

LOCAL LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS: AREAS OF SPECIAL COUNTY VALUE IN CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER



**Final Report
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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	METHODOLOGY	7
3	AREAS OF SPECIAL COUNTY VALUE (ASCV)	11
	Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth ASCV	13
	Dee Coastal Area ASCV	19
	Delamere / Utkinton ASCV	27
	Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV	33
	Helsby & Frodsham Hills ASCV	39
	Weaver Valley ASCV	45
	Willington ASCV	53
	Wych Brook Valley ASCV	59
4	CONCLUSION	65
	APPENDICES	
	Appendix 1: Background to ASCV Designation within CWaC	67
	Appendix 2: Landscape Character Types and Areas within the ASCVs	74
	FIGURES	
	Figure 1: Location of ASCVs within CWaC	6
	Figure 2: Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth ASCV	13
	Figure 3: Dee Coastal Area ASCV	19
	Figure 4: Delamere / Utkinton ASCV	27
	Figure 5: Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV	33
	Figure 6: Helsby & Frodsham Hills ASCV	39
	Figure 7a: Weaver Valley ASCV (Lower Weaver)	45
	Figure 7b: Weaver Valley ASCV (Mid & Upper Weaver)	46
	Figure 8: Willington ASCV	53
	Figure 9: Wych Brook Valley ASCV	59

contents continued/...

TABLES

Table 1: Hierarchy of Natural / Cultural Heritage and Landscape Designations in CWaC	4
Table 2: Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) in CWaC	5
Table 3: Criteria for Defining the Special Qualities of ASCVs within CWaC	8

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 The *Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies*, adopted in January 2015, recognises the high quality natural and historic environment of Cheshire that gives the borough its special and highly valued landscape character and local distinctiveness. This is reflected in Strategic Objective 10 which aims to protect the borough’s environmental quality and character through maintaining the general extent and character of the countryside and North Cheshire Green Belt, and is built upon through policy STRAT 2 that seeks to promote growth whilst protecting the high quality environment of the borough, and policy STRAT 9 that specifically relates to countryside. Policy STRAT 9 recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the Cheshire countryside¹ and that the high quality of its landscape and environment is highly valued. Under policy ENV 2 the Local Plan (Part One) seeks to protect and, wherever possible, enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness in the borough.
- 1.2 In seeking to protect the borough’s landscape character, the Local Plan (Part One) was supported by landscape character assessments and landscape guidance produced by Cheshire County Council (*Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment*, 2008), Vale Royal Borough Council (*Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document 5*, 2007) and Chester City Council (*Cheshire District Landscape Assessment and Guidelines*, 1998). Furthermore, in recognising that all countryside has an inherent value, the local plan is in line with the European Landscape Convention² that promotes the need to take account of all landscapes, supported by landscape character assessment.
- 1.3 In this way the Local Plan (Part One) complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March 2012, which sets out a number of core land-use planning principles including the need to take account of the different roles and character of different areas, and to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside³.
- 1.4 The Council has recently consulted on its Preferred Approach to the Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) *Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies*. Part Two of the local plan will conform to the Local Plan (Part One) and will be informed by up-to-date evidence on key aspects including environmental characteristics of the area, as required by NPPF⁴. A number of supporting documents will form part of the evidence base, including an updated landscape character assessment (**A Landscape**

¹ “Countryside” refers to the rural area beyond identified settlement boundaries

² Council of Europe, 2000, *European Landscape Convention*, Strasbourg.

³ NPPF, 2012, paragraph 17.

⁴ NPPF, 2012, paragraph 165.

Strategy for Cheshire West and Chester Borough, Parts 1 & 2, March 2016⁵) which supersedes all the previous landscape character assessments referred to above.

- 1.5 The 2016 *Landscape Strategy* describes the unique character and rich diversity of landscapes across the borough, highlighting the important contribution they make to local identity and sense of place: from the prominent sandstone ridge running north-south down the spine of the borough; the flat lowland plain and extensive areas of pastoral farmland to the east and west; the heaths, meres, mosses and river valleys adding interest and diversity across the borough; and the marshland, mudflats and saltmarsh of the Mersey and Dee Estuaries to the north and west. These landscapes often extend beyond CWaC into adjoining areas as part of a wider regional and local landscape.
- 1.6 To support the Local Plan (Part Two), in 2016 the Council commissioned consultants (Bayou Bluenvironment and The Planning and Environment Studio) to undertake a review of policy in relation to local landscape designations⁶. This review considered the raft of current landscape designations across the borough stemming from saved development plan policies for the former local authorities of Ellesmere Port & Neston (2002), Chester District (2006) and Vale Royal (2006). This includes policy mechanisms for Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) at the former county scale, and Areas of Significant Local Environmental Value (ASLEV) within the former borough of Vale Royal. These operate alongside other spatially delineated policy, such as for the Green Belt and designated nature conservation sites, and topic-specific policy such as for biodiversity, the historic environment and development in the open countryside.

Areas of Special County Value (ASCV)

- 1.7 ASCVs were initially identified through the former Cheshire County Council Structure Plan process in the 1970's for their landscape characteristics and features, scenic quality and the individual or combined presence of features of built heritage, archaeological, recreational and wildlife importance. Whilst detailed descriptions of the features of value within each ASCV are not available, legacy documents provide an insight into the County Council's preliminary ideas on the spatial distribution, nature and approximate size of *potential* ASCVs. They were, by and large, fairly extensive but their boundaries were not precisely defined. Further background information is given in Appendix 1 towards the end of this report.
- 1.8 Previous ASCV Structure Plan policy was transposed and adapted into policy within each of the predecessor district authority's local plans, albeit with varying local interpretation of the Structure Plan context (expanded upon in Appendix 1). In the main these policies have been 'saved' and remain part of the development plan. ASCVs are not specifically identified in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One).

⁵ Referred to as the **Landscape Strategy**.

⁶ Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two), *Local Landscape Designation Review, Advisory Position Paper, January 2016, Part 1: Moving towards a Rationalised Local Landscape Designations Policy Hierarchy in Cheshire West and Chester*.

- 1.9 ASCVs sit within the context and broader framework of the up-to-date landscape character assessment, recognising that their boundaries are not coterminous and that an ASCV may include characteristics from more than one landscape character type and landscape character area. The evidence set out within the 2016 *Landscape Strategy* suggests that the general extent of the landscapes of the ASCVs still present particular character, qualities and scenic value across those areas, sufficient to merit identification and protection within a local landscape designation approach as part of the emerging CWaC Local Plan (Part Two), subject to a full review of those designations.
- 1.10 The 2016 *Local Landscape Designation Review* concludes that the former county-wide ASCV designation remains appropriate and legitimate at the borough scale in furthering policy ENV2 of the Local Plan (Part One) as the areas are demonstrably special in their landscape character and particularly sensitive to intrusive or poorly mitigated development.
- 1.11 Evidence set out within that review showed that, of the broad landscape, historic and natural/wildlife characteristics initially presented as providing additional value within the original *potential* ASCVs, only landscape qualities could not now be adequately covered by other topic-specific policy within the Local Plan (Part One). Consequently a landscape-only definition of ASCV in terms of their valued characteristics and special landscape qualities is considered appropriate. However, this should include aspects of the natural and cultural environment, and social, perceptual and aesthetic qualities that together or individually can make an important contribution to overall landscape character and value. Therefore, ASCVs are identified as areas in the borough that are demonstrably special in their landscape character and scenic value.
- 1.12 The Council's preferred approach for the protection of countryside and landscape within the Local Plan (Part Two) is consequently to include policy to protect and, wherever possible, enhance the special landscape qualities of the eight areas currently identified as ASCV, as a local landscape designation. In this way the Part Two plan will conform to NPPF which states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes⁷.
- 1.13 ASCV designation would represent the highest level of landscape protection in the borough, as indicated in **Table 1**:

⁷ NPPF, 2012, paragraph 109.

Table 1: Hierarchy of Natural, Cultural Heritage and Landscape Designations in CWaC

Hierarchy/ Status	Natural	Cultural	Landscape
International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramsar site • Special Protection Area (SPA) & candidate SPA • Special Area of Conservation (SAC) & candidate SAC 		
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) • Ancient Woodland • UK BAP priority habitats and species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled Monument • Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Listed Building) • Historic Park and Garden • Historic Battlefield 	
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Wildlife Site • Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site (RIGGS) • Local Nature Reserve (LNR) • Nature Improvement Area (NIA) • Cheshire BAP priority habitats and species • Tree Preservation Order • Ecological network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Area • Heritage asset recorded on the Cheshire Historic Environment Record • Heritage asset designated on the former borough council lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of Special County Value (ASCV)

Purpose and Scope of the Study

1.14 Cheshire West and Chester Council commissioned the same consultants that undertook the 2016 *Local Landscape Designation Review* to identify and describe the character and special landscape qualities of the eight areas currently identified as ASCV within the borough. This will provide up-to-date evidence to inform an emerging Local Plan (Part Two) criteria-based policy against which proposals for any development in or affecting the locally designated landscape will be considered, in accordance with NPPF⁸.

1.15 The purpose and scope of the study is to:

- Demonstrate why the areas identified as ASCV remain appropriate and justified;

⁸ NPPF, 2012, paragraph 113.

- Set out a clear definition of ASCV and confirm that ASCV local landscape designation is appropriate and robust in the context of NPPF; and
- Identify and describe the character and special landscape qualities of the eight ASCVs to inform emerging Local Plan (Part Two) criteria-based policy, against which proposals for any development in or affecting the locally designated landscape can be judged.

1.16 Whilst the scope of the study does not extend to a review of the existing ASCV boundaries, minor amendments were considered where appropriate. This is explained further in the following section.

1.17 **Table 2** lists the eight ASCVs within CWaC, and the originating authority. **Figure 1** shows their general location (note: the Dee Coastal Area and the Weaver Valley ASCVs both comprise three separate areas).

Table 2: Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) in CWaC.

Name of ASCV	Previous Local Plan Area
Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth	Chester
Eaton Estate / Dee Valley	
Willington	
Wych Brook Valley	
Dee Coastal Area	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Delamere / Utkinton	Vale Royal
Helsby and Frodsham Hills	
Weaver Valley	

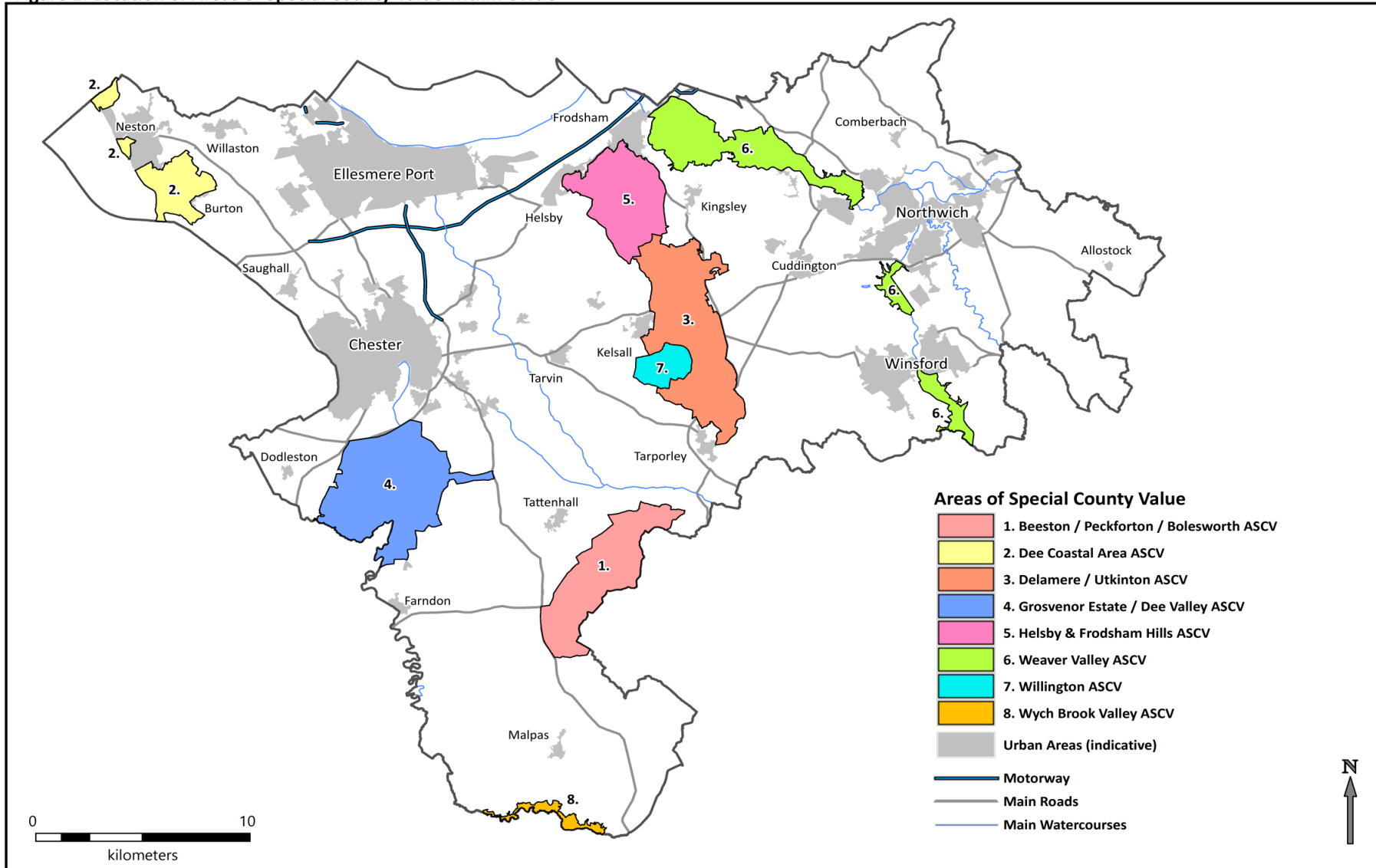
Format of the Report

1.18 Following this introductory section, **Section 2** describes the methodology used in this report for identifying ASCV special qualities. **Section 3 is the main part of the report, containing separate profiles of each of the eight ASCVs that describe their locally important landscape characteristics and special qualities, highlighting why these areas are considered to be of particular landscape value in CWaC.**

1.19 **Appendix 1** towards the back of the report provides background information on the initial identification of ASCVs and previous policy protection within local plans within the three predecessor district authorities of Chester City, Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough, and Vale Royal Borough.

1.20 **Appendix 2** shows the landscape character types and landscape character areas that fall within the ASCVs, taken from the 2016 *Landscape Strategy*. It also notes relevant landscape designations in neighbouring authorities where ASCVs lie on the CWaC boundary. It should be noted from Appendix 2 that one ASCV has been renamed to be consistent with the relevant landscape character area within the 2016 *Landscape Strategy*; this is the Eaton Estate / Dee Valley ASCV re-named Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV.

Figure 1: Location of Areas of Special County Value within CWaC



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2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This study follows recognised guidance on local landscape designations⁹ (LLD) and landscape character assessment¹⁰. LLD guidance suggests that, as part of an all-landscape approach (as endorsed by the European Landscape Convention¹¹) local landscape designations can play an important role in promoting awareness, pride and care of our most valued landscapes, and also in protecting those which are most valuable.
- 2.2 A systematic and transparent process has been adopted to identify and describe the particular landscape characteristics and special landscape qualities within each of the eight locally designated ASCVs. This entails desk study review of the background and reasons for designation of ASCVs within what is now Cheshire West and Chester borough, and the development of appropriate criteria for qualification as ASCV. Targeted, structured fieldwork was undertaken to record key landscape characteristics, sensitivities, qualities and value within the ASCVs, using the broad descriptions of landscape character types (LCT) and landscape character areas (LCA) in the 2016 *Landscape Strategy* as a basis for the study.

Desk Study Review and Establishing Criteria to Identify ASCV Special Qualities

- 2.3 The process of identifying landscape characteristics and the special qualities of the ASCVs requires the development of criteria appropriate to the particular local circumstances of the designated areas. Six criteria are used to reflect the value attached to particular aspects of the character and qualities of the ASCVs. They have been agreed with the Council's project steering group and are shown in **Table 3**. They have been developed from the consultant's considerable experience of landscape character assessment and the identification of special qualities, and their knowledge of the landscapes of Cheshire and in particular Cheshire West and Chester borough.
- 2.4 The criteria were also informed following a review of other LLDs, including the neighbouring Cheshire East LLD study, 2013. This is particularly pertinent since two ASCVs overlie the border between CWaC and Cheshire East, namely:
- **Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth ASCV** (named Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth / Bickerton Hills LLD in Cheshire East), and
 - **Weaver Valley ASCV** (named Weaver Valley LLD in Cheshire East).

⁹ Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland, March 2004, *Guidance on Local Landscape Designations*

¹⁰ Countryside Agency and SNH, 2002, *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*, CAX 84; and Natural England, October 2014, *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*.

¹¹ Council of Europe, 2000, *European Landscape Convention*, Strasbourg.

