



SEFTON COUNCIL

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT SITES WITHIN GREEN BELT



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GLOSSARY

HORSICULTURE – REPRESENTS A LANDSCAPE WHERE HORSES ARE KEPT, TYPIFIED BY POST AND WIRE, POST AND RAIL AND ELECTRIC BOUNDARY FENCING, STABLES AND SHELTERS.

LAND PARCELS – AREAS OF LAND IDENTIFIED BY THE GREEN BELT REVIEW AND ALSO SUGGESTED BY LANDOWNERS/DEVELOPERS AS POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES.

LANDSCAPE – AN AREA, AS PERCEIVED BY PEOPLE, THE CHARACTER OF WHICH IS THE RESULT OF THE ACTION AND INTERACTION OF NATURAL AND/OR HUMAN FACTORS.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER – A DISTINCT, RECOGNISABLE AND CONSISTENT PATTERN OF ELEMENTS IN THE LANDSCAPE THAT MAKES ONE LANDSCAPE DIFFERENT FROM ANOTHER.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTIC – ELEMENTS, OR COMBINATIONS OF ELEMENTS, WHICH MAKE A LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DISTINCTIVE.

LCA – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA. THESE ARE SINGLE UNIQUE AREAS WHICH ARE THE DISCRETE GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF A PARTICULAR LANDSCAPE TYPE.

LCT – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE. THESE ARE DISTINCT TYPES OF LANDSCAPE THAT ARE RELATIVELY HOMOGENOUS IN CHARACTER. THEY ARE GENERIC IN NATURE IN THAT THEY MAY OCCUR IN DIFFERENT AREAS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, BUT WHEREVER THEY OCCUR, THEY SHARE BROADLY SIMILAR COMBINATIONS OF GEOLOGY, TOPOGRPAHY, DRAINAGE PATTERNS, VEGETATION AND HISTORICAL LAND USE AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN AS WELL AS PERCEPTUAL AND AESTHETIC ATTRIBUTES.

LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS – DEFINED ASPECTS OF THE LANDSCAPE RESOURCE THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE AFFECTED BY A PROPOSAL.

VISUAL RECEPTORS – INDIVIDUALS AND/OR DEFINED GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO SEE OR OTHERWISE BE AFFECTED BY PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2014 Ryder Landscape Consultants was commissioned by Sefton Council [the Council] to undertake a Landscape Assessment of a number of potential development sites as part of its Local Plan. The Council required an assessment of the impacts of potential new development in the Green Belt on the landscape character, historic landscape character and visual amenity (i.e. views).
- 1.2 The Council is currently preparing its Local Plan and most recently consulted on its 'Preferred Option' Local Plan in 2013. It is expected that the Local Plan will be published late 2014 for an eight week period for comment and submitted for examination in public in 2015. If the Council is to provide for the full objectively assessed needs for housing and employment for the Borough, the evidence suggest that land will need to be released from the Green Belt. The choice of which sites in the Green Belt are most suitable and sustainable for new development will be based on an assessment that considers a whole range of social, economic and environmental issues. These issues include Landscape Character and Visual Amenity.
- 1.3 This assessment provides valuable information which will help to inform the choice of potential sites for release from the Green Belt in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.4 The document consists of this covering report describing the purpose of the assessment, the methodology used, and an overview summary. Included in Section 5 are individual summary sheets for each of the 51 sites assessed, along with a photosheet depicting the character and context of each of the sites. The field sheets used as an aid to assessment while visiting sites are contained at Appendix B.

BACKGROUND AND LOCAL CONTEXT

- 1.5 Sefton is a coastal borough with a population of approximately 274,000 (2011 census). Sefton adjoins the City of Liverpool to the south, the borough of Knowsley to the south-east and the largely rural West Lancashire to the east.
- 1.6 Despite being a metropolitan borough with a large urban population, approximately half of Sefton's area is rural and designated as Green Belt. This rural area comprises a variety of landscape types, some of which are protected for their habitat value. The Green Belt contains a small number of villages for which the openness of the countryside provides a setting and also prevents some of the borough's larger towns merging.

