



Open Land Designations Study

Landscape Assessment

Preston City Council, South Ribble Borough Council and Chorley Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 LUC was commissioned by the three Central Lancashire local authorities (Preston City Council, South Ribble Borough Council and Chorley Council) to undertake strategic assessments of how land in the area:

- demonstrates valued landscape characteristics (including the identification of any areas where landscape quality can be considered of 'above ordinary' value);
- provides landscape settings which are important to the character of settlements;
- maintains gaps between settlements in the Preston City Council area that are not designated as part of its Open Countryside (policy EN1) area; and
- contributes to the Green Belt purposes as defined in paragraph 138 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.2 This document presents LUC's methodology and outputs for the strategic assessment of landscape value, settlement settings and settlement gaps. A separate report presents the methodology and findings for the assessment of contribution to the Green Belt purposes [\[see reference 1\]](#).

The Central Lancashire Local Plan

1.3 Central Lancashire covers the geographical areas of Preston, Chorley and South Ribble, which together function as one integrated local economy, housing market and commuting area.

1.4 The three local planning authorities have a long history of working together to plan for the area's growth needs. In 2012, the three Authorities published a Joint Core Strategy designed to inform the strategic direction of each Council's

more detailed Local Plans, all three of which were adopted two years later in 2015.

1.5 A review of the adopted Joint Core Strategy and separate Local Plans began in 2018 and a decision was made to start work on the preparation of a new Joint Central Lancashire Local Plan. The new Central Lancashire Local Plan will update the strategic policy objectives in the adopted Core Strategy and consolidate and update the more detailed non-strategic policies in the adopted Local Plans. Local Plan policies of particular relevance to this work, collectively termed 'open land' policies, are mapped on **Figure 1.1**. These include:

- Preston Local Plan policies:
 - GB1 – Green Belt.
 - EN1 – Development in the Open Countryside.
 - EN4 – Areas of Separation.
 - EN5 – Areas of Major Open Space.
- South Ribble Local Plan policies:
 - G1 – Green Belt.
 - G3 – Safeguarded Land for Future Development.
 - G4 – Protected Open Land.
 - G5 – Areas of Separation.
- Chorley Local Plan policies:
 - BNE2 – Development in the Area of Other Open Countryside.
 - BNE3 – Areas of Safeguarded Land for Future Development Needs.
 - BNE4 – Areas of Separation.

1.6 This study will form a key part of the growing evidence base for the new Central Lancashire Local Plan.

Study aims and scope

1.7 An analysis of the open land planning policies across the Central Lancashire area has identified aspects relating to the three roles of landscape covered by this assessment:

- its key aspects of landscape value;
- its role in providing a setting for its settlements;
- its role in maintaining the separation of settlements.

1.8 This study provides, at a strategic level, a proportionate, objective, transparent and consistent assessment of Central Lancashire's landscape in terms of these three roles.

1.9 The study outputs will help determine what open land policies would be most appropriate for the Central Lancashire Local Plan and will assist with the consideration of potential future development locations.

Study area

1.10 Geographically, the study area encompasses all land in Central Lancashire subject to the open land policies listed in Paragraph 1.5 above. Those open land policies making reference to the role of landscape do not cover a large proportion of the Central Lancashire area, but it is necessary to apply the assessments outlined below across all of Central Lancashire in order to determine whether the current policy coverage is appropriate. The wording of all the local open land policies is set out in Chapter 2 below, followed by a review of national and regional policy relating to landscape.

1.11 Areas subject to 'absolute constraints' – that is where development will not be permitted – are consistent with the Green Belt study and were agreed with the Central Lancashire authorities. These are:

- International nature designations: Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA);
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- National nature reserves;
- Ancient Woodland;
- Flood Zone 3b (the functional floodplain);
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Open access land (CROW Act).

1.12 There are other designations which, whilst not considered 'absolute' at a strategic scale, are still likely to have a bearing on landscape value, settlement setting and settlement separation. These include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Local Nature Reserves;
- Biological Heritage Sites;
- Tree Protection Orders;
- Nature Improvement Areas;
- Flood zones 2 and 3a; and
- Country Parks and other Green Space.

Absolute constraints and other constraints are shown on the maps accompanying each assessment within Appendix A (landscape value), Appendix B (settlement setting) and Appendix C (areas of separation).

Landscape value assessment

1.13 The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note on 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations', published in May 2021 (TGN 02/21) suggests that landscape value can be assessed as an evaluation linked to a landscape character assessment (identifying landscape qualities across character areas or types) and/ or it can be assessed and mapped spatially, that is through identifying areas for local landscape designation.

1.14 This study undertakes a strategic-scale analysis of landscape qualities across all open land within the Central Lancashire area subject to the open land policies listed in Paragraph 1.5 above based on the Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) identified within the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire (2000). The study area excludes the Forest of Bowland, located to the north of Preston, which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is also subject to a local plan policy, EN6, which recognises its natural beauty.

1.15 The assessment includes a 'value evaluation' which reviews various aspects of landscape value [see Chapter 3] and summarises the key landscape qualities and/or elements/ features/ areas of value within each LCA, noting any distinct strategic-scale variations within the LCA. Each assessment also records whether an area is considered to have 'above ordinary' landscape value. This terminology reflects the language used in the TGN's definition of a valued landscape as being above 'everyday landscapes'.

1.16 This analysis is intended to help determine whether an area-based policy identifying areas of local landscape value, such as Chorley policy BNE2, is appropriate in the joint Local Plan and, if so, which areas might be considered for inclusion.

Settlement setting assessment

1.17 For each relevant village or larger settlement (refer to Chapter 3) this strategic assessment provides an overview of the settlement's character/identity and the extent to which its relationship with the surrounding landscape is important in contributing to that character. It also summarises key elements of that setting and concludes whether the landscape setting makes:

- a particularly important contribution to the character of a settlement;
- a reasonably important contribution to the character of a settlement; or
- a limited contribution to the character of a settlement.

1.18 This analysis is intended to determine whether an area-based policy identifying areas which are important to a settlement's setting, such as South Ribble Policy G4 (Protected Open Land), is appropriate in the joint Local Plan.