2.5 Many of the rural landscapes of Cheshire East have a similar character to Cheshire West and Chester, characterised by the contrast between the extensive flat lowland plain, gently rolling farmland and the distinctive sandstone ridge (Cheshire East also has the rising Pennine foothills to the east). The landscape is also characterised by glacial deposits, river valleys with wooded cloughs, relict unimproved features including mosses, heaths and meres and a number of designed parkland estates, similar to CWaC. Adoption of qualifying criteria similar to those used in the Cheshire East LLD study provides consistency across neighbouring authority areas.

2.6 Evidence for defining the special qualities of the ASCVs within CWaC stems from a number of sources:

- *The Landscape Strategy for Cheshire West and Chester Borough, 2016;*
- *Advisory Position Paper, Part 1: Moving Towards a Rationalised Local Landscape Designations Policy Hierarchy in Cheshire West and Chester, January 2016;*
- *The Cheshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment, 2007;*
- Natural / cultural heritage and landscape designations in CWaC;
- Landscape character assessment and policies of neighbouring authorities;
- OS maps, satellite and aerial imagery;
- Fieldwork.

Table 3: Criteria for Defining the Special Qualities of ASCVs within CWaC

Criteria and rationale	Factors to consider
<p><i>Distinctiveness</i> i.e. the importance of the area’s landscape character in contributing to local distinctiveness/sense of place; Rarity/uniqueness; Typicality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent landscape character conferring a recognisable sense of place • Distinct landform or topography forming a discrete and recognisable area • Rare/unique landscape type or landscape features/ elements in the local context • Typicality - characteristics or landscape elements are strongly representative or distinctive of CWaCs landscape • Strong character linked to particular natural/cultural associations e.g. art/ literature
<p><i>Perceptual character</i> Special experiential qualities of the landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tranquillity, relative remoteness and lack of intrusion • Strong sensory impacts including movement, colour (including seasonality) and texture • Special perceptual qualities may be the result of e.g. the level of enclosure/scale, combinations of elements or contrasts of features
<p><i>Landscape and scenic quality</i> i.e. particular scenic and aesthetic qualities; Contribution of the area to important landscape and visual qualities associated with the local landscape; Physical state and condition of the landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong visual character with memorable, important or distinctive views • An intact landscape with characteristic elements in good condition • Absence of incongruous elements or incongruous features not visually intrusive • Dramatic features, visual contrasts or a special combination or pattern of landscape elements/features that create high aesthetic quality or sense of place

Criteria and rationale	Factors to consider
Natural character Special natural characteristics/designations which add value to the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong character linked to natural factors • Strong degree of naturalness contributing to landscape quality - habitats/land cover
Cultural character Special cultural characteristics/designations which add value to the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong character linked to cultural factors – which contribute to understanding of its historic character and wider cultural record e.g. archaeology, built heritage • A landscape with particular associations for example with representation in art, music, literature, language or folklore
Function Particular or special role of the area in the local landscape context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special function as a setting to designated landscapes or cultural/natural features • Visual backdrop • Open gap/local green space • Aspects of the landscape which hold particularly special value for recreation and amenity such that people from outside the local area visit it as a destination

2.7 It should be noted that many of the criteria are inter-related e.g. a landscape valued for recreation may also have strong scenic appeal, or one where specific cultural character derives strong distinctiveness.

ASCV Boundaries

- 2.8 Fieldwork identified minor inconsistencies in legacy document boundary alignment, where although many boundaries follow recognisable features on the ground, such as roads, hedgerows or walls, for example, others did not. Some boundaries appeared to cut across fields without following distinct topographical changes or watersheds. There could be a number of reasons for this, such as changes on the ground since the boundaries were originally drawn (for example where landscape features such as hedgerows have been removed or new development built) as a consequence of initial delineation at a smaller cartographic scale or simply due to human error when drawing or copying the boundaries onto new maps.
- 2.9 Whilst a detailed review of the ASCV boundaries was beyond the scope of the study (not least since a significant proportion of existing ASCV boundaries are on private land and not readily accessible) a review of maps and aerial photographs was undertaken to ascertain the potential extent of boundary change needed to align with features on the ground and to ensure consistency with landscape character area (LCA) boundaries within the 2016 *Landscape Strategy*.
- 2.10 A pragmatic approach was taken to follow the closest recognisable feature wherever possible, or the LCA boundary where more suitable to ensure an appropriate juncture of new and existing boundaries. It should be noted that none of the boundary changes involved qualitative assessment of landscape characteristics or special qualities.
- 2.11 The following minor amendments to ASCV boundaries have been made and are shown on the maps accompanying each ASCV profile in Section 3:

- The boundary between Helsby and Frodsham Hills ASCV and Delamere / Utkinton ASCV has been drawn along the boundary of LCA 1a: Delamere and LCA 2a: Frodsham (previously the boundary between the two ASCVs was uncertain);
- Realignment of part of the north-eastern boundary of the Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV to follow public rights of way (footpath and bridleway) to the west of Saighton;
- Realignment of the northern boundary of the Wych Brook Valley ASCV to more closely follow the boundary of LCA 15g: Wych Valley; and
- Realignment of the southern boundary of the Wych Brook Valley ASCV to follow the administrative boundary between Cheshire West and Chester Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.

3 AREAS OF SPECIAL COUNTY VALUE

3.1 This section describes the locally important characteristics and special landscape qualities of each of the eight ASCVs which, individually and combined, make them particularly valued in CWaC. This will support policy within the emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) for the preservation and enhancement of ASCVs and may also be helpful as a development management tool and in helping to bring forward land management initiatives.

3.2 The ASCVs are described in turn, as follows:

Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth ASCV

Dee Coastal Area ASCV

Delamere / Utkinton ASCV

Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV

Helsby & Frodsham Hills ASCV

Weaver Valley ASCV

Willington ASCV

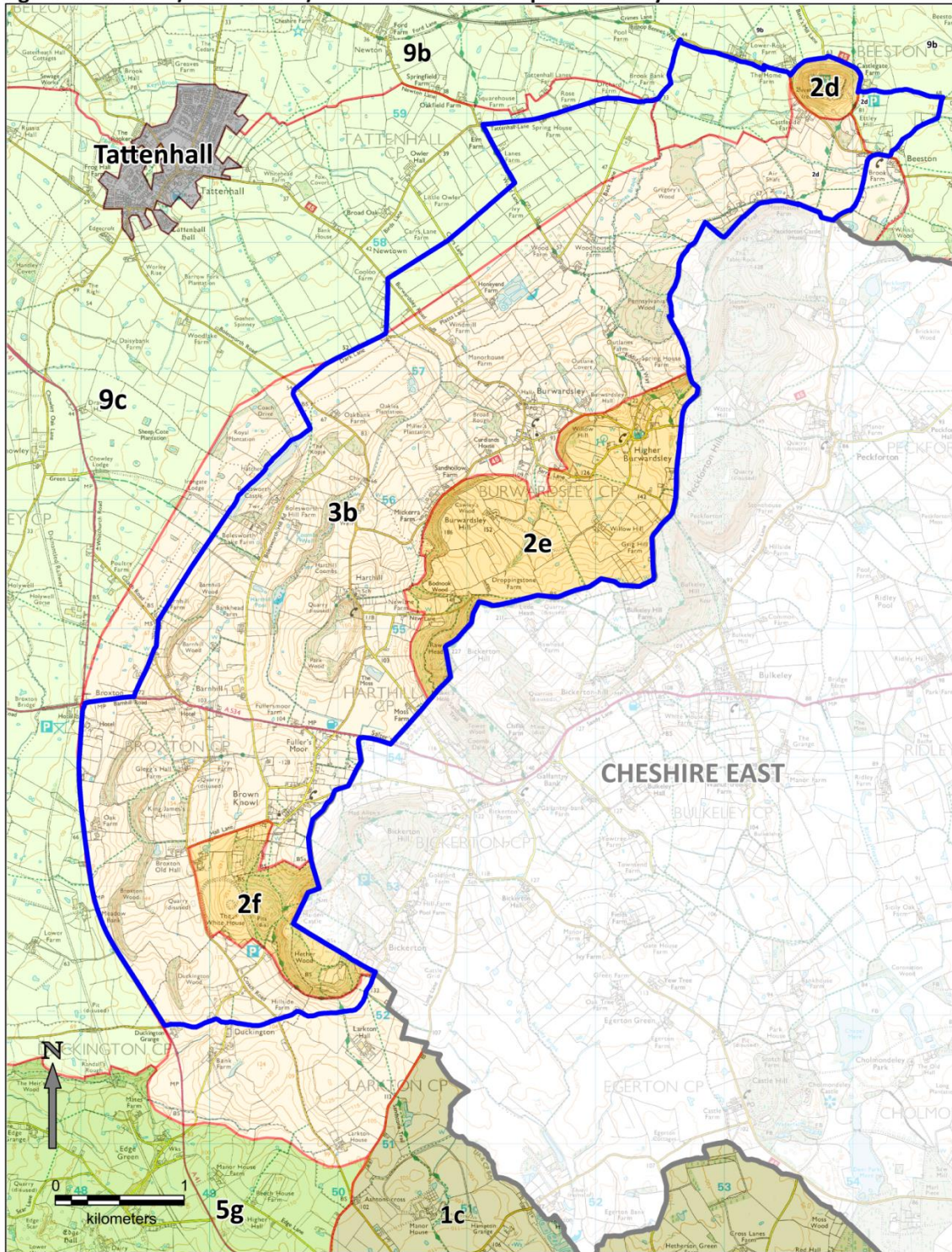
Wych Brook Valley ASCV

3.3 For each ASCV, a general description of the landscape and extent of the area is given, illustrated by a location map showing the boundary of the designated area (including any minor amendments to original boundaries as described in paragraph 2.11) together with relevant landscape character types and landscape character area boundaries. An overview statement of importance is provided, together with a list of the special landscape qualities. These are supported by a tabulated description against each of the six designation criteria that outlines the relative value attached to particular aspects of local landscape character and qualities, particular to each ASCV. A series of photographs illustrate some of the key characteristics.

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Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth ASCV

Figure 2: Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth Area of Special County Value



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See Table A3 in Appendix 2 for Landscape Character Area classifications

- Area of Special County Value
- Landscape Character Area Boundary

General Description and Extent

Prominent sandstone ridge that wraps around the borough boundary and continues into Cheshire East, and the distinctive wooded hills and outcrops within *LCA 3b: Beeston to Duckington Sandstone Fringe* forming a transition with the relatively flat *Cheshire Plain West*.

From Beeston Castle that rises on the prominent isolated sandstone outcrop of *LCA 2d: Beeston Crag* above the Cheshire plain to the north, the ASCV includes the steeply rising *LCA 2e: Higher Burwardsley Sandstone Ridge* and *LCA 2f: Larkton Hill / Hether Wood Sandstone Ridge* to the south.

Statement of Importance

Dramatic wooded sandstone ridge outcrops of Beeston Crag, Higher Burwardsley and Larkton Hill/Hether Wood, protruding abruptly from the surrounding flat expanse of the Cheshire lowland plain. The distinctive linear wooded hills and outcrops of the Beeston to Duckington Sandstone Fringe is a transitional landscape of importance to the setting of the ridge. The prominent landform is visible from long distances in the surrounding landscape and itself provides spectacular panoramic views across the flat plain to distant hills, including from the Sandstone Trail long distance route. The wooded slopes and skyline provide rich texture and character and there are important foci in the landscape at Beeston Castle, Peckforton Castle (in Cheshire East) and Maiden Castle. Sandstone walls are characteristic features within the Sandstone Ridge landscape. The area is also rich in natural and cultural heritage features including areas of ancient woodland, SSSIs, RIGGS, Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings.

Special Landscape Qualities - Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth ASCV

- ***Distinctive linear wooded hills of the undulating sandstone fringe that forms a transition of intermediate elevation between the prominent wooded escarpment of the sandstone ridge and the low lying farmland of the Cheshire plain.***
- ***The sandstone fringe is important to the setting of the prominent sandstone ridge that rises steeply to 227m at Bickerton Hill, 200m at Hether Wood and 110m at Beeston Crag.***
- ***West facing wooded fringe slopes includes numerous small and medium sized copses and plantations, and larger ancient woodland such as Pennsylvania Wood, with dense woodland on the steep scarp slopes of the sandstone ridge such as Hether Wood and on Beeston Crag.***
- ***Beeston Crag is a late Bronze Age promontory hillfort and Scheduled Monument; the remains of the thirteenth century Beeston Castle, also a Scheduled Monument and***

Grade I listed building, occupies a prominent position on the rocky summit and is a popular English Heritage visitor attraction.

- *The Sandstone Trail long distance footpath and other rights of way including the Eddisbury Way provide recreational opportunities.*
- *Numerous local wildlife sites with woodland, semi-improved and species-rich grassland habitats of nature conservation interest.*
- *Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS), for example at Higher Burwardsley and Raw Head.*
- *Extensive elevated views from the sandstone ridge across the plain to distant hills including the Peak District, Shropshire hills and the Clwydian hill range of north Wales.*
- *The distinctive prominent landform and woodland of the sandstone ridge is visible from extensive areas of the borough and beyond, with Beeston Castle, Peckforton Castle (in Cheshire East) and Maiden Castle important foci in the landscape.*
- *Sandstone walls are characteristic features within the Sandstone Ridge landscape.*
- *Settlement pattern within the fringe landscape of nucleated villages and hamlets, for example Burwardsley, Brown Knowl and Harthill, and scattered farms, cottages and grand mansion houses such as Bolesworth Hall and Broxton Old Hall, linked by a network of historic lanes, some sunken, in contrast to the low density settlement and few roads on the sandstone ridge.*

Criteria	Summary Description
Distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent sandstone ridge outcrops are local landmarks in views across the borough and beyond, and are strongly characteristic features of Cheshire West and Chester borough. • The steep wooded western slopes form a distinctive contrast with the surrounding Cheshire plain. • The sandstone fringe is important to the setting of the ridge, for example where the A534 passes between <i>Higher Burwardsley</i> and <i>Larkton Hill/Hether Wood</i>.
Perceptual character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast of the sense of enclosure created by the dense woodland and the open panoramic views from the sandstone ridge. • Relative tranquillity away from main roads and popular visitor spots.
Landscape and scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent, distinctive, simple skyline and rolling outline of the wooded hills add texture, variety and interest to the landscape. • Sandstone walls are characteristic features within the Sandstone Ridge landscape. • Spectacular panoramic views from the ridgeline across the flat plain to distant hills.
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient woodland, including Pennsylvania Wood, Broxton Wood, Barnhill Wood and Burwardsley Wood.

Criteria	Summary Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local wildlife sites. • Open heathland habitat, e.g. on Bickerton Hill. • SSSI covers most of <i>LCA 2f: Larkton Hill/Hether Wood Sandstone Ridge</i> for its heathland communities and assemblage of reptiles. • Raw Head escarpment is of national importance for its sandstone exposures and is a geological / geomorphological SSSI. • Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS), e.g. Hether Wood and Raw Head.
Cultural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many designated archaeological sites and historic buildings, including: promontory forts, such as Maiden Castle (Scheduled Monument), dating from the late Bronze Age, blend into a skyline which is often punctuated by their successors, the medieval castle at Beeston (Scheduled Monument and Listed Building) and the nineteenth century romantic recreation Peckforton Castle (Listed Building). • An historic pattern of dispersed villages (Burwardsley, Fullers Moor) on or adjacent to former commons, contrasts with nucleated villages (e.g Harthill) which display through the architecture of their buildings (often listed) the influence of the Tollemache and Bolesworth estates.
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public rights of way including the Sandstone Trail and Eddisbury Way. • The sandstone ridge is a visual backdrop and landmark for much of the borough. • Beeston Castle and associated woodland park is a popular English Heritage visitor attraction.