1.7 The Preferred Option draft of the Local Plan (2014) identified land for approximately 5,700 new homes in the Green Belt across 30 sites, ranging from a few under 1ha in size to one potential site with an area over 60ha. A further three sites were identified in the Green Belt for employment use and one site was identified for an 'Area of Search' for wind power.

1.8 During the 2013 Preferred Option consultation a number of additional sites were put forward by landowners or developers, including some which were extensions to those identified in the original draft Local Plan. These 'additional sites' were consulted on, through a public consultation, separately from June to August 2014.

PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

1.9 The key purpose of the assessment is to undertake a landscape assessment of the potential development sites being considered by the Council. This includes:

- an assessment of the landscape character and visual quality of each site and its wider setting; and
- identifies key visual receptors, significant views and viewpoints and sensitivity of receptors to change, considering quality, distinctiveness and role.

1.10 The assessment uses this information to determine how constrained each site is in terms of landscape. In line with the wider assessment of potential sites in the Green Belt, the following five point system is used to indicate how constrained the site is in landscape terms:

- No constraint
- Minor constraint
- Moderate constraint
- Significant constraint
- Severe constraint [i.e. one that cannot be overcome]

1.11 More information on this five point system to classify sites on how constrained they are is provided in the Methodology [section 2].

1.12 Additionally the assessment is required to provide key recommendations on how new development, if it were to go ahead, would be best designed to mitigate losses or improve the current landscape quality. This includes;

- Consider and make recommendations on how any potential harmful impacts arising from development could be reduced and identify opportunities for mitigation including the retention of important existing features/ landscape elements;
- Identify broad principles for the location and design of new development to minimise or mitigate effects on landscape character, and views and to maximise benefits through sensitive development; and

- Recommend design principles for boundary treatments for any new 'urban fringe/edge'.

IMPORTANCE OF LANDSCAPE

1.13 Landscape is more than just 'the view'. It can be the ever-changing backdrop to our daily lives, as much as the places we seek out for leisure. It can mean a park, a piece of wasteland, a beach, a mountain, a forest. It is also about how people relate to these places and to nature – what they value about it, and how they respond to changes in the landscape.

1.14 Some landscapes, such as the coastal sand dunes of Sefton, consist entirely of natural elements. These are typically referred to as 'natural landscapes'.

1.15 Other landscapes can be largely the result of human activity, such as arable farmland or urban areas. These can be referred to as 'cultural landscapes'.

1.16 More often though, our landscapes are a mix of natural and cultural elements, giving rise to the European Landscape Convention's definition of landscape:

'An area perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'

1.17 Landscapes should be managed, planned and, where appropriate, protected to deliver a full range of goods and services. A number of documents exist in order to provide the framework and information to manage, plan and where necessary protect our landscapes.

1.18 These include:

- The European Landscape Convention.
(<http://www.coe.int.com>)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)
- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97>)
- Natural England – National Character Areas.
(<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/>)
- Sefton Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Note - Landscape Character Assessment (2003).
(<http://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/204417/PERD-Landscape-Character-Assessment-of-Sefton.pdf>)

EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION (FLORENCE CONVENTION)

1.19 Landscape is defined in the European Landscape Convention (ELC) as *'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'*.

- 1.20 The ELC recognises that every landscape has a value and acknowledges that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday landscapes.
- 1.21 The convention goes on to reference 'Actions on the Landscape', where development may occur. Relevant sections of the ELC relating to planning and protection of landscapes include the following excerpts:
- 1.22 *'Landscape planning.... concerns forms of change that can anticipate new social needs by taking account of ongoing developments. It should also be consistent with sustainable development and allow for the ecological and economic processes that may occur in the medium to long terms.'*
- 1.23 *'The concept of protection includes the idea that landscape is subject to changes which, within certain limits, have to be accepted. Protective measures, should not be designed to stop time or to restore natural or human influence characteristics that no longer exist; however, they may guide changes in sites in order to pass on their specific, material and immaterial features to future generations. Landscape protection should find the ways and means of acting at an appropriate level, not only on the characteristics present at sites but also on external factors.'*