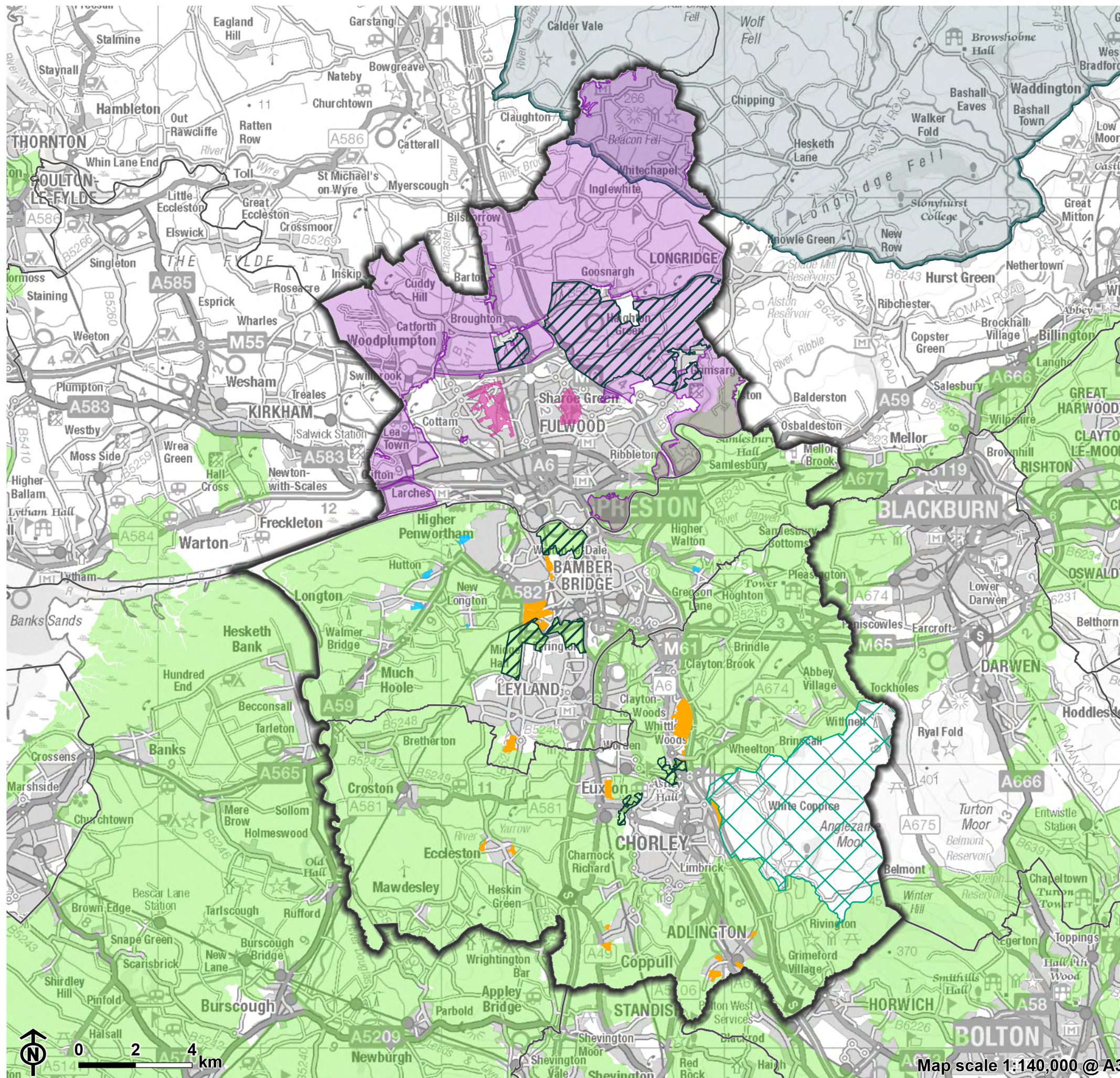
Areas of separation assessment

1.19 In South Ribble and Chorley, areas that are currently subject to area of separation policies (G5 and BNE4 respectively) all lie within the Green Belt and relate to towns. In Preston, however, areas of separation (policy EN4) have been defined between the main urban area and much smaller settlements. Therefore, it was agreed that the scope of this assessment would focus on settlements outside of the Green Belt within Preston.

1.20 This 'areas of separation' assessment focuses on the spatial separation of settlements, taking into consideration the presence of physical features that serve to either reduce or increase the perceived gaps between settlements. It provides an evaluation of the gap, followed by identification of any variations and provides an overall judgement on the strength of the gap, whether it is robust, moderate or fragile. The assessment also notes the key elements that contribute to the maintenance of the gap.

1.21 This analysis is intended to determine whether an area-based policy identifying areas of separation, to replace Preston's EN4, South Ribble's G5 and Chorley's BNE4, is appropriate in the joint Local Plan.

Figure 1.1: Open land policy areas



- Central Lancashire boundary
- Local Authority boundary
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (EN6)
- Open Land Policy Areas**
- Green Belt (GB1, G1)
- Areas of Major Open Space
- Areas of Separation (BNE4, EN4, G5)
- Area of Other Open Land (BNE2)
- Open Countryside (EN1)
- Safeguarded land (BNE3, G3)
- Protected Open Land (G4)

Map scale 1:140,000 @ A3

Method statement consultation

1.22 Local Planning Authorities have a duty to cooperate [see reference 2] with neighbouring authorities, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries. Paragraph 20 of the NPPF sets out the strategic topics for which Local Plan strategic policies should be prepared, including population and economic growth and associated development and infrastructure and facilities, climate change and the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. All these topics either have a direct or indirect link to land designated as Green Belt or other local countryside designations. Consequently, a method statement was prepared for consultation with the stakeholders with whom the Authorities have a duty to cooperate. These included:

- Historic England.
- Natural England.
- Environment Agency.
- Relevant neighbouring local planning authorities (that is those adjoining the administrative boundaries of Central Lancashire) including Lancashire County Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Fylde Council, West Lancashire Borough Council, and Wyre Council.

1.23 The method statement consultation gave an opportunity for the Councils' duty to cooperate partners to review and comment on the proposed approach to the study, prior to the assessment being undertaken. Several responses were received, but none presented any queries relating to the methodologies proposed for the landscape elements of the study (comments relating to the assessment of land against the Green Belt purposes can be seen in the separate Green Belt study report). Therefore, no changes to the draft methodology were required in response to the consultation process.

Report authors

1.24 This report has been prepared by LUC on behalf of the Central Lancashire Authorities.

Report structure

1.25 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the context for the study, including relevant planning policy in each of the Central Lancashire authority areas;
- **Chapter 3** sets out the proposed methodology for undertaking the strategic assessment of valued landscape qualities and value of landscape as a setting to settlements and in providing separation between settlements;
- **Chapter 4** summarises the findings of the different assessment elements;
- **Chapter 5** summarises the next steps in the assessment and reporting process, and how the proposed evidence will be used to inform the new Central Lancashire Local Plan.
- **Appendix A** details the landscape value assessment for each landscape character area.
- **Appendix B** details the settlement setting assessment outputs.
- **Appendix C** details the areas of separation assessment outputs.

Chapter 2

Policy Review

2.1 This chapter details international and national policy relevant to landscape. It then reviews the regional policy and local ‘open land’ policies (as listed in Chapter 1), identifying those aspects relating to landscape value, settlement settings and settlement separation that have prompted the assessments that have been carried out.

International and National policies relating to landscape

International

2.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. The ELC defines ‘landscape’ as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. This recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding.

National

2.3 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out three overarching objectives to the planning system, one of which is “an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land ...”.

2.4 At paragraph 130(c) the NPPF states that “Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: ... are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting ...”.