Beeston Castle on the prominent isolated sandstone outcrop, with the Peckforton hills in the distance



Steep wooded slopes on the Sandstone ridge contrast with the sandstone fringe and lowland plain



Larkton Hill / Hether Wood



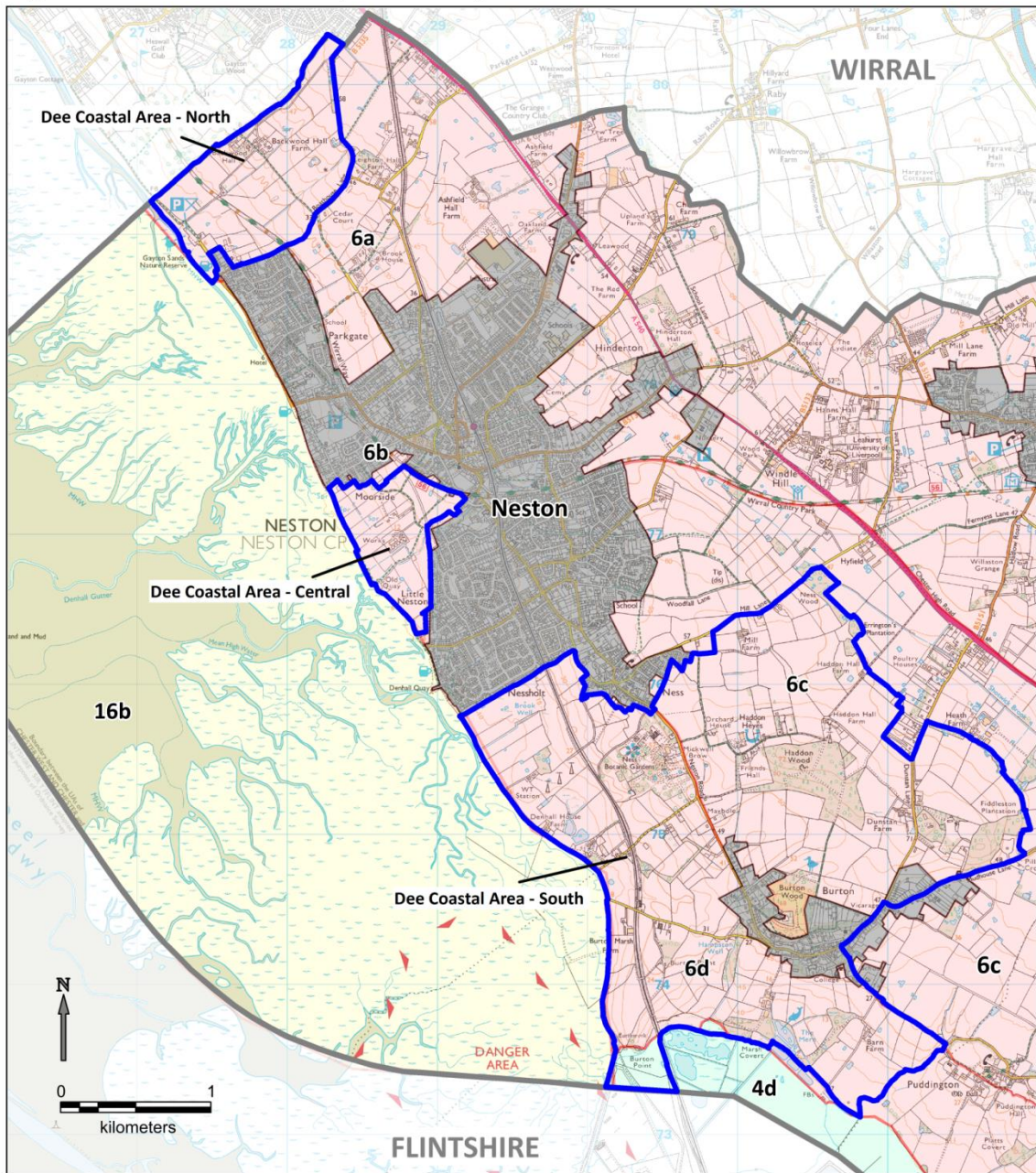
Iconic view representative of CWaCs distinctive landscape of sandstone fringe and ridge, with distant views across the Cheshire plain



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Dee Coastal Area ASCV

Figure 3: Dee Coastal Area of Special County Value



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See Table A3 in Appendix 2 for Landscape Character Area classifications

- Area of Special County Value
- Landscape Character Area Boundary

General Description and Extent

Three separate areas of locally significant landscape overlying the lower slopes of the western fringe of the Wirral peninsular as it falls towards the Dee Estuary. These areas offer expansive panoramic views towards the north, west and south over the coastal

mudflats and the Dee Estuary to the steeply rising Flintshire hills and conspicuous industry of Connah's Quay.

The three areas display subtly different characteristics, but all share a similar relationship with the coastline, presenting a gently transitional change between sloping enclosed farmland, inter-tidal coastal flats and open water.

The ASCV's northern area lies across sloping land between the Georgian coastal resort of Parkgate to its southern edge and the borough boundary with Wirral to the north. The central area of the Dee Coastal Area ASCV is a small, tightly contained 'island' of pasture and coastal scrub surrounded on its landward sides by the urban framework of Neston. The southern area of the ASCV is more extensive and presents a rich historic landscape characterised by a mosaic of small fields, woodlands, small settlement and historic designed landscapes.

The ASCV's component parts all fall within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 6: *Enclosed Farmland*. The northern section falls within *LCA 6a: Willaston*. The central area occupies the whole of *LCA 6b: Neston*. The southern area comprises a coastal strip within *LCA 6d: Ness, Burton, Puddington and Shotwick Slopes*, with an eastern area falling within *LCA 6c: Neston to Saughall*.

Statement of Importance

The county significance of the Dee Coastal Area ASCV relates in a large part to the context it sets as a transitional landscape between land and the intertidal Dee Estuary saltmarsh and mudflats, and the opportunities it offers for experiencing the undeveloped, accessible and highly distinctive coastline with outstanding panoramic views. Sloping topography falls gradually from the east towards the coastline where the boundary between open water and land is subtle yet at the same time complex and transient, as seasonal and daily tidal flows vary the extent to which the coastal flats appear either as land or open water.

Visually distinctive saltmarsh and reed beds define the inter-tidal area of the Dee Estuary in this area, but do not fall within the ASCV itself, which is characterised by mostly simple pastoral farmland and small woodlands or shelter belts of trees. The special qualities of the area are primarily due to the coastal 'experience' and the ability the areas offer to enjoy a wider landscape context of land, sea and the Welsh uplands to the west.

The land within the ASCV does present its own locally distinctive and valued character however, particularly in the southern area with its enclosed pastoral and woodland character, attractive settlements such as Burton and its historic registered landscape components including Burton Manor and Ness Botanic Gardens. To the central area of the ASCV historic field patterns and rough grazing presents valued and accessible semi-natural open space to local residents, whilst the northern area affords access to the historic coastline and longer views from more elevated points such as Boathouse Lane and the Public Rights of Way network. The inter-relationship of land, saltmarsh and tidal flats also presents highly significant habitat interest for all three areas.

Special Landscape Qualities: Dee Coastal Area ASCV – North

- ***Gentle but defined convex slope profile leading uniformly towards the coast across well-managed pastoral farmland offering exceptional panoramic views across the Dee Estuary.***
- ***Linear, regular pattern of medium size fields are mostly bounded by a strong, intact, hedgerow system, with hedgerow trees prominent in some areas.***
- ***Historic listed manor farmhouse and outbuildings at Blackwood Hall.***
- ***Historic interest of the linear Parkgate Conservation Area along the high water mark, reflecting former significance as a coastal trading area.***
- ***The international and national ecological designations of the estuary overlap the ASCV to the coastal fringe.***
- ***Opportunity to observe the distinctive wildlife of the marshland in the near distance, including internationally important populations of waders and wildfowl.***
- ***Local ecological importance is recognised along the Wirral Way cutting (former railway line), now an important recreational trail and part of the Sustrans network.***
- ***Away from the intrusive features, the simplicity of the agricultural land use and the pattern of its components such as hedgerows and trees provide landscape unity, texture and seasonal colour.***

Special Landscape Qualities: Dee Coastal Area ASCV – Central

- ***Panoramic views westwards across the Dee Estuary towards north Wales and the Flintshire Hills from most parts of the character area, including from the popular coastal footpath that follows the shoreline.***
- ***Perception of a small scale, enclosed landscape when looking inland.***
- ***A quiet, peaceful landscape despite being closely ‘surrounded’ by Neston.***
- ***Strong field pattern of post medieval, regular, rectangular small to medium sized fields bounded by hedgerows and trees.***
- ***Small woodland blocks influence views to the coast and prominence of the town.***
- ***Linear wooded green corridors along two dismantled railways provide enclosure to the eastern part of the character area, whilst tall relatively dense vegetation along the northern and southern boundaries allows only glimpsed views of Neston, despite immediate proximity.***
- ***Occasionally imperceptible change between the land of the ASCV and the adjacent coastal reed beds as colonisation of wet areas by the reeds extends inland, leading to a blurring of landscape type boundaries.***
- ***An area of small ponds and unimproved neutral grassland in the north-eastern corner, known as ‘The Intake’, is recognised as a local wildlife site.***
- ***Opportunity to observe the distinctive wildlife of the marshland in the near distance, including internationally important populations of waders and wildfowl.***
- ***A series of springs and ponds located across the character area.***
- ***‘The Old Quay’ (Locally Listed Building) was located on a tidal creek at the junction of Great and Little Neston providing evidence of the past importance of the area in***

shipping trade with Ireland. Sandstone walls and steps remain visible along the old shoreline.

- *Other rights of way along field boundaries and Old Quay Lane provide access between the estuary inland to Neston, including links to the Sustrans NCR 56 Wirral Way Recreational Route / Wirral Country Park (disused railway).*

Special Landscape Qualities: Dee Coastal Area ASCV – South

- *Panoramic views westwards across the Dee Estuary towards north Wales and the Flintshire Hills from many parts of the area, but sometimes screened inland by woodland, dense hedgerow network and topography.*
- *A more extensive tract than the central and northern Dee Coastal ASCV areas, comprising a mosaic of mixed farmland and woodland, punctuated with designed landscapes and historic sites and buildings.*
- *A gently falling topography from east to the coastal fringe, with undulating landform.*
- *Fields are mostly bounded by a strong, intact hedgerow system, with hedgerow trees - where these are accompanied by blocks of woodland, copses and plantations there is a strongly verdant character.*
- *Broadleaf, conifer and mixed woodlands form an important feature in some areas e.g. north of Burton. Broadleaved woodland to the south and east of Burton is of local wildlife value.*
- *Larger water bodies at Denhall House Farm and Burton Mere RSPB Reserve provide surface water landscape components and ecological value. Field ponds are inconspicuous features in the landscape elsewhere but provide habitat value.*
- *Conservation Areas at Ness and at Burton with high concentrations of listed buildings such as Burton Manor.*
- *Scheduled Monuments including the Ice House at Burton, Promontory Fort at Burton Point and Limekiln at Denhall.*
- *Ness Botanic Gardens and parkland at Burton Manor are on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.*
- *A popular coastal footpath provides opportunities to experience the Dee Estuary and its special landscape and ecological interest in relative tranquillity.*

Criteria	Summary Description
Distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct transitional landscapes between gentle pastoral and wooded slopes, through to expansive and dramatic flat saltmarsh, estuary and upland landscapes. • Unlike the Mersey estuary landscapes of CWaC, views from the ASCV uniquely encompass large expanses of tranquil saltmarsh, reed beds and open water and are not visually dominated by development and industry. • The ASCV is frequently experienced without strong intervisibility to other landscape areas within CWaC, but views to north Wales are expansive. • The central 'island' of the ASCV provides an easily accessible pastoral and coastal fringe landscape despite complete enclosure by Neston on the landward side. • Distinctly coastal character and large skies, but high tides rarely rise to meet the land at high water mark.
Perceptual character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentle but prevailing sense of transition between land and sea viewed from within the ASCV. • Big skies, coastal light and salty air. • Important presence and focus towards the waterscape and the movement and reflected light it presents within the landscape. • Relatively high levels of tranquillity away from main transport routes, even close to the settlements within or abutting the ASCV. • Strong sense of contrast between wildness of the saltmarsh and reedbeds adjacent to the managed farmland and parkland landscapes. • Occasionally unexpected enclosure close to the high water mark where mature reedbeds obscure all views out to towards the estuary. • Diurnal and season changes in views across intertidal areas and saltmarsh habitats.
Landscape and scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic vistas across the estuary, particularly from elevated viewpoints away from the ASCV boundary at high water mark. • Attractive contrast between open water, saltmarshes and reedbeds and managed farmland and woods. • Prominence and distinctiveness of the Welsh hills to the west. • Localised important parkland and historic garden landscapes. • Generally landscape components are in good condition, but the ASCV central area in some areas presents a perception of landscape in transition, partly naturalising or in decline.

Criteria	Summary Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often wooded or heavily hedged/hedgerow tree skylines inland present some enclosure and seasonal changes.
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pockets of woodland, including Burton Local Wildlife Site. • Very extensive coverage of international and national wildlife site designation across the tightly abutting saltmarshes (and overlying the ASCV marginally at Parkgate), but perception of that landscape and its ecological importance is strong within much of the ASCV.
Cultural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrations of attractive historic buildings within Conservation Areas present pleasing townscapes at Burton and Ness and the outlying coastal fringe of Parkgate. • Prominent, handsome manor houses and farmhouses such as Blackwood Hall (Listed Building). • Registered Parks and Gardens at Burton Manor and Ness Botanical Gardens. • A wide range of archaeological and historic buildings, from the Iron Age promontory fort at Burton Point (Scheduled Monument) to the Second World War bombing decoy at Burton Marsh. • Buildings and structures reflecting the area's heritage as an important port for traffic to Ireland prior to the sedimentation of the navigable landings. Heritage assets such as buildings (lime kilns at Denhall and Parkgate) and archaeological sites (coal mining and brick kilns at Neston Colliery), which are the legacies of industries which developed in the shadow of the port.
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important linear Public Rights of Way network, particularly coastal paths including Sustrans NCR 56 Wirral Way Recreational Route / Wirral Country Park. • Important landscape for experiencing the estuary landscapes and important nature conservation interest. • Important concentration of public historic sites across the ASCV southern area. • Maintains a strong agricultural function.

Northern area; glimpses of the estuary from well-treed farmland across gently rising land



Naturalisation of the landscape from reedbed encroachment and scrub, Neston central area



Important vistas across the Dee Estuary to the Flintshire Hills from within ASCV central area



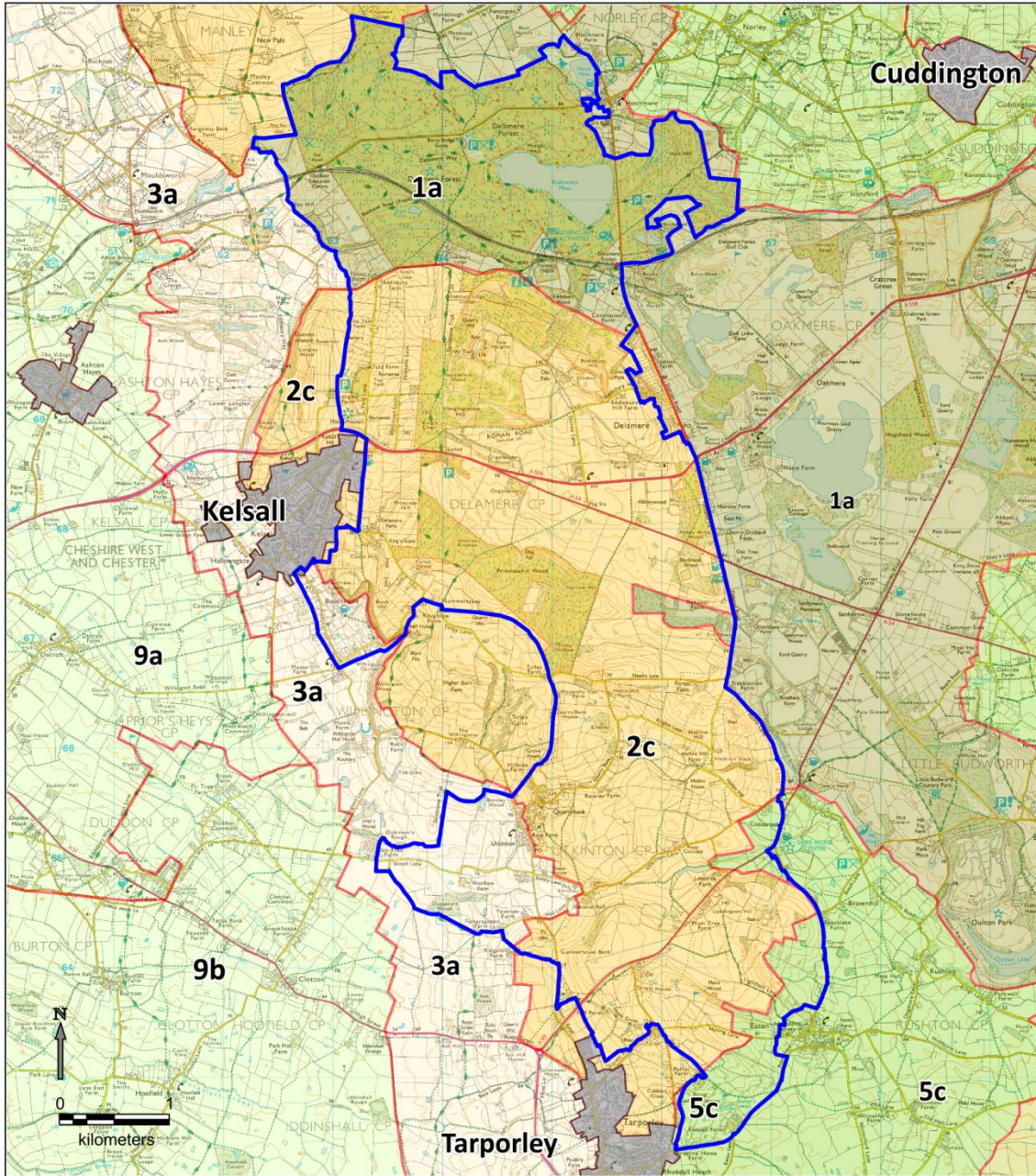
Extensive views from rising pasture in the ASCV south area, across the Dee Estuary



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Delamere / Utkinton ASCV

Figure 4: Delamere & Utkinton Area of Special County Value



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See Table A3 in Appendix 2 for Landscape Character Area classifications

- Area of Special County Value
- Landscape Character Area Boundary

General Description and Extent

Central and southerly sections of the prominent sandstone ridge that bisects the plains of Cheshire West and Chester borough from north to south. The ASCV comprises a markedly incised and narrow plateau landscape extending from its northern boundary at Manley Common and Delamere Forest to its southern limits at Tarporley. The narrow form of the ASCV reflects its delineation by steeply falling eastern and western slopes, whilst the short northern boundary abuts the Helsby & Frodsham Hills ASCV.