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.24 One of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.
- 1.25 Where appropriate, Landscape Character Assessments should be prepared to complement Natural England's National Character Area profiles. Landscape Character Assessment is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change and may be undertaken at a scale appropriate to local and neighbourhood plan making.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 1.26 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a standard system for identifying, describing, classifying and mapping the variety of landscape: it helps to explain what makes individual landscapes different from each other.
- 1.27 The assessment of landscape is an important aspect in the consideration of development locations throughout the countryside. There are a number of relevant documents that define landscape and its importance, including the following documents:

NATURAL ENGLAND - NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA PROFILES

1.28 National Character Areas (NCA's) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity.

1.29 As part of its responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention as well as its own statutory purpose, Natural England has produced the National Character Area (NCA) profiles to make environmental evidence and information easily accessible to a wide audience.

1.30 NCA profiles provide a broad range of information that can be used by individuals and communities to help achieve a more sustainable future.

1.31 Three National Character Areas are found within Sefton: the Sefton Coast; the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain and the Merseyside Conurbation. See Figure 1 below for their locations.



Figure 1. Map of the National Character areas that are found within Sefton.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OF SEFTON SPG (2003)

1.32 Landscape character assessment is an objective way of identifying the elements of a landscape which make up its particular character. Such an assessment helps to guide decisions about proposals which may affect that particular character. It is an aid to understanding what, how and why the landscape is shaped and how to ensure that change and development does not undermine whatever is characteristic or valued about a particular landscape and the ways to improve the local distinctiveness of a place or area.

IMPORTANT LANDSCAPE TYPES FOUND WITHIN SEFTON

1.33 Within Sefton, there are ten Character Types (as defined by the Sefton Landscape Character Assessment SPG, 2003). These Character Types are listed below and shown on Figure 2:

- Carr Farmlands
- Coastal Dunes
- Coastal Marshland
- Dune Backlands
- Enclosed Marsh
- Estate Farmlands
- Sandstone Hills
- Sandy Foreshore
- Settled Farmlands
- Urban

1.34 For detailed descriptions for each of the landscape types identified above, reference should be made to the Sefton Landscape Character Assessment SPG, 2003.

(<http://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/204417/PERD-Landscape-Character-Assessment-of-Sefton.pdf>)