2.5 At Paragraph 174 is explicit in its requirement for development plan policies to protect, and where appropriate enhance, the landscape, stating that “planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...(in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality)” and “b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside...”.

Regional policy and local open land policies

Regional

Landscape value

2.6 Core Strategy Policy 13 – ‘Rural Economy’ is concerned primarily with ways in which economic and social improvement of rural areas can be achieved. However, after setting out types of development that will be allowed it states that ‘... proposals will be required to show good siting and design in order to conserve and where possible enhance the character and quality of the landscape ...’.

2.7 Core Strategy Policy 21 – ‘Landscape Character Areas’ concerns the positive role that new development is required to play in relation to landscape character. The policy states that “New Development will be required to be well integrated into existing settlement patterns, appropriate to the landscape character type and designation within which it is situated and contribute positively to its conservation, enhancement or restoration or the creation of appropriate new features”. The supporting policy text references the broad range of landscape character areas identified within the Landscape Strategy for

Lancashire (2000). It goes on to state that “whilst not all are nationally significant, they are recognised as locally distinct and highly valued”.

Settlement setting

2.8 Policy 1 – ‘Locating Growth’ seeks to “focus growth and investment ... whilst protecting the character of suburban and rural areas”. The policy wording goes on to say that “an appropriate scale of growth and investment will be encouraged in identified Local Service Centres, providing it is in keeping with their local character and setting, and at certain other key locations outside the main urban areas...”.

Settlement separation

2.9 Policy 19 – ‘Areas of Separation and Major Open Space’ seeks to “protect the identity, local distinctiveness and green infrastructure of certain settlements and neighbourhoods by the designation of Areas of Separation and Major Open Space, to ensure that those places at greatest risk of merging are protected and environmental/ open space resources are safeguarded”. The policy identifies several Areas of Separation around northern settlements and within the Preston urban boundary (Preston), and between central and southern settlements (Chorley and South Ribble).

Preston

Landscape value

2.10 Policy EN1 – ‘Development in the Open Countryside’ aims to protect areas of ‘Open Countryside’ from unacceptable development which would harm its open and rural character. It seeks to do this by limiting development to “a) that needed for purposes of agriculture or forestry or other uses appropriate to a

rural area ...; b) the re-use or re-habitation of existing buildings; c) infilling within groups of buildings in smaller rural settlements”. The majority of land within Preston District is designated as ‘Open Countryside’.

Settlement separation

2.11 Policy EN4 – ‘Areas of Separation’ seeks to prevent “harm to the effectiveness of gaps between settlements and, in particular, the degree to which the development proposed would compromise the function of the Area of Separation in protecting the identity and distinctiveness of settlements”. Areas of Separation are identified between: Broughton and the Preston Urban Area; Goosnargh Whittingham and Grimsargh; and Grimsargh and the Preston Urban Area.

2.12 Policy EN5 – ‘Areas of Major Open Space’ is concerned primarily with maintaining separation between urban neighbourhoods in Preston. It is applied to two areas - between Ingol/Tanterton and Greyfriars/Cadley; and between Sharoe Green and Fulwood. It seeks to prevent development within the Areas of Major Open Space unless certain criteria are met, including “ ... d) the proposal does not detrimentally affect the visual amenity, landscape amenity, landscape character or nature conservation value of the open space/Area of Major Open Space...”.

South Ribble

Landscape value and settlement setting

2.13 Policy G4 – ‘Protected Open Land’ seeks to “retain the openness and natural character of local areas and to protect the land from development”. It is applied to a number of relatively small areas of land adjacent to Penwortham, Longton, New Longton, Hutton and Gregson Lane. The supporting policy text states that “this land fulfils a key role in the character, appearance and

openness of these settlements, and as such is worthy of protection in its own right". Settlement separation

2.14 Policy G5 – ‘Areas of Separation’ seeks to prevent built-up areas from merging into one another and to protect the land within the boundary from inappropriate development. Three Areas of Separation are identified: between Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall; between Walton-le-Dale and Penworthan; and between Farington, Lostock Hall and Penwortham.

Chorley

Landscape value

2.15 Policy BNE2 – ‘Development in the Area of Other Open Countryside’ applies to a single, large area of land located to the east of the M61 including the West Pennine Moors. It aims to protect this land (which is not designated as Green Belt) from “unacceptable development which would harm its open and rural character”. It seeks to do this by only permitting development where the applicant can demonstrate that “a) It is needed for the purpose of agriculture or forestry or other uses appropriate to a rural area” or “b) It involves the rehabilitation and re-use of existing rural buildings where their form, bulk and general design are appropriate to the character of the surrounding countryside”. The text supporting Policy BNE2 refers to the West Pennine Moors as a ‘special landscape’, indicating that it has landscape qualities beyond being open and rural.

Settlement setting

2.16 Policy BNE10 – ‘Trees’ seeks to protect trees and woodland areas “which make a valuable contribution to the character of the landscape, a building, a settlement or the setting thereof”.

Settlement separation

2.17 Policy BNE4 – ‘Areas of Separation’ seeks to protect built-up areas from merging into each other and maintain the openness of these areas of countryside by preventing inappropriate development. Two Areas of Separation are identified between Chorley and Euxton and between Chorley and Whittle-le-Woods.

Chapter 3

Assessment Methodologies

3.1 This chapter sets out the methodologies used to assess the following:

- Landscape value (focused on Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) defined in the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire);
- The contribution of landscape setting to the character of settlements (for all villages and larger settlements);
- The strength of the gaps between settlements (focussing on gaps associated with settlements in and adjacent to land in the Preston City Council area that is not designated as Green Belt).

Landscape value assessment

Approach

3.2 The assessment provides an area-by-area analysis of all land within the Central Lancashire, as shown on **Figure 3.1**. The study analyses landscape value across all open land within the Central Lancashire area, based on LCAs identified within the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire (2000). As noted in Chapter 1, the methodology draws specifically on the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note on 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations'(TGN 02/21). Criteria for assessing landscape value

3.3 The Landscape Institute TGN 02/21 provides a list of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value. These factors and their definitions are as follows (Table 1 in the TGN also provides examples of indicators and examples of evidence of landscape value in relation to each of these factors):

- **Natural heritage** – Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.
- **Cultural heritage** – Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.
- **Landscape condition** – Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.
- **Associations** – Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.
- **Distinctiveness** – Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.
- **Recreational** – Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.
- **Perceptual (scenic)** – Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.
- **Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)** – Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies.
- **Functional** – Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

3.4 The TGN also provides some advice on the practical application of the factors listed above. This is summarised as follows:

- The listed factors are not fixed as they need to be appropriate to the particular project and location.
- The relative importance attached to each factor is likely to vary across different landscapes. Judgement is required as to how the factors weigh up in any particular circumstance.
- There are likely to be overlaps between the factors, and with other specialist studies (such as ecological or cultural heritage). These should be acknowledged when presenting overall conclusions.