The southern area of the ASCV closely reflects the extent of *Landscape Character Area 2c: Eddisbury Sandstone Ridge*, with a small area of the *LCA 3a: Helsby to Tarporley Sandstone Fringe* north and south of the adjoining smaller Willington ASCV. Its northerly area comprises the north-western part of *LCA 1a: Delamere*, with its distinct woodland and mere components within the wider *Woodland, Heaths, Meres and Mosses Landscape Character Type (LCT)*. The south-eastern fringe of the ASCV includes small parts of *LCA 5c: Eaton, Morton and Over* within the wider *Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCT*.

The eastern limits of the ASCV primarily abut *Landscape Character Area 1a: Delamere*, whilst the steep western flank the ASCV is wholly bounded by *LCA 3a: Helsby to Tarporley Sandstone Fringe* between Mouldsworth and Tarporley.

Statement of Importance

Visually and perceptually some of the most important landscape within CWaC due to the relatively pronounced contrast in elevation and land cover in relation to the lower-lying pastoral landscapes of the Cheshire Plain to the east and west. This gives rise to a prominent but rounded skyline visible from a wide area that presents extensive views from a variety of points upon it. Such views are particularly significant from historic hillfort and promontory forts, where expansive vistas are often panoramic over the plain towards the uplands of the Peak District in the east and to the Clwydian Hills and beyond in Wales in the west. The northern area of the ASCV, north of the A54, includes a lower lying reach of the sandstone ridge, where the non-agricultural land cover and waterscapes of the Delamere Forest contrast with the dry and more exposed upper reaches of the ridge, presenting much more enclosed, atmospheric landscapes offering significant access and recreation opportunities. Sandstone walls are occasionally characteristic features within the Sandstone Ridge landscape.

The landscape overall comprises a mosaic of larger woodlands, pasture and arable farmland with areas of smaller clough woodlands mainly to the north western and north eastern slopes of the ridge. More incised cloughs and dry valleys complicate the ridge's topography. The Delamere Forest area of the ASCV is characterised by distinctive mosses and meres within large areas of broadleaf/conifer/mixed plantation woodlands.

Special Landscape Qualities - Delamere / Utkinton ASCV

- ***Across the ASCV as a whole, the enclosed, organic mosaic of meres, mosses, swamp, fen, extensive mixed woodland and heathland of Delamere contrasts with the neighbouring landscape of elevated sandstone ridge, grasslands, block plantation and its open panoramic views in all directions.***
- ***Away from the main A54 and A556, tranquil rural character is underpinned by the absence of significant settlement across the ASCV.***
- ***A dynamic landscape is evident within Delamere with many locations showing different stages of peatland/mossland development and ecosystem succession.***
- ***Medium and small scale open water bodies known as meres add visual and ecological richness to the landscape.***
- ***The skyline of Delamere Forest is defined by trees, most often the dark lines of large conifer plantations overlying former heath, much of which is managed for recreation and habitat importance.***
- ***South of Delamere, steep sandstone slopes and dry gorges support small but dense broadleaved woodlands whilst sandy soils support permanent grassland on less steep ground.***
- ***Rounded outcrops of Triassic sandstone form a prominent, undulating ridge reaching to over 170m elevation at Pale Heights, with belts of Scots pines forming distinctive skyline elements.***
- ***Sandstone walls are occasionally characteristic features within the Sandstone Ridge landscape.***
- ***A deeply historic landscape whose water bodies and mosslands maintain a record of environment and climate change in excess of 10,000 years. Visible influences include Late Bronze Age promontory fort at Kelsborough, Eddisbury Hillfort (late Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon Burh) and Roman Roads. However, the most visible historic features are experienced at the landscape scale; the Old Pale deer park and the regular geometric fieldscape and large blocks of forestry established with the enclosure of Royal Forest of Mara in the nineteenth century.***
- ***Characteristic sunken lanes provide access over the ridge, responding to landform, whilst roads through Delamere are frequently unbounded, with woodland and open peatlands close to the carriageway edge.***
- ***The 'Sandstone Trail' runs along part of the ridge with other Public Rights of Way and permissive paths forming a dense network of access, particularly in Delamere.***
- ***Spectacular panoramic views from the ridge across Delamere Forest and beyond to the northeast, over the open plains to the south-east, to the Peckforton Hills to the south, and to north Wales to the west.***

Criteria	Summary Description
Distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct, rolling and elevated topography with complex incised valleys across the ridge with pronounced slopes to the east and west, contrasting with the less undulating moss heath and woodland of Delamere. • Markedly contrasting mosaics of land use, enclosure and field patterns with permanent grassland, hedgerow trees and block woodlands overlaying the complex relief of the ridge, and more enclosed woodland, plantation, heath and open waters of Delamere. • Raised elevation and low density of development and quiet lanes serve to provide contrast with surrounding more settled landscapes.
Perceptual character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts between sense of elevation and openness upon the ridge to an atmospheric, enclosed, (perceptually) less managed landscape within Delamere. • Attractive, mystical contrast within Delamere of dense woodland opening out into heathland glades and open water of the mosses and meres, often giving rise to reflections of sky and trees from the water's surface. • Broadleaved and mixed treescapes across the ridge and in Delamere Forest present strong seasonal changes and later the degree of enclosure. • Relative tranquillity away from neighbouring settlements and the main road and rail corridors which bisect the ridge north of Kelsall. • Low density of settlement, buildings and minor roads contribute to 'deeper' rural character. • Rolling topography rarely affords a sense of exposure apart from along the scarp slopes such as Eddisbury and where change in elevation is most obvious. • The relative elevation of the ridge is emphasised by frequent expansive vistas in all directions from various points in the ASCV. • Extensive Public Rights of Way network allows opportunities for direct experience of the contrasting special qualities of the ASCV.
Landscape and scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high, rolling farm and woodland landscape with limited incongruous features. • Attractive contrast between wooded valley sides and open rolling tracts of farmland across the ridgeline. • Prominent, distinctive, rolling skyline and inter-locking outline of the wooded slopes help enclose the landscape at times and add seasonal change. • Sandstone walls are characteristic features within the Sandstone Ridge landscape.

Criteria	Summary Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small and medium still open waters within woodland and heathland settings provide attractive and changing visual experiences across Delamere.
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAMSAR site and SSSI designation at Black Lake, Hatch Mere and Linmere Moss underline the international and national significance of its fen, mire and ‘quaking bog’ habitats. • Local Wildlife Site designation also reflects local habitat importance. • Pocket Local Wildlife Site designations across the ridge include Oxpasture Wood, Holbitch Slack and Fishpool Moss. • Urchin’s Kitchen exposed rock formations and the <i>Delamere Soil Trail</i> designated as Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites.
Cultural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich historic time-depth to the landscapes of the ASCV. • The visually distinctive Late Bronze Age and Iron Age hillfort at Eddisbury Hill (Scheduled Monument) which was briefly re-established as an Anglo-Saxon Burh (Old English fortification), and later the location of the ‘Chamber in the Forest’, a medieval hunting lodge and administrative centre for the Royal Forest . • The promontory fort at Kelsborrow (Scheduled Monument) occupies a prominent position along the western ridge. • Old Pale enclosed medieval deer park ditch and bank boundary is a distinctive historic feature in the landscape. • Cluster of Listed Buildings at Utkinton Hall country house.
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ridge acts as a significant landmark across the centre of the borough, serving a strong visual reference point for much of the east and west Cheshire plan and settlement across it. • Important network of Public Rights of Way network including the Sandstone Trail. • Important connecting ecological and green infrastructure function within Delamere forest along the across ASCV ridge, much of which is accessible. • Important elevated viewpoints along the ridge. • Concentration of golf courses north of Tarpoley.

Extensive views over the Cheshire Plain to the Peak District from Eddisbury Hill on the eastern slopes of the Sandstone Ridge



Dense woodland landscape of Delamere from the Sandstone Ridge

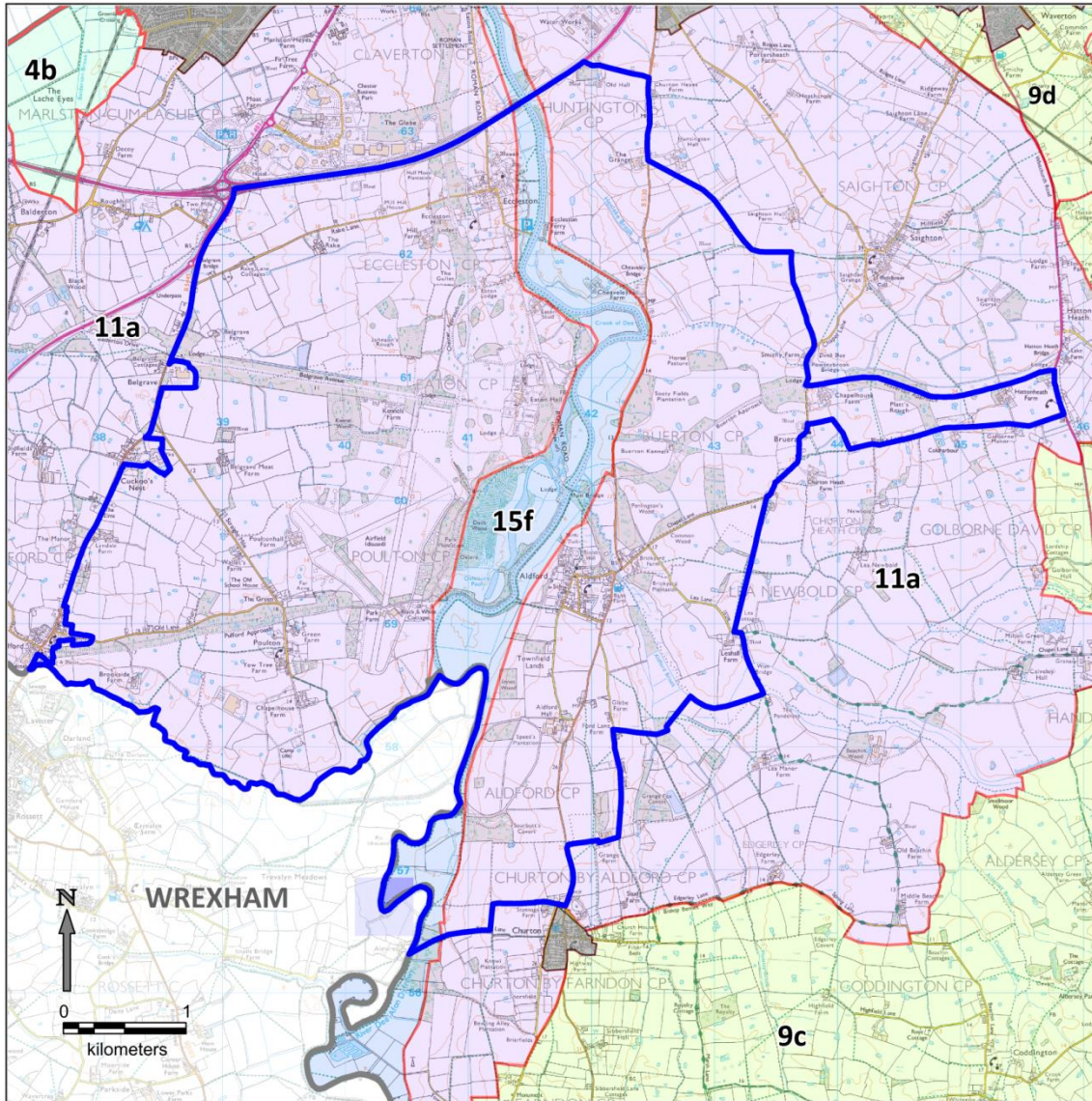


Rich time-depth to the ASCV landscape, showing earthworks at Eddisbury Hill hillfort.



Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV

Figure 5: Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley Area of Special County Value



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See Table A3 in Appendix 2 for Landscape Character Area classifications

- Area of Special County Value
- Landscape Character Area Boundary

General Description and Extent

The significant historical and managed landscape influence of the Eaton Estate, the seat of which is Eaton Hall, home to the Grosvenor Family now the Dukes of Westminster, lies to the east and west of the relatively narrow and sinuous corridor of *LCA 15f: Dee Valley* running due north through the centre of the ASCV from Churton into Chester City and beyond.

Long, straight formal avenues and woodland ‘approaches’ are a key characteristic of the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden, radiating out in all directions from the formal gardens and designed landscape around the Hall and through the relatively flat *LCT 11: Estate Farmland* within which lie the Aldford, Eccleston and Poulton model farm estate villages. A relatively high density of tree cover distinguishes the ASCV from the adjoining *LCT 9: Cheshire Plain West*.

A number of medieval moated sites and motte and bailey Scheduled Monuments provide significant historic legacy throughout the ASCV.

Statement of Importance

The natural meandering course of the River Dee running south-north through the middle of the ASCV contrasts strongly with the special historic, formal, designed gardens and man-made landscape parkland important to the setting of Eaton Hall. The Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden includes a high concentration of important listed buildings and other historic elements, e.g. Chapel clock tower and spire, which are important foci in the landscape. A former deer park and the estate farmland around the Hall, including nucleated model estate villages of Aldford, Eccleston and Poulton, have a strong and consistent identity afforded by the very large number of late C19 and early C20 estate buildings with distinctive architectural detailing. The narrow valley of the River Dee defines the eastern extent of the main part of the registered landscape around the Hall, with formal approaches down the long, straight, tree-lined Belgrave Avenue from the west, Chester Approach from the north, Buerton Approach and Waverton Approach from the east, Aldford Approach from the south-east and Pulford Approach from the south-west. Despite this enclosure there are long distance views westwards to the Welsh hills and eastwards to the sandstone ridge and Beeston Castle. In addition to the cultural heritage of the estate, the ASCV includes medieval moated sites, motte and bailey castles (Scheduled Monuments), ridge and furrow earthworks and the remains of RAF Poulton. The area is also noted for its range of natural heritage habitats including numerous woodland and meadow local wildlife sites; the River Dee is a SSSI and SAC.*

Special Landscape Qualities - Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV

- *The Grade II* Registered Park and Garden at Eaton Hall is of special historic interest, with a high concentration of important listed buildings and other historic elements.*
- *The narrow, meandering valley of the River Dee defines the eastern extent of the registered landscape.*
- *Formal, long, straight, tree-lined approaches to Eaton Hall along Belgrave Avenue, Chester Approach, Buerton Approach, Waverton Approach, Aldford Approach and Pulford Approach.*
- *Nucleated model estate villages at Aldford, Eccleston and Poulton have a strong and consistent identity afforded by the very large number of late C19 and early C20 estate buildings of red and orange brick with clay tile and blue slate roofs, often with intricate brickwork detailing, ornate chimney stacks and leaded casement windows.*
- *Perception of a well-wooded landscape contrasts with the more open Cheshire Plain West landscape character type.*
- *Perception of a highly tranquil, strongly rural landscape away from the A55 and the urban influence of Chester City.*
- *The Higher Burwardsley sandstone ridge and Beeston Crag form a strong skyline in views to the east, whilst the ridge of the Clwydian Hills in Wales presents a more dramatic horizon profile to the west.*
- *Particularly rich in cultural heritage features and archaeology, including the course of Watling Street Roman Road, medieval moated sites e.g. at Belgrave, Lea Hall and Bruera, and motte and bailey Scheduled Monuments at Aldford and Pulford.*
- *A range of natural heritage habitats including numerous woodland and meadow local wildlife sites; the River Dee is SSSI and SAC.*

Criteria	Summary Description
Distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The combination of natural and man-made features, in particular the meandering course of the River Dee and the formal, designed gardens and man-made landscape parkland important to the setting of Eaton Hall, provides a strong and distinctive sense of place unique within CWaC. • The relatively high density of tree cover, including the long, straight tree-lined avenues and ‘approaches’ to Eaton Hall distinguishes the ASCV from the adjoining <i>Cheshire Plain West</i>. • The managed landscape of the Grosvenor Estate extends into neighbouring estate farmland with model estate villages at Aldford, Eccleston and Poulton which have a distinctive and consistent built identity.