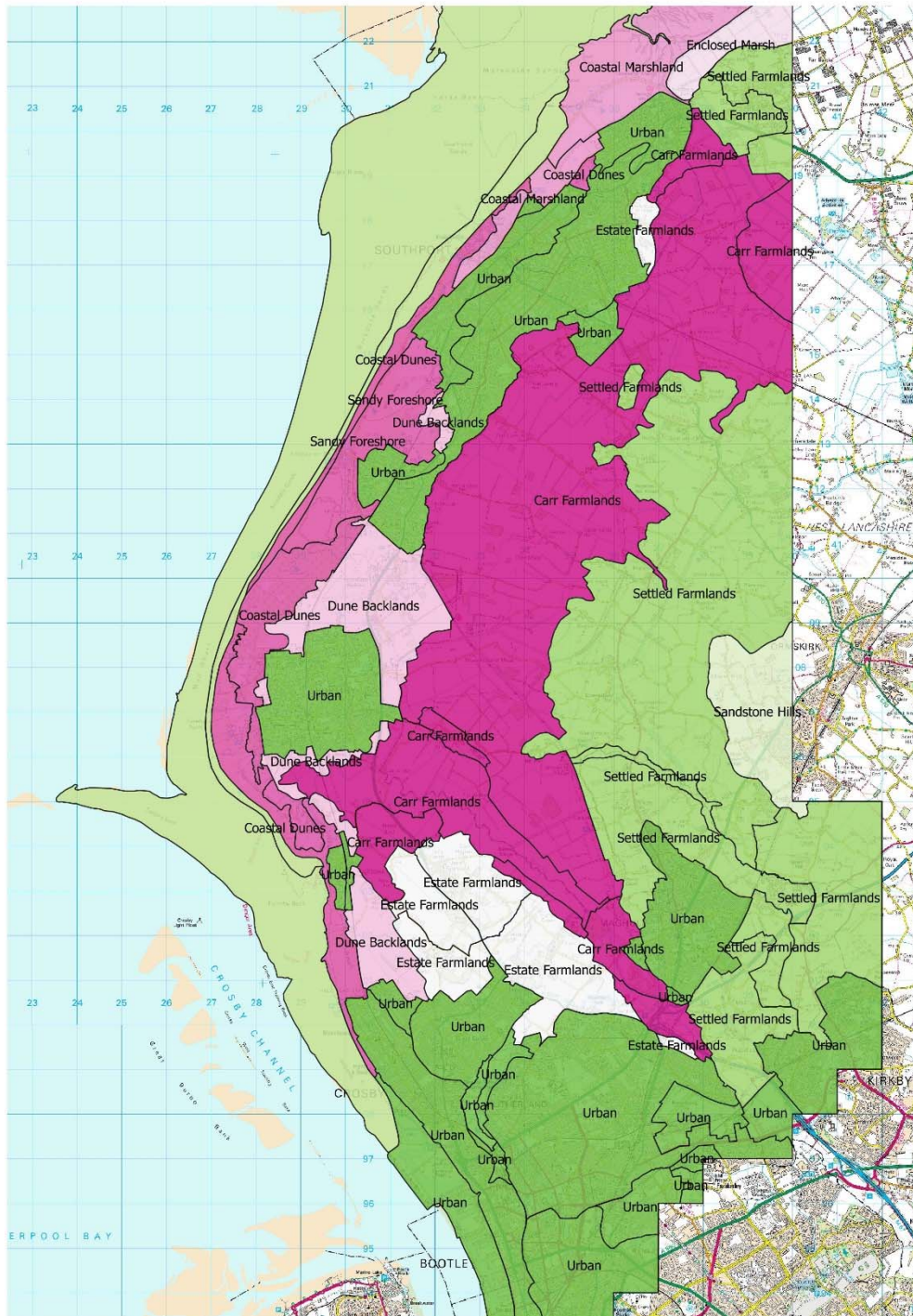


Figure 2. Map of the Character types that are found within Sefton (as defined by the Sefton Landscape Character Area SPG).

2 METHODOLOGY

STAGE 1 – IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL SITES

2.1 The Council has undertaken previous work to identify sites in the Green Belt for potential development. These have been consulted on at previous stages on the Local Plan development, notably during the 'Options' stage in 2011 and the 'Preferred Option' stage in 2013. In addition landowners and developers have suggested alternative 'additional sites' during the 2013 consultation.

2.2 The sites that are to be considered as part of this assessment are the sites in the Green Belt that were consulted on within the 2013 Preferred Option Local Plan [with the exception of a small number of sites that have been subsequently withdrawn/ruled out] and the additional sites put forward by landowners/developers.

2.3 In total, 51 sites are to be considered as part of this landscape assessment. A list and map of the sites is included at Appendix A of this report.

2.4 In addition, recommendations on two sites in the urban area that border the open countryside have been provided.

STAGE 2 – BASELINE ASSESSMENT

2.5 Reference has been made throughout the assessment process to existing documents and assessments, including the following key documents;

- National landscape character assessments;
- Sefton Local Landscape Character Assessment SPG;
- Conservation Area Statements;
- Merseyside Historic Landscape Character Assessment;
- Mersey Forest Plan;
- Local Plan Preferred Option; and
- Submitted proposals, masterplans and indicative layouts from developers/landowners proposing Green Belt sites for development.