- Although landscape condition can influence value, poor landscape management should not be a reason to downgrade a landscape's value in a planning context if other factors indicate value.
- Landscape function can influence value, but the presence of a spatial designation such as Green Belt or an 'area of separation' does not in itself indicate that a landscape has high value.
- Landscape value, and the way in which landscapes are valued by people, can change over time.

3.5 With reference to the Landscape Institute's guidance, the assessment criteria listed below were defined for land in Central Lancashire.

Natural heritage

This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area. It looks at the distinctiveness of landforms, the presence and extent of semi-natural habitats and wildlife that contribute to sense of place. Designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will add value. It also considers any particular functional value of landscape elements.

Lower landscape value:

- Landscape with indistinctive and/or a lack of topographical variety.
- Lack of semi-natural habitat coverage or valued natural features.
- No particular functional value.

Higher landscape value:

- Landscape with distinctive landform and/or strong topographical variety.
- Frequent occurrence of valued natural features (tree, hedgerows, woodland) or areas of semi-natural habitats.

- Provides a valuable function associated with the natural landscape – such as, as a floodplain, or in providing linkage with, transition to or appreciation of an adjacent national landscape designation.

Cultural heritage

This considers the extent to which the landscape displays time depth: either in terms of the presence of natural features, historic field patterns or heritage assets that contribute to landscape character. The designation of heritage assets such as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG) will add value.

Lower landscape value:

- Presence of modern development or contemporary structures that detract from landscape character (such as utility, infrastructure or industrial elements).
- Regular or uniform field patterns (mainly of modern origin).

Higher landscape value:

- Presence of small-scale, historic or vernacular settlement or historic features important to landscape character (such as Listed Buildings, archaeological features, industrial relics).
- Complex field patterns of historic origin – such as piecemeal enclosure with irregular boundaries, remnants of ridge and furrow cultivation.

Landscape condition

This considers the physical condition of the landscape in terms of both individual elements and overall structure.

Lower landscape value:

- Degraded landscape structure and poor condition of natural elements – such as significant hedgerow loss and lack of maintenance/management.
- Presence of detracting/incongruous features that influence landscape structure and condition (such as utility, infrastructure or industrial elements).

Higher landscape value:

- Strong landscape structure with intact boundary features.
- Good physical condition of natural landscape elements.
- An absence of detracting/incongruous influence from incongruous features.

Distinctiveness

This considers a landscape's strength of identity, with reference to the presence of distinctive or unusual features that are characteristic of a particular place. A landscape may have additional distinctiveness if it has high visual prominence, or a strong association with the character of a particular settlement, whether through strong views from the settlement or through providing a clear sense of arrival at the settlement.

Lower landscape value:

- Landscape does not have a strong expression. Elements are not unusual and do not have a strong association with any particular area.
- Features do not form a landscape that contributes significantly to the character of a notable settlement.

Higher landscape value:

- Landscape has a strong sense of place, with features that are very distinctive to this location, and/or visually prominent.

- Features form a landscape setting that makes a significant contribution

Recreational

This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include Public Rights of Way (PRoW), Country Parks, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Accessibility from urban areas is also an important consideration. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes or national cycle routes.

Lower landscape value:

- Limited provision of access routes and a lack of outdoor tourist attraction.
- Recreational value limited to community sports facilities (where enjoyment of the landscape is not integral to the activity).

Higher landscape value:

- Landscapes important for access and enjoyment of the landscape.
- Presence of well-connected, long distance routes, and public rights of way linking centres of population.

Perceptual aspects

Perceptual aspects (This criterion covers three factors listed separately in the Landscape Institute guidance: associations, perceptual (scenic) and

perceptual (wildness and tranquillity).) considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. It also considers whether there are any associations with notable people, historic events or artwork that contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape.

Lower landscape value:

- Close to visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development, weakening rural character.
- No associations with notable people, historic events or artwork that contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape.

Higher landscape value:

- A rural landscape, remote from visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development.
- A landscape that is recognised for its association with a notable person, historic event(s) or artwork that contributes to positive perceptions of the landscape.

Making judgements on landscape value

3.6 The landscape within each LCA has been appraised against the individual criteria set out above, subdividing areas that display significant variation from the LCA as a whole (noting this was done on a strategic in scale rather than picking out localised landscape features). Key aspects of value (qualities and/or elements/features/areas of value) have been summarised for each sub-area, as a useful source of reference when considering the potential impact of development in any given location.

3.7 In addition, a judgement has been made as to whether each area can be considered to have 'above ordinary' landscape value (This terminology reflects

the language used in the TGN's definition of a 'valued landscape' which is "an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes"). In some cases, one criterion alone may have been sufficient to result in an overall judgement of 'above ordinary' value, but more often the judgement is informed by a number of criteria. This judgement can be used as a broad indication of areas that might be candidates for local landscape designation.

Settlement setting assessment

Approach

3.8 This assessment focused on the landscape's influence on settlement character, in order to identify any landscape elements that play an important role in defining the character of a settlement. It has included all of the settlements listed below (by authority area). This includes several settlements outside of but adjacent to Central Lancashire, but in these cases only the contribution of land within Central Lancashire to the settlement's character is assessed. The assessed settlements are mapped on **Figure 3.1**.

Preston

- Main urban area: Preston
- Other villages: Barton, Broughton, Goosnargh, Grimsargh, Lea Town, Woodplumpton

South Ribble

- Main urban areas: Penworthan, Bamber Bridge, Lostock Hall, Walton-le-Dale, Higher Walton
- Key service centres: Leyland/Farington
- Urban local service centre: Longton

- Other villages: Coupe Green, Hutton, Mellor Brook, Much Hoole, New Longton, Samlesbury, Walmer Bridge

Chorley

- Key service centre: Chorley Town
- Urban local service centres: Adlington, Clayton Brook/Green, Clayton-le-Woods, Coppull, Euxton/ Buckshaw Village, Whittle-le-Woods
- Rural local services centres: Brinscall/Withnell, Eccleston
- Other villages: Abbey Village, Brindle, Bretherton, Charnock Richard, Croston, Gib Lane, Great Knowley, Gregson Lane, Heath Charnock, Higher Wheelton, Hoghton, Knowley, Mawdesley, Wheelton, Withnell Fold

Adjacent to Central Lancashire

- Key service centres: Longridge (Ribble Valley), Horwich (Bolton)
- Urban local service centres: Tarleton with Hesketh Bank (West Lancashire)
- Rural local services centres: Bilsborrow (Wyre Forest)
- Other villages: Rufford (West Lancashire)

Criteria for assessing the landscape's role in settlement setting

3.9 The assessment has considered:

- The extent to which the landscape has influenced settlement form – such as physical or cultural heritage features that have constrained settlement growth.

- The visual relationship between the settlement and surrounding landscape – such as higher ground that forms a backdrop; or open views across the surrounding landscape to/from a settlement.
- Whether the landscape has any particular distinctiveness or recreational value which enhances settlement character – such as a strong sense of historic character ('time-depth'), the experience of arrival, a particular functional relationship with the settlement; or important areas of public access from which the settlement setting can be appreciated.