Criteria	Summary Description
Perceptual character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of enclosure created by low, flat topography, relatively high density of tree cover and river valley sides, contrasting with occasional long distance views to the Welsh hills and the sandstone ridge. • Highly tranquil with a strong rural character and little intrusion except close to the A55 along the ASCVs northern boundary. There is no vehicular river crossing within the ASCV. • Strong perception of a well-managed, estate farmland landscape.
Landscape and scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Registered Park and Garden and model estate villages are of high landscape and scenic quality, well managed by the Grosvenor Estate. • An obelisk and Chapel with clock tower and spire close to Eaton Hall are important foci in the landscape. • The River Dee valley is an important part of the registered area, important to the setting of Eaton Hall. • In places the river valley sides form a visually sensitive skyline.
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The River Dee presents rich riparian vegetation, water and wetland habitats including SSSI and SAC. • Woodland and wet pasture Local Wildlife Sites.
Cultural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Grade II* Registered Park and Garden is of special historic interest, with a high concentration of important listed buildings and other historic elements. • Historic, nucleated model estate villages at Aldford, Eccleston and Poulton are Conservation Areas with a distinctive and consistent built identity. • In addition to the cultural heritage of the estate, the ASCV includes medieval moated sites, motte and bailey castles (Scheduled Monuments), ridge and furrow earthworks and the remains of RAF Poulton.
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverside footpath continues north and south of the ASCV, with footbridge crossing at Iron Bridge, Aldford.

Well managed estate farmland



Nucleated estate villages have a strong and consistent identity



View across managed farmland towards the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden where the clock tower and spire are important foci in the landscape. Views of the Welsh hills in the distance are an important characteristic



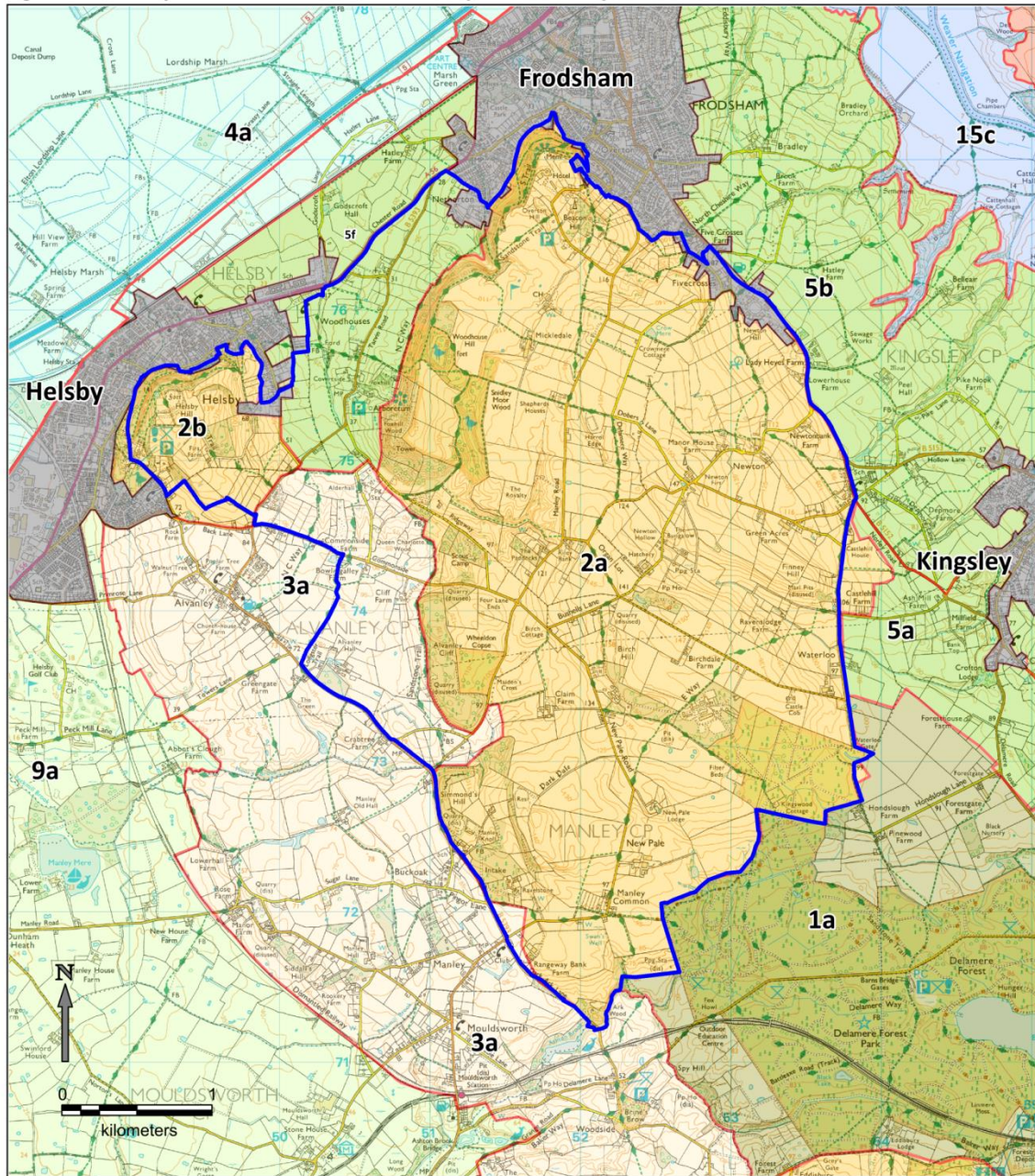
The narrow valley of the River Dee defines the eastern extent of the registered landscape around Eaton Hall



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Helsby & Frodsham Hills ASCV

Figure 6: Helsby & Frodsham Hills Area of Special County Value



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See Table A3 in Appendix 2 for Landscape Character Area classifications

- Area of Special County Value
- Landscape Character Area Boundary

General Description and Extent

The northern-most section of the prominent central sandstone ridge which partially bisects CWaC from north to south, culminating in dramatic scarp and outcrop features at Frodsham and Helsby Hill. The ASCV comprises a markedly rolling, raised landscape extending from its southern boundary at Manley Common where it bounds the Delamere/Utkinton ASCV. The eastern slopes of the ASCV primarily abut the *Undulating Enclosed Farmland* of LCT 5, whilst to the steep western flank the ASCV is bounded by *LCA 3a: Helsby to Tarporley Sandstone Fringe* between Helsby and Mouldsworth.

The ASCV broadly reflects the extent of *Landscape Character Areas 2a: Frodsham* and *2b: Helsby Hill*, but also includes a north to south reaching landscape corridor between those LCAs, comprising fringe parts of *LCA3a: Helsby to Tarporley* and *LCA 5f: Helsby to Frodsham Undulating Enclosed Farmland*.

Statement of Importance

Visually and perceptually some of the most important landscape within CWaC due to the relatively pronounced change in elevation in relation to the lower-lying pastoral landscapes of the Cheshire Plain to the east and west. This gives rise to a prominent but rounded skyline visible from a wide area and presents extensive views from a variety of points upon it. Such views are particularly important to the north where expansive vistas of the industrialised Mersey Estuary and Ellesmere Port are dramatic, as well as towards the uplands of the Peak District in the east and to the west towards the Clwydian Hills and, in clear conditions, beyond to the mountains of north Wales.

The landscape comprises a mosaic of pasture and arable farmland with pockets of woodland cover, particularly to the western slopes of the ridge. More incised cloughs complicate the ridge's generally linear form to its eastern and western flanks. The ASCV is crossed by a dense and connected network of recreational trails, bridleways and footpaths, including the Sandstone Trail and Delamere Way.

Special Landscape Qualities - Helsby and Frodsham Hills ASCV

- ***Outcrops of Triassic sandstone form a prominent ridge reaching over 150m with summit features at Beacon Hill, Harrol Edge and Birch Hill.***
- ***Helsby Hill at 141m elevation stands as a prominent free-standing outcrop with distinctive, steep sided profile, including the 'Old Man of Helsby'.***
- ***Pronounced sandstone scarps to the north and west of the ASCV support dense woodland, including ancient oak woodland, for example at Alvanley Cliff Wood.***
- ***Dry gorges, created by glacial meltwater, are features of the northern and western edges of the ridge.***

- *A strong mosaic land cover of grassland, arable farmland and woodland.*
- *Groups of Scots pines form distinctive skyline elements.*
- *Regular geometric fields, resulting from late eighteenth and early nineteenth century enclosure by private agreement and Parliamentary Act, characterise the ridge.*
- *17th century deer park to the south of the ASCV at New Pale with distinctive circular boundary is a feature in the landscape.*
- *Low density of dispersed farms and hamlets – many farm buildings are constructed from sandstone (quarried from the ridge) with welsh slate roofs.*
- *Sunken lanes network provides access over the ridge, responding to landform whilst there is an absence of main roads.*
- *The promontory forts at Helsby Hill and Woodhouses Hill (Scheduled Monuments) occupy prominent positions along the ridge. Other archaeological sites include the remains of the possible motte and bailey castle at Castle Cobb and the remains of the Maidens Cross wayside cross (Scheduled Monuments).*
- *Historic buildings range from seventeenth century manor houses and farmsteads, nineteenth century follies and the buildings of Crossley East Sanatorium (Listed Buildings).*
- *The War Memorial on Frodsham Hill is a landmark feature, from where there are panoramic views over the Mersey Estuary.*
- *Long distance footpaths run along the length of the ridge from where there are some spectacular panoramic views from the ridge as far as Wales to the west and the Peak District to the east.*

Criteria	Summary Description
Distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct, rolling and elevated topography with complex landform across the ridge with marked slopes to the north, east and west. • Distinct mosaic land use and field patterns with mixed woodlands overlaying the rolling relief. • Raised elevation and low density of development and quiet lanes serve to provide contrast with surrounding settled, industrial and urban landscapes.
Perceptual character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of elevation and being upon a topographical barrier within the wider lowland and coastal landscape. • Relative tranquillity compared to surrounding transport corridors and settlements. • Rolling topography rarely affords a sense of exposure apart from along the scarp slopes and outcrops where change in elevation is occasionally dramatic. • The relative elevation is emphasised by frequent expansive vistas in all directions from various points in the ASCV. • Extensive Public Rights of Way network allows opportunity for direct experience the special qualities of the ASCV.

Criteria	Summary Description
Landscape and scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high, rolling farm and woodland landscape with limited incongruous features. • Visually strong ‘buttress’ character of Helsby and Frodsham Hills from the coastal saltmarshes, mudflats and M56 corridor to the north. • Attractive contrast between wooded valley sides and open rolling tracts of farmland across the ridgeline. • Low density of settlement, buildings and minor roads contribute to ‘deeper’ rural character. • Prominent, distinctive, rolling skyline and inter-locking outline of the wooded slopes help enclose the landscape at times and add seasonal change.
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient woodland, including Dunsdale Hollow SSSI and Local Wildlife Site designation across slope-side woodlands such as Alvanley Cliff and Helsby Hill. • Woodland such as at Frodsham and Overton Woods recognised by Local Wildlife Site designation. • Helsby Hill and Frodsham Hill are designated as Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites.
Cultural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promontory forts at Helsby Hill and Woodhouses Hill (Scheduled Monuments) occupy prominent positions along the ridge. Other archaeological sites include the remains of the possible motte and bailey castle at Castle Cobb and the remains of the Maidens Cross wayside cross (Scheduled Monuments). • Historic buildings range from seventeenth century manor houses and farmsteads, nineteenth century follies and the buildings of Crossley East Sanatorium (Listed Buildings).
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important network of Public Rights of Way network including the Longster Way, Delamere Way, North Cheshire Way, East Way and Sandstone Trail. • Important connecting ecological and green infrastructure functions within Delamere Forest and along the ASCV ridge, much of which is accessible. • Popular elevated viewpoints at Frodsham and Helsby Hills.

Rolling mosaic of the western slopes of the Sandstone Ridge



Quiet, sunken country lane network



Extensive views from Frodsham Hill towards Helsby Hill and the coastal plain



Important views from Frodsham Hill to the industrial Mersey Estuary



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Weaver Valley ASCV

General Description and Extent

Three separate areas of locally significant landscape containing the mainly rural stretches of the valley of the River Weaver as it flows north-westwards from the boundary with Cheshire East, through the borough towards its mouth into the Mersey Estuary. The three areas of the ASCV are separated by urban reaches of the valley at Winsford and Northwich and then at Frodsham where the designation terminates. The ASCV extends into the borough from the Cheshire East stretches of the upper reaches of the Weaver.

The ASCV broadly reflects the extent of the three Landscape Character Areas of the *Upper, Mid and Lower Weaver Valley (LCAs 15a, 15b and 15c)*, but also includes elements of *LCA 5b: Frodsham to Northwich, LCA 5e: East Winsford, 8a: Aston, 10a: Darnhall Plain and 10d: Wimboldsley and Sproston Plain*. These areas generally serve to form part of the visual envelope of the valley but also signify the subtle variation in landscape character of the setting of the river and valley as it flows towards the Mersey.

Figure 7a: Weaver Valley (Lower) Area of Special County Value

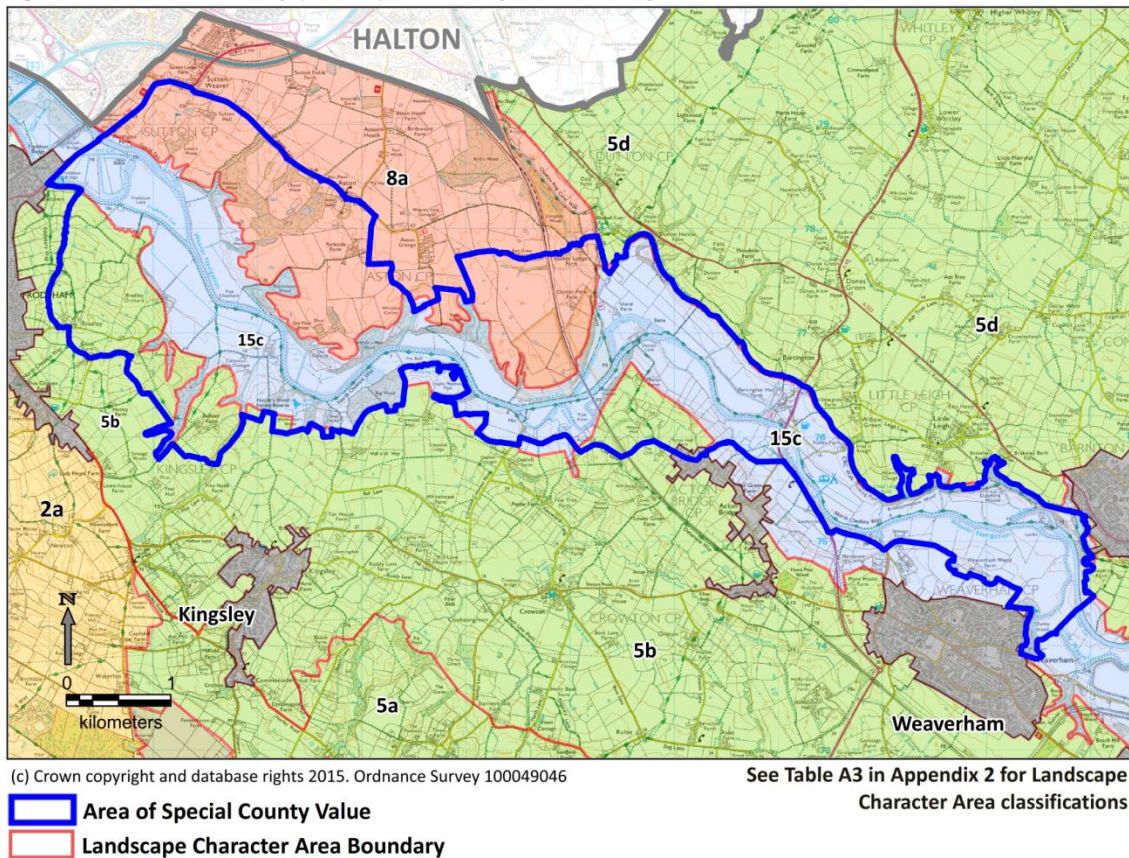
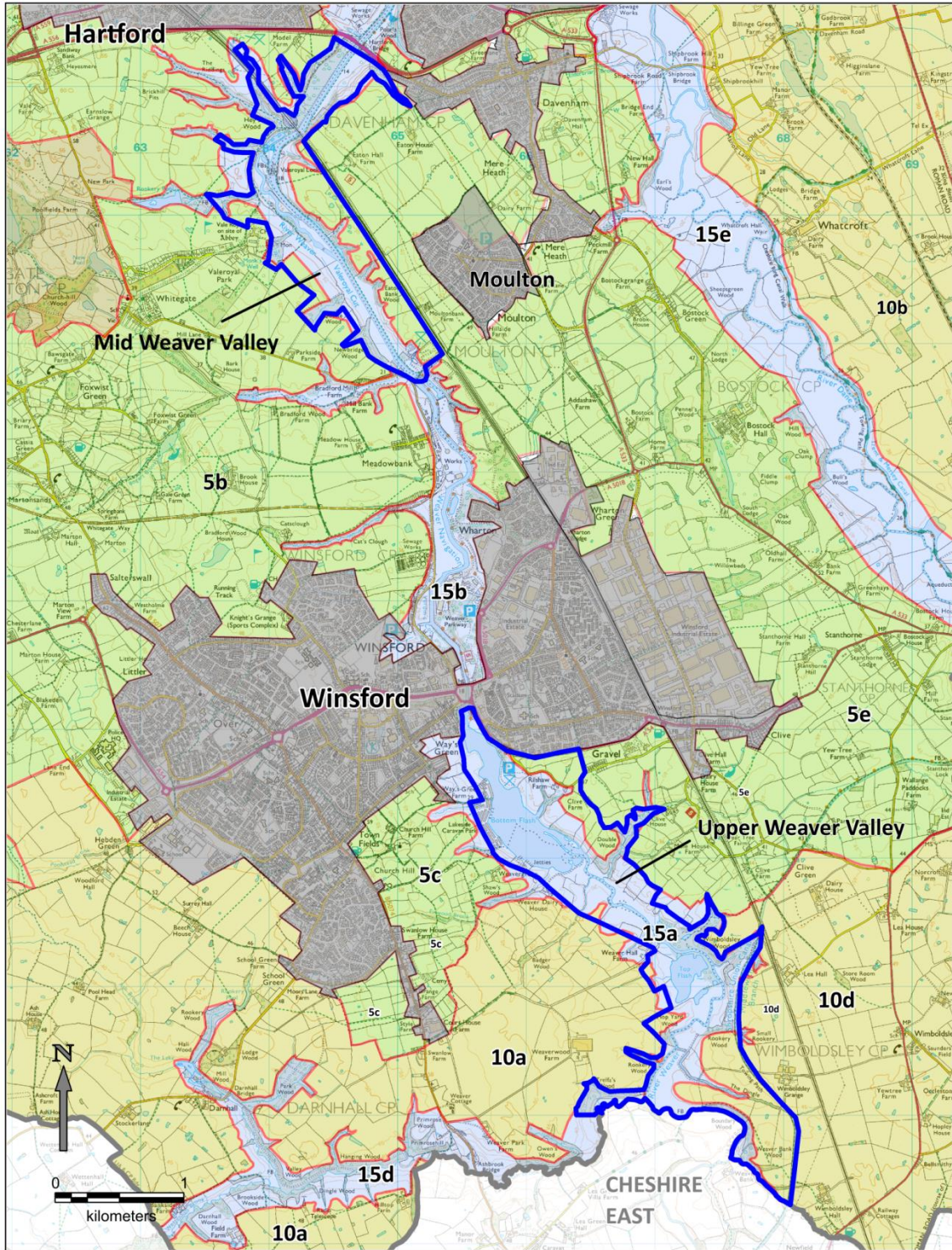