2.6 In addition this review has used the following resources to inform the assessment: aerial mapping, Ordnance Survey mapping, site visit photographs and site visit field survey sheets.

STAGE 3 – SITE ASSESSMENT

2.7 Site visits were undertaken during June and July 2014 by an experienced, chartered landscape architect to assess each of the sites listed in Appendix A.

2.8 Field assessment sheets were used to record data in a systematic way whilst attending the sites. An example of the field assessment sheet is contained in Appendix B.

2.9 Field sheets recorded the key qualities, elements, value and characteristics of the sites.

2.10 Photographs were taken to record the character and context of the sites. Photographs were taken according to best practice (Landscape Institute Guidance for photography, Advice Note 01/11).

STAGE 4 – REPORTING

2.11 Following site assessment, the preparation of the written assessment was carried out. An example of the assessment sheets is shown below, including a description of each of the sections within the sheet.

Site Name:	Site Ref:	SITE ANALYSIS
<p><u>Landscape Issues:</u> Physical Influences: <i>Provides information on topography, geology and hydrology</i> Land Cover: <i>Describes the land use and the vegetative or built elements</i> Influence of human activity: <i>Sets out the human influences on the landscape</i> Aesthetic and perceptual aspects: <i>Sets out key views or influence of surrounding aspects</i> Distinctive landscape character types: <i>Sets out the type of landscape that exists on the site</i> Overall character of the landscape: <i>Summary of the landscape character of the area in question</i></p>		
<p><u>Site Plan:</u> <i>A plan indicating the location of the site</i></p>		
<p><u>Landscape Character Appraisal:</u> <i>A review of the key elements that contribute to the landscape character of the site and the surrounding context. This can include a description of the built elements, vegetation types, boundary types, openness, land use etc.</i></p>		
<p><u>Visual Issues Appraisal:</u> <i>A description of the views available from the site, and also available looking into the site.</i></p>		
<p><u>Key Visual Receptors:</u> <i>A list of the key people who benefit from views to and within the site, such as local residents, road users, footpath users and so on.</i></p>		

Site Name:	Site Ref:	
<p>Landscape Principles Plan:</p> <p><i>A plan setting out the principles for development, reflecting the subjects shown below.</i></p>		DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
<p><u>Principles for development:</u></p> <p><i>Recommendations for development including vegetation treatments, boundary treatments, layout recommendations and other pertinent issues.</i></p>		
<p><u>Boundary Treatment and Site Integration:</u></p> <p><i>Recommendations for appropriate boundary treatments to help integrate the site and any proposals into the wider landscape character. Suggestions will generally refer to the surrounding landscape character to help provide appropriate context and integrate potential proposals in a sensitive way into the surroundings.</i></p>		
<p><u>Further references:</u></p> <p><i>Reference to relevant documents including the National Character Areas, Local Landscape Character Areas, Mersey Forest Plan and Conservation Area Appraisals.</i></p>	<p><u>Landscape Constraint Classification:</u></p> <p><i>One of the 5 levels of constraint used within the Green Belt assessment process will be applied here, with a brief summary of justification.</i></p>	

2.12 Taking into account the design principles and proposed mitigation required for the potential sites, the assessment of the level of constraint for each site was made using the following scale.

Table 1: Levels of assessment and what they mean:

Assessment	Description
No Constraint on development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No constraint
Minor Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minor constraint that can be satisfactorily addressed without mitigation, or with limited mitigation. A constraint that only affects a small part of the site and can be addressed without significantly reducing the number of dwellings or area for development.
Moderate Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A constraint that requires more extensive / costly mitigation to satisfactorily address, but that can be overcome. A constraint that affects a larger proportion of the site – requiring mitigation that would reduce the number of houses or area of development that can be built, albeit it would not prevent development from taking place.
Significant Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant constraint that requires very substantial / very costly mitigation measures to overcome. Alternatively, a constraint where it is not clear that it is capable of being satisfactorily addressed. A constraint that would very significantly reduce the proportion of the site that can be developed (e.g. less than half can be developed).
Severe Constraint that cannot be overcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constraint that cannot be overcome. Site cannot be allocated for development.