Making judgements on level of contribution

3.10 A judgement on the extent to which the settlement's character is influenced by the surrounding landscape has been made, choosing one of the following three categories:

- The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement – where all, or most, of the surrounding landscape is important to a settlement's character.
- The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement – where parts of the surrounding landscape are important to a settlement's character.
- The landscape makes a limited contribution to the character of the settlement – where the landscape is not important to a settlement's character.

3.11 This section also highlights key areas/elements of the settlement setting.

Areas of separation assessment

Approach

3.12 The assessment of the function of land in relation to settlement separation is distinct from consideration of the value of land either in relation to its innate qualities or to its role in enhancing the character/setting of a settlement. Land that lacks any particular valued qualities and/or that doesn't provide a notable contribution to settlement character may still play a role in maintaining separation between settlements.

3.13 This spatial role of landscape is already to an extent considered as part of the assessment of contribution to Green Belt Purpose 2, as set out in the separate Green Belt Assessment report, but that analysis is concerned with gaps between towns, rather than gaps between smaller settlements. Land forming gaps between smaller settlements that in turn contributes to the separation of towns will make some contribution to Green Belt Purpose 2, but gaps unrelated to towns will not.

3.14 Any settlement large enough to be defined as a village for the purposes of Preston's Local Plan Policy AD1(b), any larger settlements within or adjacent to the district boundary, and suburbs of Preston which are separated by land designated under policy EN5 as 'areas of major open space' were considered when defining settlement gaps for assessment. Any urbanising development between these settlements was also considered relevant when applying the assessment methodology (as set out in the paragraphs below). On this basis, gaps between the settlements listed below have been assessed. The assessed gaps are also indicated on **Figure 3.1**.

- Preston and Broughton
- Broughton and Barton
- Barton and Bilsborrow (Wyre Forest)
- Preston and Goosnargh/Whittingham

- Preston and Grimsargh
- Preston and Lea Town
- Lea Town and Clifton (Fylde)
- Preston and Woodplumpton
- Woodplumpton and Broughton
- Broughton and Goosnargh
- Goosnargh/Whittingham and Longridge (Ribble Valley)
- Grimsargh and Longridge (Ribble Valley)
- Within Preston, between the suburbs of Ingol/Tanterton and Greyfriars/Cadley
- Within Preston, between the suburbs of Sharoe Green and Fulwood.

Criteria for assessing landscape's role in settlement separation

3.15 The assessment has considered the strength of each gap, and identified key landscape elements, for example distinct physical features, areas of land or views, that contribute to the physical and perceived gap.

3.16 The principles of this assessment are the same as those employed in the assessment of NPPF Green Belt Purpose 2. The assessment has considered both the physical and visual role that intervening open land plays in preventing the merging of settlements, with reference to the following:

- Physical separation - considering the settlement form and edge; the width of the gap (as the crow flies); the presence of intervening urbanising development; and the presence or absence of separating features, such as rivers, railway lines or prominent topographical features.
- Visual separation - considering the presence or absence of landscape elements that either decrease or increase inter-visibility between

settlement edges, such as woodland, hedgerows or intervening topography.

- Connection – considering the presence or absence of road routes that directly connect settlements; and the influence of any intervening urbanising development on the perceived sense of separation when travelling between settlements.

3.17 The size of the neighbouring settlements, relative to the size of the gap between them, is also a relevant factor in considering the relevance of land to the purpose of preventing settlement coalescence.

Making judgements on settlement gap strength

3.18 With reference to the guideline criteria below, a judgement has been made on the strength of the gap, using the following definitions:

Fragile gap strength

Criteria:

- Open land lies within a gap between settlement which is distinct but narrow in relation to the size of the settlements; or
- Open land lies in a gap between settlements which is moderate in relation to their size but it lacks strong separation from one or both of them, or the gap is diminished by intervening development.

Moderate gap strength

Criteria:

- Open land lies in a gap which is moderate in relation to the size of the settlements, and which has significant separating features; or
- Open land lies in a wider gap between settlements but which lacks significant separating features, or which is diminished by intervening development; or
- Open land lies in a narrow gap between settlements, but they are already connected to a degree that limits the role of open land in preventing coalescence.

Robust gap strength

Criteria:

- Open land lies in a gap between settlements which is wide in relation to their size, with significant separating features.

3.19 The supporting analysis also comments on significant variations in contribution within the gap – such as identifying whether there are areas adjacent to one or other of the settlements that make a weaker contribution.

Sources of evidence

Published information

3.20 The assessment has drawn on a range of evidence, including:

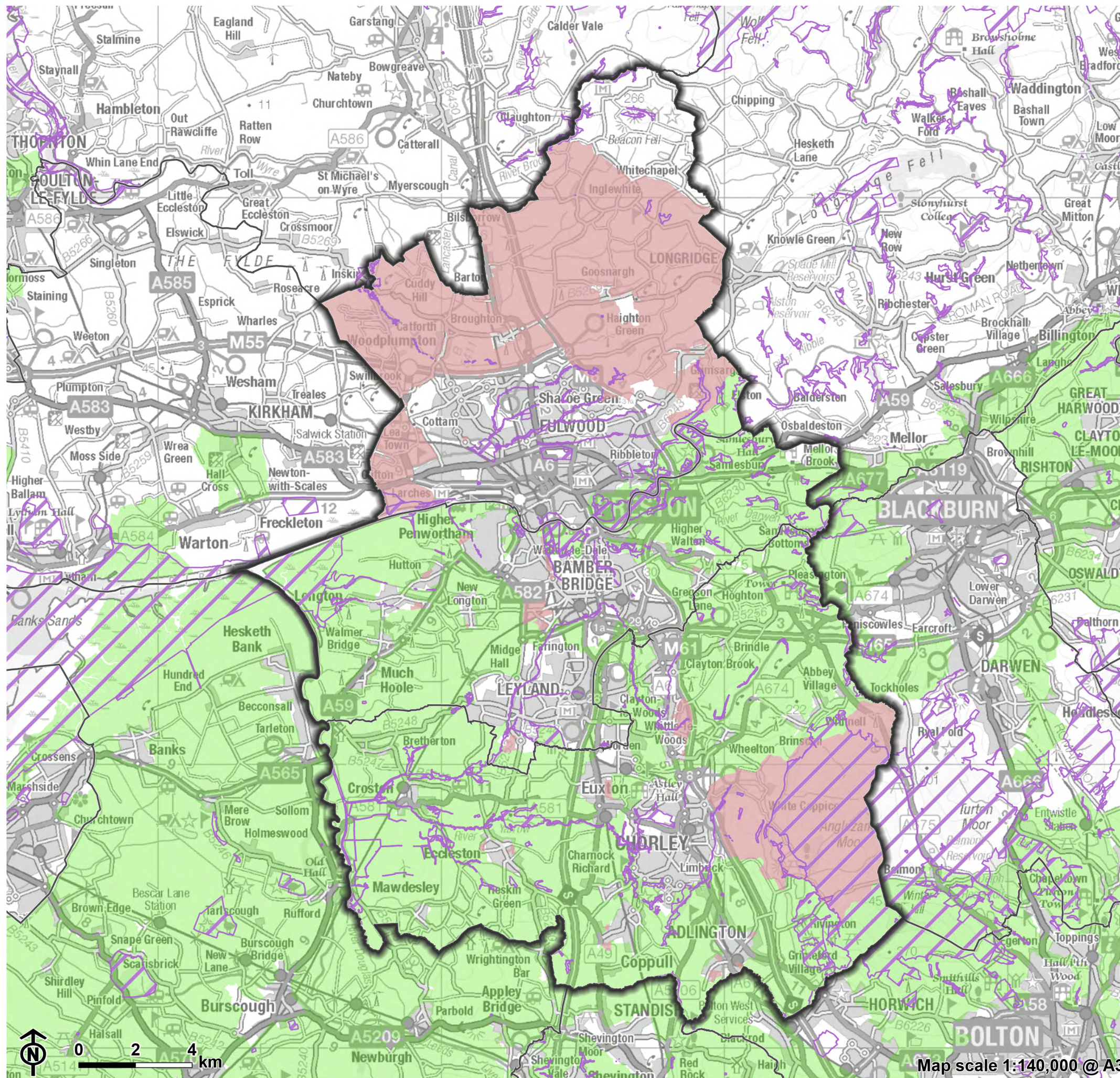
- The Landscape Strategy for Lancashire (2000);
- The Lancashire Historic Landscape Characterisation (2017);
- CPRE Light Pollution mapping and tranquillity mapping;