Figure 7b: Weaver Valley (Mid & Upper) Area of Special County Value



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See Table A3 in Appendix 2 for Landscape Character Area classifications

- Area of Special County Value
- Landscape Character Area Boundary

Statement of Importance

The Weaver Valley ASCV comprises three separate areas providing variously hidden, tranquil, naturally and culturally diverse landscape corridors of functional importance, each visually and perceptually enclosed within distinctive river valley topography. The river provides important aesthetic and sensory qualities, below often dense wooded valley sides providing a simple rolling skyline. Despite close proximity to larger towns the river valley is distinctly rural with very limited urban inter-visibility. Views from outside into the ASCV are mainly limited to road and historic rail crossings which provide landscape foci from within the valley. Listed navigation infrastructure such as locks with distinctive black and white livery are important features within mid and lower sections of the ASCV.

*The intimate pastoral and woodland mosaic of the dynamic meandering **upper Weaver** ASCVs relatively shallow valley is set within a quiet, undulating farmed landscape. Open water ‘flashes’ – legacies of the brine and halite industries - enrich the visual and ecological diversity of the ASCV, where otherwise built development is almost totally absent and public access is generally restricted.*

*The heavily ‘engineered’ and accessible **mid-Weaver** valley ASCV is punctuated by handsome Victorian navigational infrastructure such as Valeroyal Locks set within dense valley-side woodlands, including tributary clough woodland, and wet riverside habitats, providing a clearly distinctive sense of place and enclosed special character. The prominent Hartford Bridge and sandstone arched railway viaduct contribute to the industrial heritage and character of this section of the ASCV.*

*The **lower Weaver** ASCV retains a distinctive valley profile albeit with a broader floodplain, where open rough pasture and wetland habitats on the valley floor compliment the arable farmland of the mid-slopes and woodland of the steeper valley sides to provide visual, ecological and recreation value and diversity. Archaeological sites such as Bradley Promontory Fort overlook the lower Weaver Valley, whilst the valley floor contains historic agricultural earthworks, the Dutton and Saltersford Locks and now abandoned elements of the navigation, such as the infilled Sutton Locks and its associated boat graveyard (Daresbury Scheduled Monument). The prominent arched Dutton railway viaduct contributes to industrial heritage and character, whilst the Trent & Mersey canal and North Cheshire Way provide important recreational and amenity value.*

Special Landscape Qualities: Weaver Valley ASCV – Upper Weaver

- **Relatively shallow valley containing the natural meandering course of upper reaches of the River Weaver.**
- **Large flashes (formed by subsidence as a result of brine pumping) occupy the valley floor upstream of Winsford adding variety to the ASCVs component parts.**
- **Steeper valley sides to the east and a series of steep-sided tributary valleys support distinctive clough woodland, much of which is ancient e.g. Wimboldsley Wood SSSI.**
- **Less steep valley sides support small/medium scale arable and pastoral fields, bounded by low, gappy hedgerows.**
- **Alluvium on the valley floor gives rise to waterlogged soils which generally support permanent pasture including unimproved and semi-improved species rich grassland.**

- *The majority of the Upper Weaver valley is inaccessible to the public, supporting a sense of tranquillity, although there is some access on the edges of Winsford and along the Trent and Mersey Canal towpath to the southern reaches.*
- *Views are typically restricted to within the valley, for example views across the valley from either side, and from floodplains to the valley sides. The tops of the valley sides often form an enclosing visual envelope.*
- *Generally a quiet, tranquil landscape with an absence of significant settlement and very limited built structure, including agricultural buildings.*

Special Landscape Qualities: Weaver Valley ASCV – Mid Weaver

- *Pronounced river valley topography with a relatively narrow, flat floodplain and steep, wooded valley sides containing the course of the River Weaver (partly engineered to become the Valeroyal Cut) with many artificial channels, locks and bridges, including Valeroyal Locks.*
- *The steep valley sides and series of steep sided tributary valleys support distinctive clough woodland, much of which is ancient.*
- *Alluvium on the valley floor gives rise to waterlogged soils which generally support seasonally wet species rich grassland.*
- *This ecological value is recognised by local wildlife site designation over much of the ASCV.*
- *Recreational opportunities are provided by multi-user paths alongside the river / navigation, and on the river itself which supports both commercial and recreational waterborne traffic.*
- *Views are typically restricted to within the valley, for example there are views across the valley from either side, and from riverside/navigation path to the valley sides. The tops of the valley sides generally form a skyline.*
- *A quiet, tranquil and distinctly enclosed landscape with an absence of settlement despite proximity to larger towns.*
- *Industrial and heritage landmarks have a visual influence on parts of the valley – particularly close to Winsford.*
- *The prominent Hartford Bridge, and sandstone arched railway viaduct contribute to the industrial heritage and character of the valley, reminding of the proximity to major transport routes and settlement.*

Special Landscape Qualities: Weaver Valley ASCV - Lower Weaver

- *Distinct valley with a flat open floodplain and steep, wooded, valley sides.*
- *Contains the course of the River Weaver and the engineered Weaver Navigation with many artificial channels ('cuts'), remnant meanders, major locks, sluices and weirs such as at Dutton and Saltersford.*
- *The steep valley sides and series of steep sided tributary valleys support distinctive clough woodland, much of which is ancient - some have notable bluebell swathes.*

- *The ASCV includes Beechmill Wood and Pasture, Warburton's Wood and Well Wood SSSIs and Hunter's Wood nature reserve. Dutton Park is a large mixed-habitat Woodland Trust estate.*
- *Valley sides also support small/medium scale arable and pastoral fields, bounded by low gappy hedgerows.*
- *Alluvium on the valley floor gives rise to waterlogged soils which generally support permanent pasture including seasonally wet species rich grassland.*
- *Recreational opportunities are provided by public footpaths alongside the river/navigation, including Delamere Way and the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk long distance recreational footpaths.*
- *The locks and 'boat graveyard' at Dutton are distinctive sites and popular visitor attractions.*
- *Views are typically restricted to within the valley, for example there are views across the valley from either side, and from floodplains to the valley sides. The top of the valley sides form a skyline.*
- *Generally a quiet, tranquil landscape with significant opportunity for quiet recreation.*
- *The Trent and Mersey Canal (designated as a linear Conservation Area) follows the northern flank of the valley – contributing associated structures and artefacts of industrial archaeology, many of which are listed.*
- *Marker stones at the meadows at Frodsham are listed as are buildings to the northern valley side at Aston.*
- *Scheduled Monuments are found at Bradley Promontory Fort and Middleton moated monastic grange.*
- *Designed parkland surrounding the former Aston Hall (now demolished) contributes to the wooded character of the ridge and is a locally important historic site.*
- *The Acton Swing Bridge (A49) and huge sandstone arched Dutton railway viaduct contribute to the industrial influence of the valley and importance as a navigable waterway.*
- *Settlement is generally absent from floodplain, except at locks and small areas of ribbon development alongside the A49. Scattered farms are typical of the less steep valley sides, such as Weaverham Wood Farm and Bartington Hall Farm.*
- *There is a minimal road network beyond the A49 crossing.*

Criteria	Summary Description
Distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct valley landscapes with visually strong river, navigation, canal and open water <i>flash</i> landscape components. • Characteristic meander features to the river within the upper and lower Weaver Valley sections. • Sometimes steep valley sides of mixed woodland and farmland serve to enclose the landscape within discrete visual envelopes. • The ASCV is frequently experienced without strong intervisibility to other landscape areas. • The wooded valley profile, varied floodplain land uses and habitats contrast with the urban and pastoral landscapes which bound the ASCV.
Perceptual character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of containment, particularly within the Mid Weaver stretches of the ASCV. • Important presence and focus on the waterscape and movement it presents within the landscape. • Relatively high levels of tranquillity away from main transport crossings (road and rail). • Semi-natural valley floor areas add to sense of wildlife experience and value. • Access within the ASCV often limited to footpaths and towpaths, with highly limited road network, supporting a sense of peacefulness and separation.
Landscape and scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic vistas across the valley from elevated crossings such as Hartford Bridge, the railway viaducts and upper valley sides such as at the northern edge of Weaverham. • Attractive contrast between open water, linear waterways, riparian habitats and wooded valley sides. • Very low density of settlement and buildings contribute to 'natural' character, despite the engineered river course in places. • Prominent, distinctive, simple skyline and rolling outline of the wooded hills help enclose the landscape and add seasonal change. • Handsome Victorian navigation infrastructure adds focal points to the natural valley character.
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient woodland, including Wimboldsley, Hatton's Hey and Warburton's Woods SSSIs. • Very extensive coverage of local wildlife site designation for woodland, riparian and watercourse habitats.
Cultural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological sites such as Bradley Promontory Fort and Middleton Moated Monastic Grange (Scheduled Monuments) overlook the lower Weaver Valley, whilst the valley floor contains extensive agricultural earthworks and now abandoned elements of the

Criteria	Summary Description
	<p>navigation, such as the infilled Sutton Locks and its associated boat graveyard. The latter containing the wreck of the Daresbury (Scheduled Monument).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upstream the most apparent cultural heritage is the 'flashes' created by the subsidence caused by brine and halite extraction. Flanking these are features of a more agricultural landscape including farmsteads and mills with medieval origins. Strong influence of listed navigation infrastructure (Grade II) with distinctive black and white livery, such as Dutton Lock, Saltersford and Valeroyal Lock. The high level Dutton Railway viaduct is a dramatic bridge with Grade II* listing
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important linear Public Rights of Way network including the North Cheshire Way, Delamere Way and canal and navigation towpaths. The river, navigation and canals remain important for commercial and recreational navigation. Important connecting ecological and green infrastructure function along the ASCV corridor.

Bottom Flash, Upper Weaver Valley



Meanders, Upper Weaver Valley



Wooded valley and Navigation,
Mid Weaver



Valeroyal Locks, Mid Weaver



Listed footbridge at Dutton,
Lower Weaver

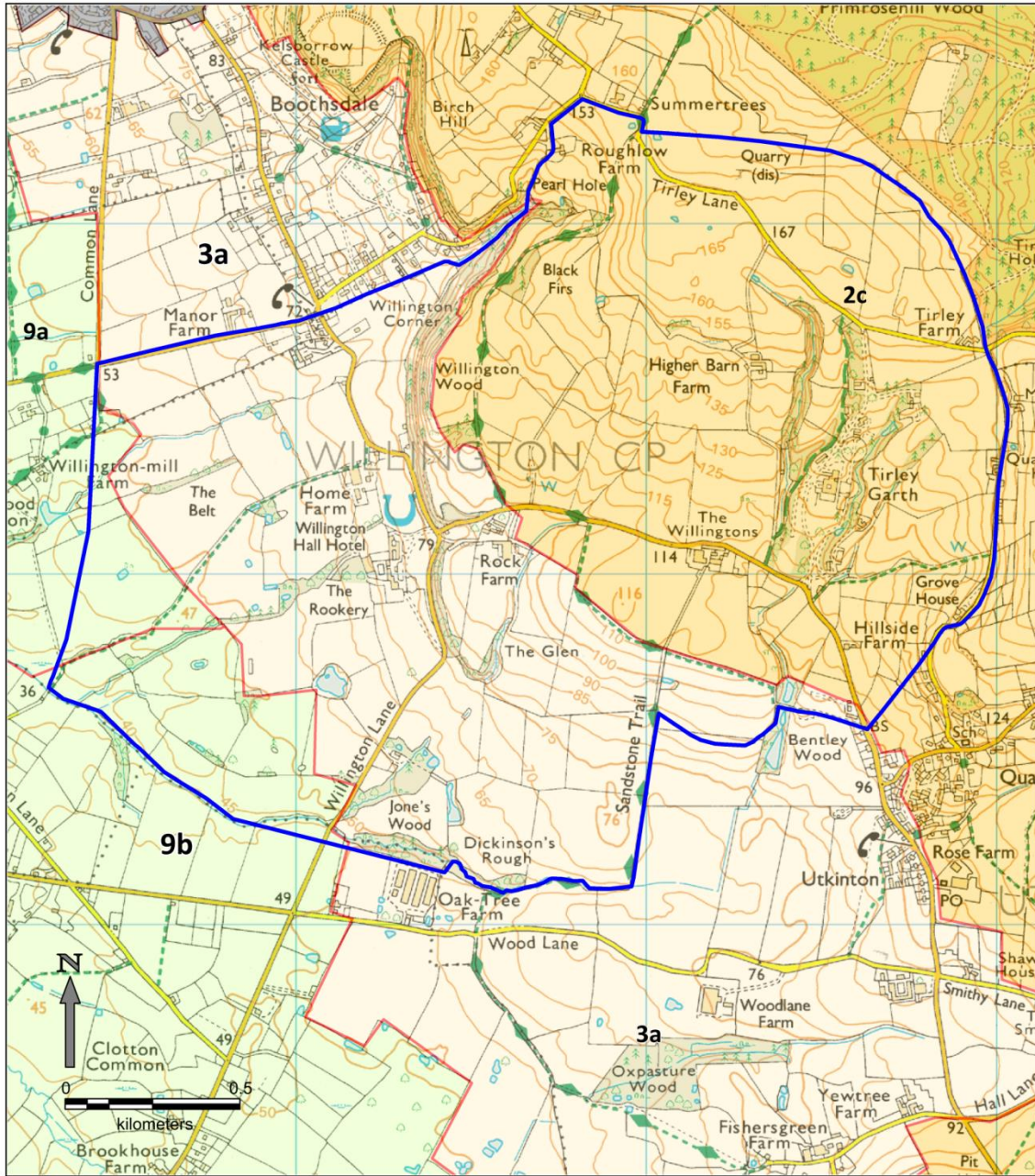


Grade II* listed Dutton Viaduct,
Lower Weaver



Willington ASCV

Figure 8: Willington Area of Special County Value



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See Table A3 in Appendix 2 for Landscape Character Area classifications

- Area of Special County Value
- Landscape Character Area Boundary

General Description and Extent

The boundary of the ASCV generally follows the Willington village / civil parish boundary, its northern end tucked into the steeply rolling western scarp of *LCA 2c: Eddisbury Sandstone Ridge*, between Willington and Utkinton. It encompasses the distinctive wooded hill of Willington Wood where the ridge meets *LCA 3a: Helsby to Tarporley Sandstone Fringe*, a relatively well-treed landscape in contrast with the more open *Cheshire Plain West*.