2.13 The levels of constraint identified by this assessment are contained within the lower end of the assessment spectrum (No Constraint to Moderate Constraint). This is due to the following:

- the nature of landscape character in Sefton [i.e. it does not contain any land designated /protected for landscape quality such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty];
- the majority of sites that are subject to severe environmental constraints have already been ruled out for development on environmental grounds; and
- new development has the potential to be designed to mitigate negative impacts on landscape character.

3 OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT

PRESENTATION OF ASSESSMENT

3.1 For each land parcel the following are included to illustrate the various elements of the assessment;

- Assessment Sheet, including site location plan, assessment of landscape character and visual qualities of the site, design principles, mitigation and an overall assessment of constraint; and
- Photosheets with supporting photographs taken during field site visits.

3.2 When viewing the plans indicating broad design principles and key views, reference should be made to the Legend contained in Section 4 of this report.

SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL SITE CONSTRAINT CLASSIFICATION

3.3 A summary of the constraint classification for all the assessed land parcels in terms of landscape is set out in Table 2 below;

Table 2. Summary of Site Landscape Constraint Classification Outcomes.

Site Reference	Site Name	Landscape Constraint Classification
SR4.02	Bankfield Lane, Southport	Moderate Constraint
SR4.03	Land at Moss Lane, Churchtown	Moderate Constraint
SR4.04	Land at Crowland Street, Southport	Moderate Constraint
SR4.06	Former Ainsdale High School	Minor Constraint
SR4.07	(Boundary Treatment)	
SR4.08	(Boundary Treatment)	
SR4.10	Land south of Moor Lane, Ainsdale	Minor Constraint
SR4.11	Land north of Brackenway, Formby	Minor Constraint
SR4.14	Land at Liverpool Road, Formby	Minor Constraint
SR4.15	Land at Altcar Lane, Formby	Minor Constraint
SR4.16	Land at Andrews Close, Formby	Minor Constraint
SR4.17	Land at Elmcroft Lane, Hightown	Minor Constraint
SR4.18	Land at Sandy Lane, Hightown	Minor Constraint

Site Reference	Site Name	Landscape Constraint Classification
SR4.19	Land at Hall Road, Crosby	Minor Constraint
SR4.20	Land at Southport Old Road, Thornton	Moderate Constraint
SR4.21	Land west of Holgate, Thornton	Moderate Constraint
SR4.22	Land east of Holgate, Thornton	Moderate Constraint
SR4.23	Land at Lydiate Lane, Thornton	Moderate Constraint
SR4.24	Tanhouse Farm, Thornton	Moderate Constraint
SR4.25	Land south of Runnell's Lane, Thornton	Moderate Constraint
SR4.26	Former Prison Site, Maghull	Minor Constraint
SR4.27	Land east of Maghull	Moderate Constraint
SR4.28	Land east of Waddicar Lane, Melling	Minor Constraint
SR4.29	Waddicar Farm, Melling	Minor Constraint
SR4.30	Land at Wango Lane, Aintree	Moderate Constraint
SR4.44	Land at Woodvale Sidings, Ainsdale	Minor Constraint
SR4.46	Powerhouse Site Phase 2, Formby	Minor Constraint
SR4.47	Land north of Lambshear Lane, Lydiate	Moderate Constraint
SR4.48	Land north of Kenyon's Lane, Lydiate	Minor Constraint
SR4.49	Land south of Melling Lane, Maghull	Minor Constraint
SR5.2d	Land to the north of Formby Industrial Estate	Moderate Constraint
S112e	Housing Allocation Turnbridge Lane, Maghull	Minor Constraint
CC3	Land to the north of Ince Blundell village	Moderate Constraint
AS01	Bankfield Lane, Southport	Moderate Constraint
AS02	Land west of Lynton Drive, Birkdale	Minor Constraint
AS06	Land at Hawksworth Drive, Formby	Minor Constraint
AS08	Land south of Altcar Road, Formby	Moderate Constraint
AS10	Land at Edge Lane, Thornton	Moderate Constraint