- National and local datasets for landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity and recreational designations.
- Conservation Area statements/appraisals.

Field verification

3.21 A structured process of field survey verification has been undertaken by landscape environment experts in order to test and refine the outputs from the initial desk study. Visits have been made to each identified LCA and to any sub-areas identified on the basis of significant variations in landscape qualities. Visits were also made to support the assessment of settlement settings and gaps. The field survey has been undertaken from roads and public rights of way.

Figure 3.1: Landscape assessment study area



- Central Lancashire boundary
- Local Authority boundary
- Absolute constraints
- Green Belt (GB1, G1)
- Other open land designations (EN1, G3, G4, BNE2, BNE3)

Chapter 4

Assessment Findings

4.1 This chapter summarises the findings of the Landscape Designations Study.

4.2 Table 4.1: Landscape value assessment findings provides a summary of the Landscape Value Assessment, Table 4.2: Landscape setting assessment findings provides a summary of the Settlement Setting Assessment, and Table 4.3: Areas of separation assessment findings provides a summary of the Areas of Separation Assessment. The findings are also shown on the overview maps, in **Figure 4.1 - Figure 4.**

Table 4.1: Landscape value assessment findings

LCA	Landscape Character Type	Sub-areas	'Above ordinary' value
2a: West Pennine Moors	Moorland Hills	None identified	Yes
4j: West Pennine Fringes	Moorland Fringe	None identified	Yes
5c: Lower Ribble	Undulating Lowland Farmland	None identified	No
5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	Undulating Lowland Farmland	None identified	No
5h: Goosnargh-Whittingham	Undulating Lowland Farmland	None identified	No
5k: Cuerden-Euxton	Undulating Lowland Farmland	5ki: Cuerden and Shaw Hill Parkland	No

LCA	Landscape Character Type	Sub-areas	'Above ordinary' value
		5kii: Leyland and Chorley Urban Fringe	
6b: West Pennine Foothills	Industrial Foothills and Valleys	6bi: Northern West Pennine Foothills 6bii: Southern West Pennine Foothills	No
6d: Adlington-Coppull	Industrial Foothills and Valleys	None identified	No
9a: Rivington	Reservoir Valleys	None identified	No
11a: Lower Ribble Valley	Valleys Floodplains	11ai: Brockholes open floodplain 11aii: Fishwick Bottoms urban fringe	Yes
15b: Longton-Bretherton	Coastal Plain	None identified	No
15c: Croston-Mawdesley	Coastal Plain	None identified	No
15d: The Fylde	Coastal Plain	15di: Woodplumpton and surrounds small scale farming 15dii: Lea and Cottam urban fringe	No
16c: Martin Mere and South West Mosses	Mosslands	None identified	No
16g: Hoole and Farrington Mosses	Mosslands	None identified	No
17a: Clifton and Hutton Marsh	Enclosed Coastal Marsh	None identified	No
18a: Ribble Marshes	Open Coastal Marsh	None identified	Yes

4.3 There are only five LCAs within the Central Lancashire Area that are assessed as having ‘above ordinary’ landscape value. That is, they are considered to have particular qualities/characteristics that elevate it above that of ‘ordinary’ countryside. The other LCAs, whilst having some valued landscape characteristics, are overall not considered to have ‘above ordinary’ landscape value.

Table 4.2: Landscape setting assessment findings

Settlement name	LCA(s)	Contribution
Abbey Village	6b: West Pennine Foothills	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Adlington	6b: West Pennine Foothills; and 6d: Adlington-Coppull	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Bamber Bridge	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold; 5k: Cuerden-Euxton; and 15b:Longton-Bretherton	The landscape makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Barton	5h: Goosnargh-Whittingham; and 15d: The Fylde	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Bilsborrow	5h: Goosnargh-Whittingham	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Bretherton	15b: Longton-Bretherton; and 16c: Martin Mere and South West Mosses	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Brindle	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement

Settlement name	LCA(s)	Contribution
Brinscall/Withnell	4j: West Pennine Fringes; and 6b: West Pennine Foothills	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Broughton	15d: The Fylde	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Charnock Richard	6d: Adlington-Coppull	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Chorley	5k: Cuerden-Euxton; 6b: West Pennine Foothills; and 6d: Adlington-Coppull	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Clayton Brook/Green	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold; and 5k: Cuerden-Euxton	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Clayton-le-Woods	5k: Cuerden-Euxton	The landscape makes a limited contribution to the overall character of the settlement.
Coppull	6d: Adlington-Coppull	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Coupe Green	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Croston	15c: Croston-Mawdesley; and 16c: Martin Mere and South West Mosses	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Eccleston	15c: Croston-Mawdesley; and 16c: Martin Mere and South West Mosses	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.

Settlement name	LCA(s)	Contribution
Euxton/Buckshaw Village	5k: Cuerden-Euxton; 6d: Adlington-Coppull; and 15c: Croston-Mawdesley	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Gib Lane	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Goosnargh/Whittingham	5h: Goosnargh-Whittingham	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Great Knowley	6b: West Pennine Foothills	The landscape makes a limited contribution to the overall character of the settlement.
Gregson Lane	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Grimsargh	5h: Goosnargh-Whittingham	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Heath Charnock	6b: West Pennine Foothills; and 6d: Adlington-Coppull	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Higher Walton	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Higher Wheelton	6b: West Pennine Foothills	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Hoghton	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Horwich	4j: West Pennine Fringes; 6b: West Pennine Foothills; and 9a: Rivington	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.