The undulating ridge, small brooks and wooded streams fall steeply southwards from a maximum height of around 167m AOD along Tirley Lane in the north. A landscape of strong contrasts where topography and vegetation provide small scale enclosure but elsewhere there are long distance panoramic views.

Tirley Garth listed building is an important country house with a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden on the south facing ridge, where formal terraces and landscaped parkland take advantage of the distant views. Willington Hall listed building, now a hotel, is located within parkland on the sandstone fringe beneath Willington Wood.

Statement of Importance

Willington Wood is dramatically located on the steeply undulating Eddisbury Sandstone Ridge between Willington and Utkinton, protruding abruptly above the Helsby to Tarporley Sandstone Fringe and the surrounding flat expanse of the Cheshire Plain West. The fringe contains a higher proportion of mature hedgerow trees than the lowland plain. The fringe is a transitional landscape of importance to the setting of the prominent linear wooded ridge which is visible from long distances in the surrounding landscape. A landscape of strong contrasts where topography and vegetation provide small scale enclosure but elsewhere there are spectacular panoramic views across the flat plain to distant hills, including from the Sandstone Trail long distance route and from Tirley Garth Grade II Registered Park and Garden, the last remaining complete C20 Arts & Crafts garden in Cheshire. Small brooks and streams, and the wooded slopes on the distinctive, simple skyline, provide rich texture and character, and features of natural heritage interest. Tirley Garth and Willington Hall are listed buildings of special architectural and historic interest partly due to their landscape setting. Low density settlement pattern and absence of intrusive elements provides a tranquil landscape.*

Special Landscape Qualities - Willington ASCV

- *Distinctive linear Willington Wood at the transition between the steeply undulating, prominent wooded escarpment of the sandstone ridge, the sandstone fringe and the low lying farmland of the Cheshire plain.*
- *The sandstone fringe is important to the setting of the prominent, rolling wooded sandstone ridge that rises steeply to around 167m AOD at Tirley Lane.*
- *South and west facing slopes include small brooks and wooded streams in the valleys, providing rich texture and character, and features of natural heritage interest.*
- *The Helsby to Tarporley Sandstone Fringe in this area is a relatively well-treed landscape with a high proportion of mature hedgerow trees, in contrast to the more open Cheshire Plain West.*
- *Tirley Garth is a listed building and an important country house with a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden designed by Thomas Hayton Mawson (a leading exponent of garden design in the C20), the last remaining complete C20 Arts & Crafts garden in Cheshire.*
- *The Sandstone Trail long distance footpath rises up to the wooded ridge from the lowland plain west of Utkinton; together with other rights of way including the Delamere Loop / John Street bridleway they provide valuable recreational and amenity opportunities.*
- *Tirley Garth and Willington Hall are listed buildings of special architectural and historic interest where their landscape setting is important.*
- *A landscape of strong contrasts where topography and vegetation provide small scale enclosure but elsewhere there are extensive elevated views, in particular from the sandstone ridge and terraced formal gardens and parkland at Tirley Garth, across the plain to Beeston and the Peckforton hills and the distant ridges of the Clwydian hill range in Wales.*
- *The distinctive prominent landform and simple wooded skyline of the sandstone ridge is visible from extensive areas of the borough and beyond.*
- *Willington and Utkinton lie immediately adjacent to the ASCV (to the north and south respectively), the area being important to the rural setting of the villages that straddle the boundary where the sandstone ridge meets the fringe.*
- *A very low density settlement pattern of scattered farms within the ridge and fringe landscape, linked by a small number of narrow, winding country lanes.*
- *A strongly rural character with an absence of modern built elements and intrusive transport corridors provides a tranquil landscape.*

Criteria	Summary Description
Distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent wooded sandstone ridge is a local landmark and a strongly characteristic feature of Cheshire West and Chester borough. • The wooded, steeply undulating western scarp and well-treed sandstone fringe form a distinctive contrast with the surrounding flat, open Cheshire plain. • The sandstone fringe is important to the setting of the prominent, undulating, wooded ridge.
Perceptual character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast of the sense of enclosure created by topography and vegetation, and the open panoramic views from the sandstone ridge. • A strongly rural character with an absence of modern built elements and intrusive transport corridors provides a tranquil landscape.
Landscape and scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent, distinctive, simple skyline and rolling outline of the wooded hills add texture, variety and interest to the landscape. • Spectacular panoramic views from the ridgeline across the flat plain to distant hills.
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small brooks and streams, and the wooded slopes provide rich texture and character, and features of natural heritage interest.
Cultural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tirley Garth Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, the last remaining complete C20 Arts & Crafts garden in Cheshire. • Tirley Garth and Willington Hall are listed buildings of special architectural and historic interest partly due to their landscape setting.
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public rights of way including the Sandstone Trail and Delamere Loop / John Street bridleway . • The sandstone ridge is a visual backdrop and landmark in views across the borough and beyond.

Willington Hall in its parkland landscape setting



Contrast between the steeply wooded sandstone ridge, well-treed sandstone fringe and the flatter and more open Cheshire plain

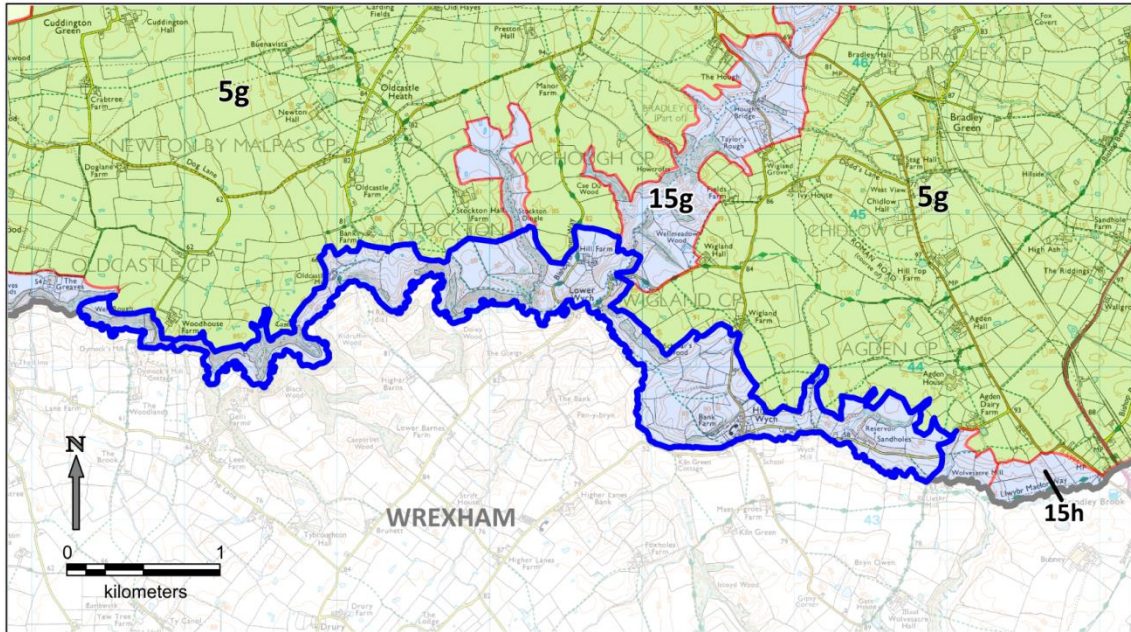


Distinctive linear Willington Wood at the transition between the steeply undulating, prominent wooded escarpment of the sandstone ridge and the sandstone fringe

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Wych Brook Valley ASCV

Figure 9: Wych Brook Valley Area of Special County Value



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See Table A3 in Appendix 2 for Landscape Character Area classifications

-  Area of Special County Value
-  Landscape Character Area Boundary

General Description and Extent

Closely following the east-west aligned, often deeply incised, linear, narrow wooded clough valley of the Wych Brook, from east of Threapwood to east of Higher Wych.

The northern boundary of the ASCV has been re-drawn to closely follow the northern boundary of *LCA 15g: Wych Valley*, whilst cutting through Stockton Dingle and in the Hill Farm area, north of Lower Wych, where LCA 15g continues northwards. The southern edge follows the meandering course of the brook that marks the administrative boundary between Cheshire West and Chester Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.

Statement of Importance

Often deeply incised, meandering, shallow valley of the fast flowing Wych Brook, with a mosaic of ancient clough woodland, meadows and wetland ecosystems of high landscape, scenic and ecological value. Stockton Dingle is ancient woodland, Well Rough woodland is SSSI and several other woodlands are local wildlife sites. A number of minor watercourses flow southwards into the brook through small to medium scale arable fields with pasture and woodland on the steeper valley sides. A key characteristic is the strong sense of seclusion and tranquillity due to the intimate, small scale valley landscape, limited public access, low density settlement pattern and absence of intrusive modern elements. The area has a long history of small scale settlement from Saxon times based upon salt extraction, with settlement limited to two small hamlets at Higher Wych and Lower Wych at the only two crossing points of the brook, and scattered farmsteads elsewhere throughout the valley. Heritage features include several mills such as Dymock's Mill and Oldcastle Mill, and a Scheduled Monument at Castle Hill, site of a Norman motte and earthwork / ditch system dating from the C11-C12 providing significant historical interest. Occasional long distance views from higher ground on the valley's edge, including Bishop Bennet Way long distance recreational route, especially westwards towards the Dee valley and the Welsh hills.

Special Landscape Qualities - Wych Brook Valley ASCV

- ***Often deeply incised, meandering, shallow valley of the fast east-west flowing Wych Brook, with ancient and semi-natural clough woodland on the steep valley sides, e.g. Stockton Dingle ancient woodland.***
- ***Important broadleaved and mixed woodland ecosystems include Well Rough woodland SSSI and several other woodlands designated as local wildlife sites, which provide interest throughout the seasons.***
- ***High ecological importance of a mosaic of ancient meadows, wetland flushes and other unimproved grassland, and lichen communities.***
- ***A number of minor watercourses flow southwards into the Wych Brook through the soft boulder clay, creating a complicated topography of rolling ridges and valleys with small to medium sized arable fields above the steeper valley sides.***
- ***Salt extraction from natural bine springs or wells is known to have taken place in the vicinity of Lower Wych since the eleventh century. Some archaeological features in the valley floor have been suggested to be the remains of the salt houses mentioned in medieval and later documents.***
- ***Other heritage assets include Castle Hill (aka Old Castle), a Norman motte and bailey castle (Scheduled Monument) located on a promontory on the valley side, ridge and furrow earthworks and a field pattern which probably at least dates from the late medieval period.***
- ***Former medieval manorial watermills of Dymock and Oldcastle retain later (albeit converted) buildings, along with elements of their associated ponds, leats and sluices. They sit within a landscape dominated by ancient woodland, late medieval field systems, and ridge and furrow.***

- *Low density scattered settlement pattern of farmsteads and former mills. Higher Wych and Lower Wych are located at the only two crossing points of the brook within the ASCV.*
- *Bishop Bennet Way long distance recreational route passes through the valley at Lower Wych, with other public footpaths generally confined to the higher valley sides.*
- *Limited public access along the intimate, small scale, enclosed 'hidden' valley bottom creates a strong sense of seclusion and tranquillity.*
- *The valley side crests form visually sensitive skylines from within the valley, confining visibility to short vistas and creating a significant sense of enclosure.*
- *Occasional long distance views from higher ground on the valley's edge, including Bishop Bennet Way, westwards towards the Dee valley and the Welsh hills.*
- *Strongly rural, natural character due to the absence of intrusive modern elements and transport corridors.*

Criteria	Summary Description
Distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeply incised, linear, meandering, narrow wooded clough valley has a distinctive character and strong sense of place. • A distinctive, locally unique mosaic of ancient clough woodlands on steep valley sides, meadows and wetland ecosystems alongside the brook.
Perceptual character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of seclusion and tranquillity due to the intimate, small scale valley landscape, limited public access, low density settlement pattern and absence of intrusive modern elements. • Fast flowing brook is often heard but not visible. • Broadleaved woodland and meadows provide seasonal interest. • Strongly rural, natural character.
Landscape and scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosaic of natural features of high landscape and scenic quality, providing texture, variety and interest. • Visibility confined to short vistas and close skylines from within the 'hidden' valley, with a strong sense of enclosure. • Occasional long distance views from higher ground to distant hills.
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important woodland ecosystems, including Stockton Dingle ancient woodland and Well Rough woodland SSSI, and several other woodlands designated as local wildlife sites. • High ecological importance of a mosaic of ancient meadows, wetland flushes and other unimproved grassland, and lichen communities.

Criteria	Summary Description
Cultural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented history of salt extraction with associated undesigantated archaeological remains. • Heritage assets include Scheduled Monuments (Castle Hill), former medieval manorial watermills of Dymock and Oldcastle with later (converted) buildings and elements of their associated ponds, leats and sluices, set within a landscape dominated by ancient woodland, late medieval field systems, and ridge and furrow. • Low density settlement pattern of farmsteads and former mills. Higher Wych and Lower Wych located at crossing points of the brook.
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop Bennet Way long distance recreational route passes through the valley at Lower Wych. • Other public footpaths generally confined to the higher valley sides between Oldcastle Mill and Higher Wych, although there is some limited access to the brook.

Lower Wych, one of only two crossing points of the Wych Brook in the ASCV



Narrow, meandering, valley of the Wych Brook



Strong sense of seclusion and tranquillity due to the intimate, small scale, wooded valley landscape, limited public access, low density settlement pattern and absence of intrusive modern elements



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4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) recognises the high quality natural and historic environment of Cheshire that gives the borough its special and highly valued landscape character and local distinctiveness. In recognising that all countryside has an inherent value, the Local Plan is in line with the European Landscape Convention that promotes the need to take account of all landscapes, and the NPPF¹² which encourages consideration of the different roles and character of different areas, including recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- 4.2 This study sets out ASCVs as areas within the borough that are demonstrably special in their landscape character and scenic value. This study builds upon the *Local Landscape Designation Review*¹³ which concluded that the general extent of the former country-wide ASCV designations still present particular landscape character, qualities and scenic value, sufficient to merit identification and protection, subject to a more detailed review¹⁴. This study has reviewed each ASCV in turn, and, in identifying the special landscape qualities of each (and by making minor boundary amendments where necessary) it has demonstrated that these areas remain appropriate and offer additional landscape character and scenic value in the borough to justify protection through a local landscape designation. This approach will enable the protection and enhancement of the borough's valued landscapes, in line with the NPPF¹⁵.

¹² NPPF, 2012, paragraph 17

¹³ Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two), *Local Landscape Designation Review, Advisory Position Paper, January 2016, Part 1: Moving towards a Rationalised Local Landscape Designations Policy Hierarchy in Cheshire West and Chester*

¹⁴ The review of ASCVs in the 2016 *Local Landscape Designation Review* was essentially a desk-based exercise – see para 3.18 and Appendix 3 of that study

¹⁵ NPPF, 2012, paragraph 109

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APPENDIX 1:

Background to ASCV Designation within CWaC

County-Wide ASCV Designation

- A1.1 A network of LLDs considered to be of particular value at the county scale has been established across Cheshire through various iterations of the Cheshire Structure Plans since 1977. These policies included identification of Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) in each of CWaCs three predecessor district authorities of Chester City, Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough, and Vale Royal Borough.
- A1.2 Some draft background documents from the County Council remain from the 1970's, showing the County planning department's preliminary ideas on the number, nature and approximate size of *potential* Areas of Special County Value. However, the key document providing a description of the special landscape qualities of each ASCV is not available.
- A1.3 The ASCVs identified in the approved 1977 Structure Plan were, by and large, fairly extensive but their boundaries were not carefully defined. It was recognised that in some cases the whole of the potential area shown would not merit ASCV designation. Other areas put forward by County Officers were selected for just one or sometimes two reasons, typically specific sites of archaeological, historical or ecological importance.
- A1.4 A draft (unapproved) Cheshire County document on ASCVs, July 1979, provides an insight into the reasons for selection of *potential* Areas of Special County Value, as shown in **Table A1**:

Table A1: Potential County-Wide ASCVs and Reasons for Selection, July 1979.