Site Reference	Site Name	Landscape Constraint Classification
AS12	Land west of Maghull	Moderate Constraint
AS13	Cheshire Lines Health Club, Sefton Lane, Maghull	Minor Constraint
AS14	Land at Highway Farm, Lydiate	Moderate Constraint
AS15	Land south of the Crescent, Maghull	Minor Constraint
AS17	Land at Switch Island north of the M57 between Aintree, Maghull	Moderate Constraint
AS18	Land north of Oriel Drive, Aintree	Minor Constraint
AS19	Land west of Bulls Bridge Lane, Aintree	Moderate Constraint
AS20	Land at Spencer's Lane, Melling	Moderate Constraint
AS21	Land east of Bulls Bridge Lane, Aintree	Moderate Constraint
AS22	Mill Farm, east Bull Bridge Lane and north of Taunton Drive	Moderate Constraint
AS23	Land east of Aintree Racecourse (south of Wango Lane)	Moderate Constraint
AS24	Land adjacent to Ashworth Hospital	Minor Constraint
AS25	Land at the Stables, Chapel Lane, Netherton	Moderate Constraint
AS27	Land at Lydiate Lane, Thornton (extension to SR4.23)	Moderate Constraint
TS2N	Land at New Causeway, Formby	Moderate Constraint
TS3W	Land at Plex Moss Lane, Ainsdale	Minor Constraint
TS4	Land at Broad Lane, Formby	Minor Constraint
TS35	Land at Broad Lane, Formby	Minor Constraint