Settlement name	LCA(s)	Contribution
Hutton	15b: Longton-Bretherton	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Knowley/Little Knowley	6b: West Pennine Foothills	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Lea Town	15d: The Fylde	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Leyland/Farington	5k: Cuerden-Euxton; 15b: Longton-Bretherton; and 15c: Croston-Mawdesley	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Longridge	5h: Goosnargh-Whittingham	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Longton	15b: Longton-Bretherton	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Lostock Hall	5k: Cuerden-Euxton; and 15b: Longton-Bretherton	The landscape makes a limited contribution to the overall character of the settlement.
Mawdesley	15c: Croston-Mawdesley; and 16c: Martin Mere and South West Mosses	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Mellor Brook	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	The landscape makes a limited contribution to the overall character of the settlement.
Much Hoole	15b: Longton-Bretherton	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
New Longton	15b: Longton-Bretherton	The landscape makes a limited contribution to the overall character of the settlement.

Settlement name	LCA(s)	Contribution
Penworthan	15b: Longton-Bretherton; and 17a: Clifton and Hutton Marsh	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Preston	5h: Goosnargh-Whittingham; 11a: Lower Ribble Valley; 15d: The Fylde; and 17a: Enclosed Coastal Marsh	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Rufford	16c: Martin Mere and South West Mosses	The landscape makes a limited contribution to the overall character of the settlement.
Samlesbury	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold; and 11a: Lower Ribble Valley	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Tarleton with Hesketh Bank	15b: Longton-Bretherton	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Walmer Bridge	15b: Longton-Bretherton	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.
Walton-le-Dale	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold; 11a: Lower Ribble Valley; and 15b: Longton-Bretherton	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Wheelton	6b: West Pennine Foothills	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Whittle-le-Woods	5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold; and 5k: Cuerden-Euxton	The landscape setting makes a reasonably important contribution to the character of the settlement.

Settlement name	LCA(s)	Contribution
Withnell Fold	6b: West Pennine Foothills; and 5d: Samlesbury-Withnell Fold	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement
Woodplumpton	15d: The Fylde	The landscape setting makes a particularly important contribution to the character of the settlement.

4.4 For the majority of the settlements in the Central Lancashire Area the landscape is judged to make a reasonably important contribution to character.

4.5 The landscape around six settlements is considered to make only a limited contribution to character. These are generally settlements located in or near the South Ribble Main Urban Area (such as Lostock Hall and Clayton Brook/Green); or are largely defined by 20th century residential development, the character of which the landscape makes little contribution to (such as Clayton-le-Woods and New Longton). In two cases – Mellor Brook and Rufford – the limited contribution relates only to land within the Central Lancashire Area; no assessment is made to the contribution that the landscape within neighbouring districts may make to their character.

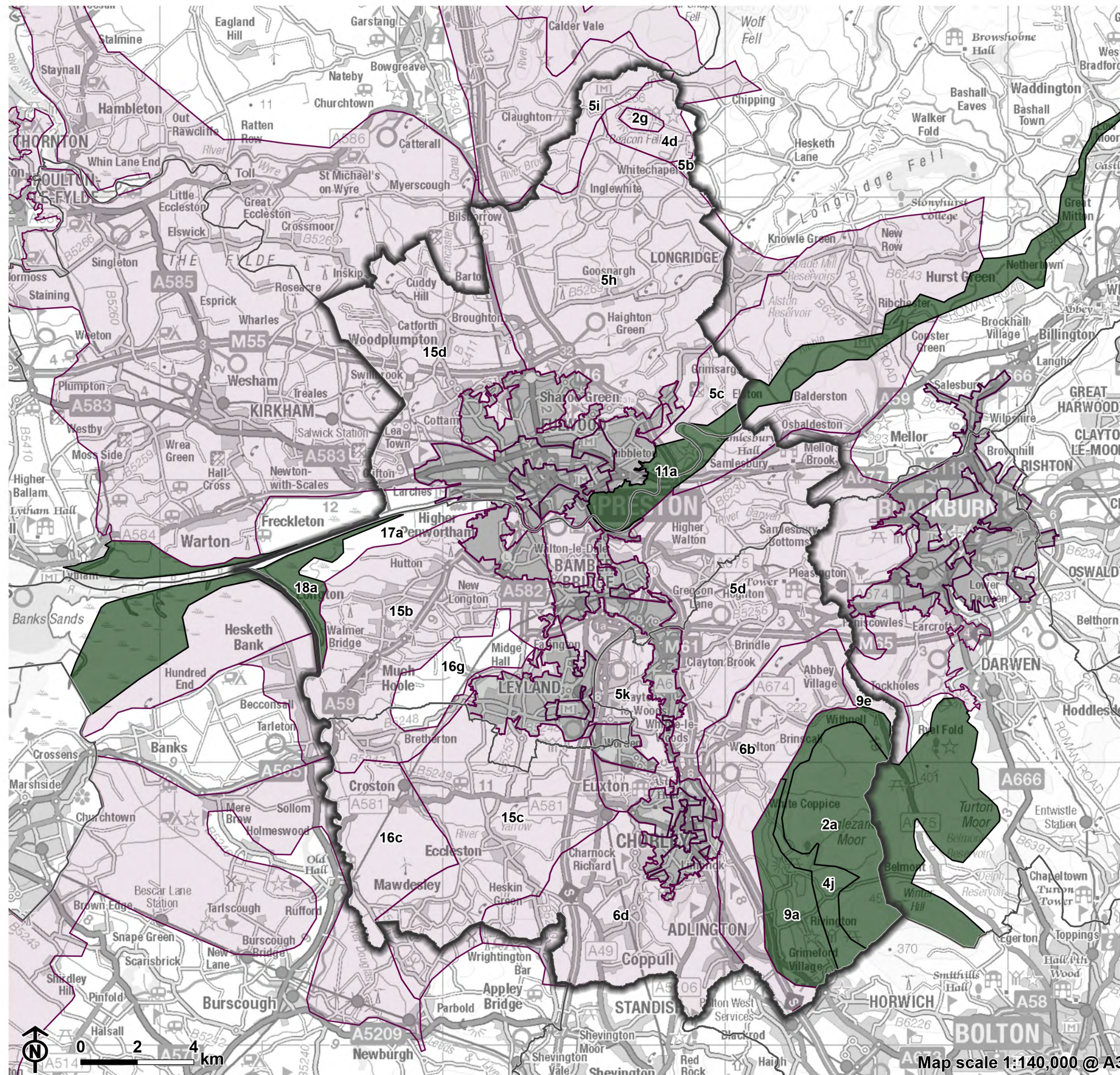
4.6 There are 16 settlements for which the landscape is considered to make a particularly important contribution to character. These are almost exclusively small villages to which the surrounding landscape setting plays an important role in defining a rural character. A high proportion of these are located to the east of the Central Lancashire Area, in close proximity to and having a strong visual relationship with the upland areas of the West Pennine Moors and West Pennine Fringes (such as Abbey Village, Brinscall/Withnell and Knowley/Little Knowley).

