should be encouraged.

2. Restore and enhance the physical and visual unity

The physical and visual unity of the area needs to be redefined.

Guidelines:

- v Development should not lead to further loss of physical and visual unity of the area.
- v Where new development is proposed it should be of appropriate scale and nature to the area.
- v Opportunities to conserve and develop a framework of open spaces should be encouraged.
- v Structured planting should be encouraged including;
 - new planting
 - enhancement of existing planting
 - Habitat enhancement and creation.

3. Conserve and enhance the historical features of the area

The existing historical features, including Warburton Toll Bridge, Irlam Locks, Barton Swing Bridge, the Bollin Aqueduct and Manchester Ship Canal are important features.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should conserve and enhance historical features of the area where this does not prejudice the commercial and operational requirements of the waterway.
- ✓ Opportunities to improve the setting and appearance of these features should be encouraged.

4. Conserve and promote the ecological areas

There are several sites of ecological interest, providing links to habitats in adjacent areas. There are instances where pressures of adjacent areas have had a detrimental impact on these sites.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should conserve and promote ecological diversity.
- ✓ Opportunities to enhance existing sites should be encouraged.
- ✓ Opportunities to enhance the ecological corridor should be encouraged.
- ✓ Where appropriate measures to control access should be encouraged.

5. Enhance ecological diversity and appearance of the river bank

The engineered riverbanks have destroyed the ecological diversity and visual appearance of these areas.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Development should enhance the ecological diversity and appearance of the riverbanks.
- ✓ Opportunities to improve existing engineered banks should be encouraged.