3.4 For ease of reference, these assessment sheets are included within this main body of this document at Section 4.

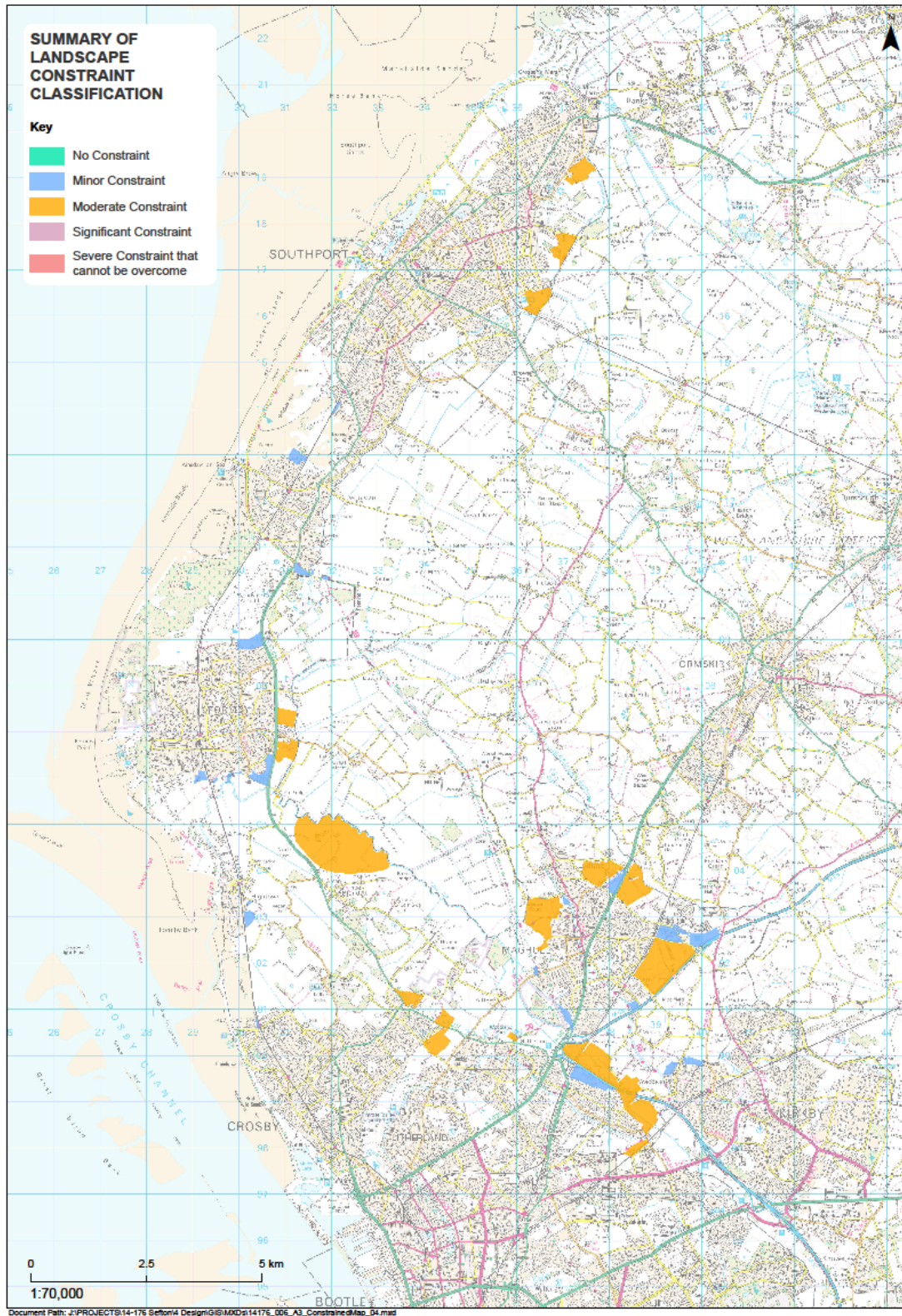


Figure 3. Map showing a summary of the constraint classifications identified for each of the sites considered within the assessment.

GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

3.5 General design principles have been included within the assessment sheets and are based on the information gathered throughout the assessment stage. The design principles look to provide guidance and recommendations for the type of mitigation treatment (including boundary treatments, inclusion of open space, tree planting and conservation or restoration of valued habitats) that should be considered for any given site.

ENHANCEMENT OF KEY VIEWS

3.6 Where key views are identified within the study, it should be ensured that an open foreground is retained within proposals to retain these views. Opportunities for public viewing points, public rights of way, cycleways and the like should be considered to take advantage of the existing views.

CONSERVATION AREAS

3.7 The proximity of Conservation Areas has been taken into account and key views identified within the Conservation Area Appraisals have been noted where applicable.

PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE

3.8 Provision of open space has been recommended where the existing character of a land parcel represents or contributes in a significant way to an open land character. In order to help retain a sense of open character, and tie in with the surrounding landscape, open space should not only be provided within proposed development but also located at the most critical part of the prospective site to maximise its landscape contribution .

VEGETATION TREATMENT

3.9 Where appropriate, tree planting has been proposed within and around the boundaries of the prospective developments in order to provide visual and physical linkages with the surrounding landscape character. Reinstatement and enhancement of hedgerow boundaries could become an important element of the vegetation treatment applied throughout the sites. Due to extensive loss of hedgerow boundaries through intensification of agriculture throughout Sefton, their importance has been increased due to their scarceness.

3.10 It should be clearly noted that the retention of hedgerows and trees does not immediately lead to acceptability of a scheme in landscape terms. Native hedgerows are traditional methods of retaining stock or protecting crops in fields rather than acting as corrals for houses and industrial units. The retention of existing positive vegetation features should be integrated in a thoughtful way into design proposals so they become a site asset and contribute to the quality of the local environment.

3.11 Other less obvious vegetation such as scrub areas and dune grasslands should be recognised for both their ecological value but also their contribution to landscape character.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.11 Layout recommendations (contained in the development principles on the site assessment sheets) have been provided where applicable and appropriate. The suggestions are based upon such aspects as the relationship with the existing patterns of development, as informed by the surrounding context and landscape character.