Table 4.3: Areas of separation assessment findings

Settlement gap	Gap strength
Preston and Broughton	Moderate
Broughton and Barton	Moderate
Barton and Bilsborrow (Wyre Forest)	Moderate
Preston and Goosnargh/Whittingham	Robust
Preston and Grimsargh	Fragile
Preston and Lea Town	Moderate
Lea Town and Clifton (Fylde)	Moderate
Preston and Woodplumpton	Moderate
Woodplumpton and Broughton	Robust
Broughton and Goosnargh	Moderate
Goosnargh/Whittingham and Longridge (Ribble Valley)	Robust
Grimsargh and Longridge (Ribble Valley)	Moderate
Within Preston, between the suburbs of Ingol/Tanterton and Greyfriars/Cadley	Moderate
Within Preston, between the suburbs of Sharoe Green and Fulwood Row.	Moderate

4.7 The majority of the settlement gaps were found to be moderate in strength. Only one settlement gap – that between Preston and Grimsargh – was found to be fragile, and two gaps – between Woodplumpton and Broughton and between Goosnargh/Whittingham and Longridge – were found to be robust.

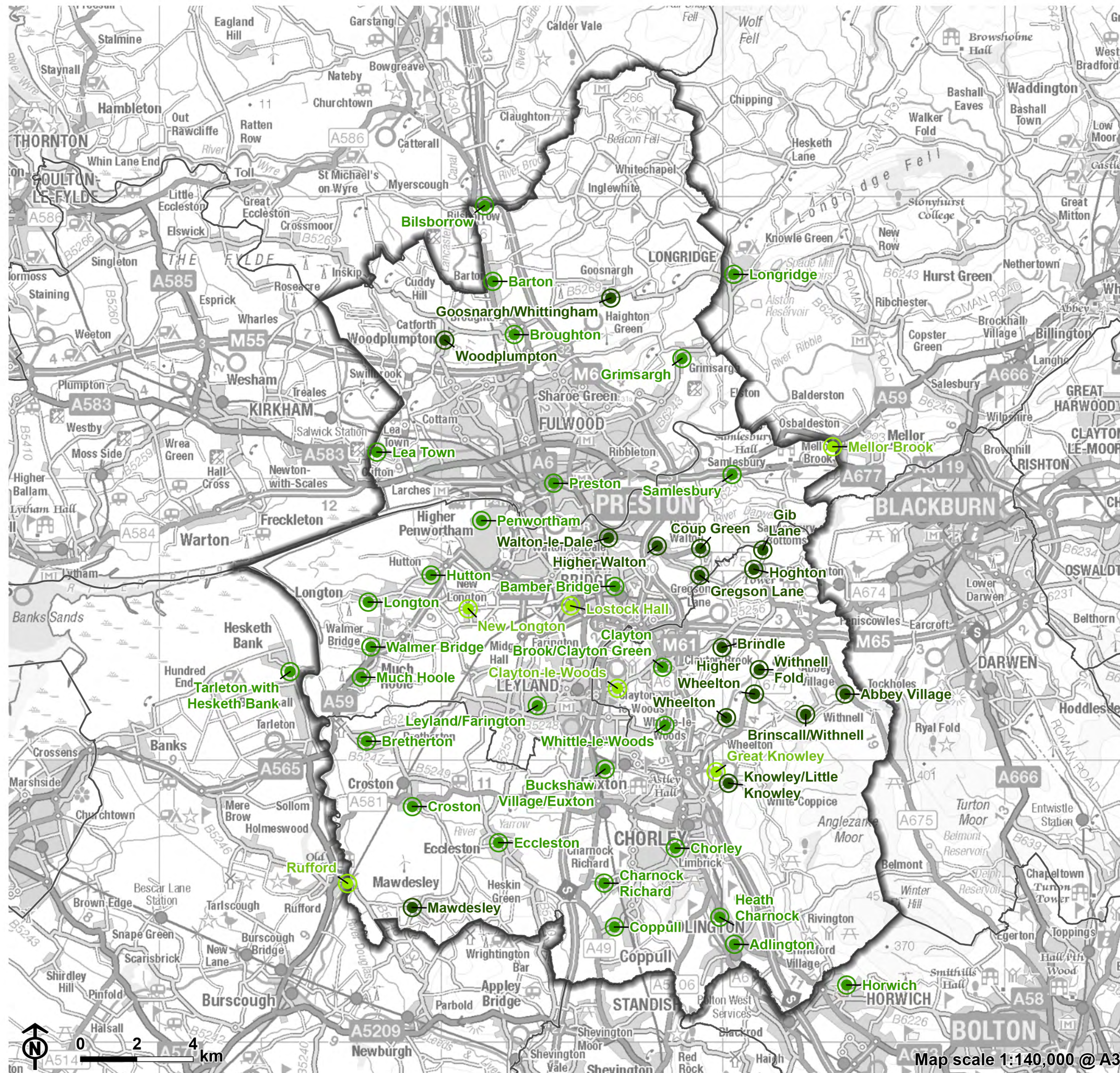
Figure 4.1: Landscape value assessment findings



- Central Lancashire boundary
- Local Authority boundary
- Landscape Character Area**
- Urban area
- Above ordinary Landscape Character Area
- Neighbouring Landscape Character Area
- 02a West Pennine Moors
- 02g Beacon Fell
- 04d Bowland Gritstone Fringes
- 04j West Pennine Fringes
- 05c Lower Ribble
- 05d Samlesbury-Withnell Fold
- 05h Goosnargh-Whittingham
- 05i West Bowland Fringes
- 05k Cuerden - Euxton
- 06b West Pennine Foothills
- 06d Adlington - Coppull
- 09a Rivington
- 09e Roddlesworth
- 11a Lower Ribble Valley
- 15b Longton - Bretherton
- 15c Croston - Mawdesley
- 15d The Fylde
- 16c Martin Mere & South West Mosses
- 18a Ribble Marshes

Map scale 1:140,000 @ A3

Figure 4.2: Settlement setting assessment



- Central Lancashire boundary
- Local Authority boundary

Settlement assessment

- Particularly important contribution
- Reasonably important contribution
- Limited contribution

Chapter 5

Next Steps

5.1 The study will be used by the Central Lancashire authorities alongside other pieces of evidence to shape open countryside policies for the forthcoming combined Local Plan. Further detailed landscape assessment work may be required to inform this process.

References

- 1 Central Lancashire Open Land Designations: Strategic Assessment of Landscape Value
- 2 Section 110 of the Localism Act (2011)

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