Name of Potential ASCV	Reasons for Selection	Comment
Neston / Parkgate Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected for landscape reasons – not so much for the quality of the coast itself but for views it enables across the Dee estuary to the North Wales hills. Complements the Parkgate conservation area which covers the old harbour front with its early nineteenth century buildings and to the Dee Estuary ASCV (see below) a very important site of special scientific interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprised two areas: (i) to the north of Parkgate extending across land and estuary – the estuary element was not later included in the Dee Coastal Area ASCV designated by Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council; (ii) to the south of Neston extending to Burton but not into the estuary. It would appear that the middle pocket of the three parts of the Dee Coastal Area

Name of <i>Potential</i> ASCV	Reasons for Selection	Comment
	<p>(SSSI).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkgate is the best example in Cheshire of harbour development even though the sea no longer reaches the sea walls. Important that the open land to the north and south of Parkgate that constitute the ASCV are protected from all new development so that the setting of Parkgate and its commanding position on the Dee estuary can be appreciated. 	<p>ASCV later designated by Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council was not at the time considered <i>potential</i> ASCV status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main reason for selection was to protect the coast from development that would affect the historic coastline and views.
Dee Estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One part of the much larger Dee estuary SSSI, extending between Neston and the county boundary. • Historically interesting due to evidence of a gradual silting estuary and former courses of the river, but its main interest is the ecological important salt marshes and sandy mudflats for a wide variety of birdlife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dee Estuary <i>potential</i> ASCV was not later included in the Dee Coastal Area ASCV designated by Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council, presumably because its main ecological interest was protected by other policy. • The main reason for selection was to protect the SSSI from development that would affect its internationally important wildlife.
Delamere / Utkinton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important for landscape reasons as the central part of the extensive Mid-Cheshire ridge and the presence of Delamere Forest in the north. • Landscape, historical and recreational importance of Delamere Forest. • The pleasantly undulating farmland provides views of the forest and in all directions especially west to Wales and south to Beeston Hill. • Also important for ecological reasons, in particular the variety of habitats important in themselves and as part of a regional network. • Also important for historical and archaeological reasons, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boundaries of this <i>potential</i> ASCV are poorly defined on a map and are open to interpretation e.g. a reason for selection is the inclusion of Delamere Forest to the north but the northern boundary appears to bisect the forest. • The <i>potential</i> ASCV includes land around Willington later designated as a separate ASCV by Vale Royal Borough Council. • At that time there was a clear gap between the <i>potential</i> Delamere / Utkinton ASCV and a <i>potential</i> ASCV covering Helsby and Frodsham Hills to the north, with the area in-between around Manley / New Pale

Name of <i>Potential</i> ASCV	Reasons for Selection	Comment
	<p>with hill forts, scheduled monuments, finds, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also considered to be of considerable recreational importance due to the number of visitors to the area, including from outside the county. 	<p>not at the time considered <i>potential</i> ASCV status (see below).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reason for selection was primarily to protect the area from development, although further work to define areas where minor development could take place was encouraged.
Helsby and Frodsham Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected for its landscape appeal with opportunity for exhilarating walks and panoramic views along numerous footpaths and rights of way, including the Sandstone Trail, and the landscape contrasts of the unspoilt sandstone crags, flat marshlands of the Mersey estuary and nearby industrial and housing complexes. Also important for historical and archaeological reasons with hill forts, scheduled monuments, finds, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>potential</i> ASCVs southern boundary was approximately along a line from Simmond's Hill to Castlehill and did not at the time include the Manley / New Pale area, later added as part of the designated ASCV by Vale Royal Borough Council. Reason for selection was not entirely to protect the area - suitable development by way of additions and alterations is encouraged in the interests of maintaining a viable agricultural economy, and woodland management is encouraged.
Lower Weaver Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A remote and visually attractive area of countryside despite its close proximity to large centres of population and industry. Good linear access by footpaths. Important for its typical landscape of a broad meandering river valley with steep wooded sides and remnant estates. Also important for its association with the early salt and alkali industries of the region. Additional interest of associated features such as locks, quays, tunnels, railway viaduct, etc. Also important for sites of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main reason for selection was landscape protection and protection of the areas ecological features. Controlled development in the vicinity of Acton Bridge was seen as beneficial in landscape terms, including rehabilitation of old parklands. Only this lower valley of the River Weaver was considered as <i>potential</i> ASCV at the time; the middle and upper sections of the Weaver Valley were later added to the Weaver Valley ASCV designated by Vale Royal Borough Council.

Name of <i>Potential ASCV</i>	Reasons for Selection	Comment
	<p>ecological rarity, in particular Warburton's Wood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taken together the combination of factors makes the area of special value and importance and transcends local and county significance. 	
Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth/ Bickerton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected for its significant number and combination of features unusual in Cheshire. • Selected for its attractive wooded landscape that contrast with the Cheshire Plain. • The hills are significant landmarks seen from extensive parts of Cheshire and beyond, whilst providing panoramic views. • Extremely popular for walking and horse riding. • Also noted for its valuable historic associations and archaeology, including Beeston Castle. • Also noted for its rich wildlife and range of habitats including Peckforton Woods SSSI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>potential ASCV</i> extends over the administrative boundary with Crewe and Nantwich (now included as a Local Landscape Designation in Cheshire East). • The main reason for selection was landscape protection and protection of the setting of the hills. Even extensions and other minor development would need to be sensitively sited and designed. Further development for recreation should be avoided. • Positive management e.g. of ageing woodland and public access, whilst resisting reclamation of upland for agriculture was recommended.
Eaton Estate / Dee Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected for the combination of natural and man-made features, in particular the special quality of the River Dee valley, Eaton Hall parkland, estate farmland and surrounding model estate villages, unsurpassed in the County. • Open views to the Welsh hills are notable. • Also noted for its archaeological interest. • Also noted for its rich wildlife and range of habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued management by the Eaton Estate should ensure that the area will change very little in appearance. Maintenance of the landscape and building form and layout as it was created in the 19th century is seen as essential and careful control of agricultural development to harmonise with the 19th century buildings.
Wych Brook Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Described as a landscape of great beauty and tranquillity, with the deeply incised, wooded river valley, ancient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of the delicately balanced ecology of the area by discouraging public access is a key reason for

Name of Potential ASCV	Reasons for Selection	Comment
	<p>meadows and wetland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sense of seclusion in the narrow valley is described as its principal charm. • Of considerable ecological importance. • Infrequent access adds to the seclusion. • Fine views from high ground on the valley's edge especially westwards towards the Dee valley and distant Welsh hills. • Historical interest of features such as mills and weirs. 	<p>selection. However, provision of a single linear footpath was promoted to enable enjoyment of the valley. A landowner's management strategy was promoted to ensure careful consideration and control of change.</p>

Local-Scale ASCV Designation

- A1.5 The ASCVs identified in the approved 1977 Structure Plan were transposed and adapted into policy within each of the boroughs' and district's local plans. In the main these were 'saved' within the previous development plan. **Table A2** demonstrates that saved policy from the three CWaC predecessor authorities for ASCV vary appreciably in their local interpretation of the Structure Plan context¹⁶ at the time of drafting.

Table A2: Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) Saved Policy across CWaC.

Plan Area	ASCV Policy	Comment/Comparison
<p>Chester City</p>	<p>ENV25 Areas of Special County Value</p> <p>'The following areas are designated as Areas of Special County Value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eaton Estate/Dee Valley • Beeston/Peckforton/Bolesworth • Wych Brook Valley • Willington <p>Development which would be likely to damage, directly or indirectly, or contribute to the erosion of features for which an ASCV has been designated, will be refused.'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems from Structure Plan Alteration 2011 ASCV policy. • Non- specific about which environmental elements policy relates to. • Supporting text to policy notes designations made <i>because of the combined significance of historic, landscape, archaeological and nature conservation value present</i> i.e. does not identify special character or features of each ASCV. • Effectively a multi-component environmental protection policy. • Supporting text recognises the potential for the use of Article 4

¹⁶ Cheshire County Council, *Cheshire 2011, Cheshire Structure Plan* (adopted 1999)

Plan Area	ASCV Policy	Comment/Comparison
		Directions to control some Permitted Development Rights in ASCV.
<p>Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough</p>	<p>ENV6 Areas of Special County Value for Landscape ‘The Dee Coastal Area is defined as an Area of Special County Value for Landscape (ASCV) and is identified on the Proposal Map. Within this area:-</p> <p>i) Development which would adversely affect the special landscape character will not be allowed.</p> <p>ii) Small-scale development required to meet the social and economic needs of rural communities and small scale outdoor sport and recreational development will be permitted, provided it is in accordance with Green Belt policies and it is sensitively related to the distinctive character of the landscape. Large-scale development will not be permitted.</p> <p>iii) The conservation and maintenance of features important to the landscape of the ASCV such as trees, hedges, copses, woodlands, ponds and traditional sandstone walls will be encouraged.’</p> <p>Where development is permitted it will be required to have a high standard of design, siting and landscaping reflecting the traditional character of buildings in the area and the landscape, using materials sympathetic to the local area. The conservation and enhancement of the landscape will be an important matter in the consideration of planning proposals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local interpretation of Structure Plan Alteration 2011 ASCV policy. • Considers three discrete parcels of designation as a single area for policy purposes. • Specifically cites landscape as reason for designation. • Prescriptive in application of policy to landscape components. • No direct reference to nature conservation or heritage features. • Supporting text states: The overriding aim of this policy is to preserve the existing landscape quality of the ASCV by protecting it from inappropriate development. • The ASCV is defined to include the open countryside overlooking the Dee Estuary. This part of the Wirral coast is important in landscape terms for the views it affords out over the Dee Estuary and North Wales, and also for the views of the Wirral from across the Estuary. It is vital that development does not reduce or detract from the views out across the Dee Estuary. • The ASCV includes areas around Burton which represent <i>traditional rural Wirral landscape</i> in terms of woodland, the pattern of fields and features such as sandstone walls. • Neston/Parkgate Coast is the only coastal ASCV in Cheshire. • Dee Coast ASCV was first defined in detail in the Ellesmere Port & Neston Local Plan (adopted 1993).
<p>Vale Royal Borough</p>	<p>NE11 Areas of Special County Value ‘The Areas of Special County Value identified because of their high landscape quality are defined on the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy stems from principle re-established in Cheshire Structure Plan Alteration (adopted 2011), and LP defined boundaries.

Plan Area	ASCV Policy	Comment/Comparison
	<p>proposals maps and are described as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaver Valley • Helsby and Frodsham Hills • Delamere/Utkinton <p>In designated Areas of Special County Value, because of their landscape quality, their archaeological, historic or nature conservation importance, development which preserves or enhances the character or features for which the ASCV has been designated will be allowed.'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area identified because of landscape character / value, but... • Can relate to Landscape or other environmental / heritage valued characteristics. • Effectively a multi-component environmental protection policy. • Vale Royal Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document 5 (September 2007) was envisaged and intended to replace ASCV policy (in the context of PPS7). • Weaver Valley further protected by Policy NE13 River Corridors.

- A1.6 Analysis of the ASCV policy framework in Table A2 suggests that saved policy application is partly dependent upon identification of the *specific features* of value for which the area has been designated. However, explicit identification of these is inconsistently set out within the plans or supporting text. In response to this, a component part of this study has been to derive from desk study and field survey a more explicit, structured and systematic record of the special landscape qualities and values of each ASCV. This builds upon the background evidence work undertaken for the advisory position paper Part 1 (see Section 1, paragraph 1.3).
- A1.7 It is apparent that policies for the former Chester City and Vale Royal plan areas are not specific either in relation to whether the policies are primarily landscape designations, or what the specific valued features or character of those areas are. Both policies allow for development proposals to be considered in relation to their potential effects on nature conservation and/or heritage assets within the ASCV, with or without landscape impacts.
- A1.8 For ASCV policy within the former Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough area, valued character relates to partly-defined 'lowland landscape character'. However, supporting text to the policy states the ASCV is defined so as to include the open countryside overlooking the Dee Estuary, noting this part of the Wirral coast is important in landscape terms for the views it affords out over the Dee Estuary and North Wales, and also for the views of the Wirral from across the Estuary. It notes the importance that development does not reduce or detract from the views out across the Dee Estuary. Supporting text also states the ASCV includes areas around Burton which represent traditional rural Wirral landscape in terms of woodland, the pattern of fields and features such as sandstone walls. As such, the policy affords the most clarity of intent of the saved plans' LLD policies.

APPENDIX 2:

Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas within the ASCVs

- A2.1 **Table A3** shows the landscape character types and landscape character areas that fall within the ASCVs, taken from the 2016 *Landscape Strategy*. It also notes relevant landscape designations in neighbouring authorities where ASCVs lie on the CWaC boundary.
- A2.2 One ASCV has been renamed to be consistent with the relevant landscape character area within the 2016 *Landscape Strategy*; this is the Eaton Estate / Dee Valley ASCV re-named Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV.

Table A3: Landscape Character Types and Areas within the ASCVs

Name of ASCV	Landscape Character Type (from Landscape Strategy)	Landscape Character Area (from Landscape Strategy)	New Name of ASCV (where appropriate)	Comments
Weaver Valley ASCV	5.Undulating Enclosed Farmland	5b: Frodsham to Northwich	No change - Weaver Valley ASCV	Weaver Valley ASCV comprises 3 separate areas: only a small part of LCA 5b lies within the Lower Weaver Valley area.
	8.Heathy Farmland & Woodland	8a: Aston		
	15.River Valleys	15c: Lower Weaver Valley		
	15.River Valleys	5c: Eaton, Marton & Over		Weaver Valley ASCV comprises 3 separate areas: only a small part of LCA 5c lies within the Mid Weaver Valley area.
		5e: East Winsford		
		15b: Mid Weaver Valley		
	5.Undulating Enclosed Farmland	5e: East Winsford		Weaver Valley ASCV comprises 3 separate areas: several very small parts of LCA 10a lie within the Upper Weaver Valley area. ASCV extends into Cheshire East where the corresponding designation is 'Weaver Valley' LLD.
	10.Cheshire Plain East	10a: Darnhall Plain		
10d: Wimboldsley and Sproston Plain				
15.River Valleys	15a: Upper Weaver Valley			

Name of ASCV	Landscape Character Type (from Landscape Strategy)	Landscape Character Area (from Landscape Strategy)	New Name of ASCV (where appropriate)	Comments
Helsby and Frodsham Hills ASCV	2.Sandstone Ridge	2a: Frodsham 2b: Helsby Hill	No change - Helsby & Frodsham Hills ASCV	Boundary between 'Helsby and Frodsham Hills' ASCV and 'Delamere / Utkinton' ASCV has been drawn along the boundary of LCA 1a and LCA 2a (previously the boundary between the two ASCVs was uncertain).
	3.Sandstone Fringe	3a: Helsby to Tarporley		
Delamere / Utkinton ASCV	1.Woodland, Heaths, Meres & Mosses	1a: Delamere	No change - Delamere / Utkinton ASCV	
	2.Sandstone Ridge	2c: Eddisbury		
	3.Sandstone Fringe	3a: Helsby to Tarporley		
	5.Undulating Enclosed Farmland	5c: Eaton, Marton & Over		
Eaton Estate / Dee Valley ASCV	11.Estate Farmland	11a: Grosvenor Estate	Grosvenor Estate / Dee Valley ASCV	Lies along the boundary with Wrexham where UDP Policy EC5: Special Landscape Areas applies.
	15.River Valleys	15f: Dee Valley		
Beeston / Peckforton/ Bolesworth ASCV	2.Sandstone Ridge	2d: Beeston Crag	No change - Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth ASCV	ASCV extends into Cheshire East where the corresponding designation is 'Beeston / Peckforton / Bolesworth / Bickerton Hills' LLD. Only relatively small parts of LCAs 9b and 9c lie within the ASCV.
		2e: Higher Burwardsley		
		2f: Larkton Hill/Hether Wood		
	3.Sandstone Fringe	3b: Beeston to Duckington		
	9.Cheshire Plain West	9b: Hargrave, Hoofield & Beeston Plain		
9c: Tattenhall to Shocklach Plain				
Wych Brook Valley ASCV	5.Undulating Enclosed Farmland	5g: Malpas	No change - Wych Brook Valley ASCV	Lies along the boundary with Wrexham where UDP Policy EC5: Special Landscape Areas applies.
	15.River Valleys	15g: Wych Valley		
Willington ASCV	2.Sandstone Ridge	2c: Eddisbury	No change - Willington ASCV	Only small parts of LCAs 9a and 9b lie

Name of ASCV	Landscape Character Type (from Landscape Strategy)	Landscape Character Area (from Landscape Strategy)	New Name of ASCV (where appropriate)	Comments
	3.Sandstone Fringe	3a: Helsby to Tarporley		within the ASCV.
	9.Cheshire Plain West	9a: Dunham to Tarvin Plain		
		9b: Hargrave, Hoofield & Beeston Plain		
The Dee Coastal Area ASCV	6.Enclosed Farmland	6a: Willaston	No change – The Dee Coastal Area ASCV	The Dee Coastal Area ASCV comprises 3 separate areas: the northern area lies along the boundary with Wirral where UDP Policy LA2: Areas of Special Landscape Value applies.
		6b: Neston		The Dee Coastal Area ASCV comprises 3 separate areas: the central area is characterised entirely by LCA 6b: Neston
		6c: Neston to Saughall		The Dee Coastal Area ASCV comprises 3 separate areas: a very small part of LCA 4d: Burton & Shotwick Drained Marsh lies within the southern part of the ASCV. The southern area lies along the boundary with Flintshire where there is no corresponding landscape designation.