Lives and Landscapes Assessment for Rossendale Borough Council

Volume 1: Appraisal Report

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Rev F
December 2015

Contents

1 Introduction

Penny Bennett Landscape Architects with Annette Birch Landscape Manager were commissioned by Rossendale Borough Council in September 2014 to carry out landscape appraisals of all sites which have potential landscape sensitivity within the Borough. These appraisals will be incorporated within the Council's Site Allocations and Development Management Plan Document, which is expected to be adopted in January 2017.

The appraisals include sites identified by both the Council and potential developers. The full list of sites considered in this appraisal is shown in the table in figure 1. The individual site assessments are incorporated in Volume 2.

This landscape assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Visual and Landscape Assessment, 3rd Edition, produced by the Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment.

Figure 1

Sites included in the Assessment:
Sites in Whitworth
Long Acre
Sites in Bacup and Stacksteads
Douglas Avenue and Fieldfare Way
East of Empire Theatre
Greens Farm
Land above Bacup Football Club
Land off Mersey Street
Land west of Goldcrest Avenue
Land at Moss Farm

Sheephouses
Sowclough
Tong Lane
Sites in Love Clough Goodshaw and Crawshawbooth
Constable Lee
Goodshaw Fold Road
West of Swinshaw Hall
Land south of Loveclough sports pitch
Sites in Rawtenstall
Above Hall Carr
Beyond New Hall Hey
Haslam Farm
Johnny Barn
Lomas Lane
Marl Pits
Oakenclough
Sites in Edenfield, Irwell Vale and Ewood Bridge
Blackburn Road
Burnley Road
Eden Mill
Ewood Bridge
Irwell Vale
Land at Alderwood and Packhorse Farm
Land East of Motorway
Pinfold
Water Lane
Sites in Haslingden
Clod Lane
Clod Lane Bottom
Greens Lane
Kirkhill and Moorland
The Courtyard
E

Sites in Rising Bridge and Acre
Baxenden Chemical Works
Hud Hey
Land north of Hud Hey
Winfield Site

2 Landscape Context

Rossendale lies in the South Pennines, a large scale sweeping landscape of high flat topped hills cut into by narrow valleys with wooded sides, and dense settlements along the valley floor, it is the gateway to Pennine Lancashire from the Manchester conurbation to the south. While the South Pennines are the only upland landscape in England not to be protected by a statutory designation, there is non-statutory recognition of their landscape value as the South Pennines Heritage Area by SCOSPA (Standing Conference of South Pennine Authorities). Natural England's South Pennine National Character Area profile provides a broad brush description of the area.
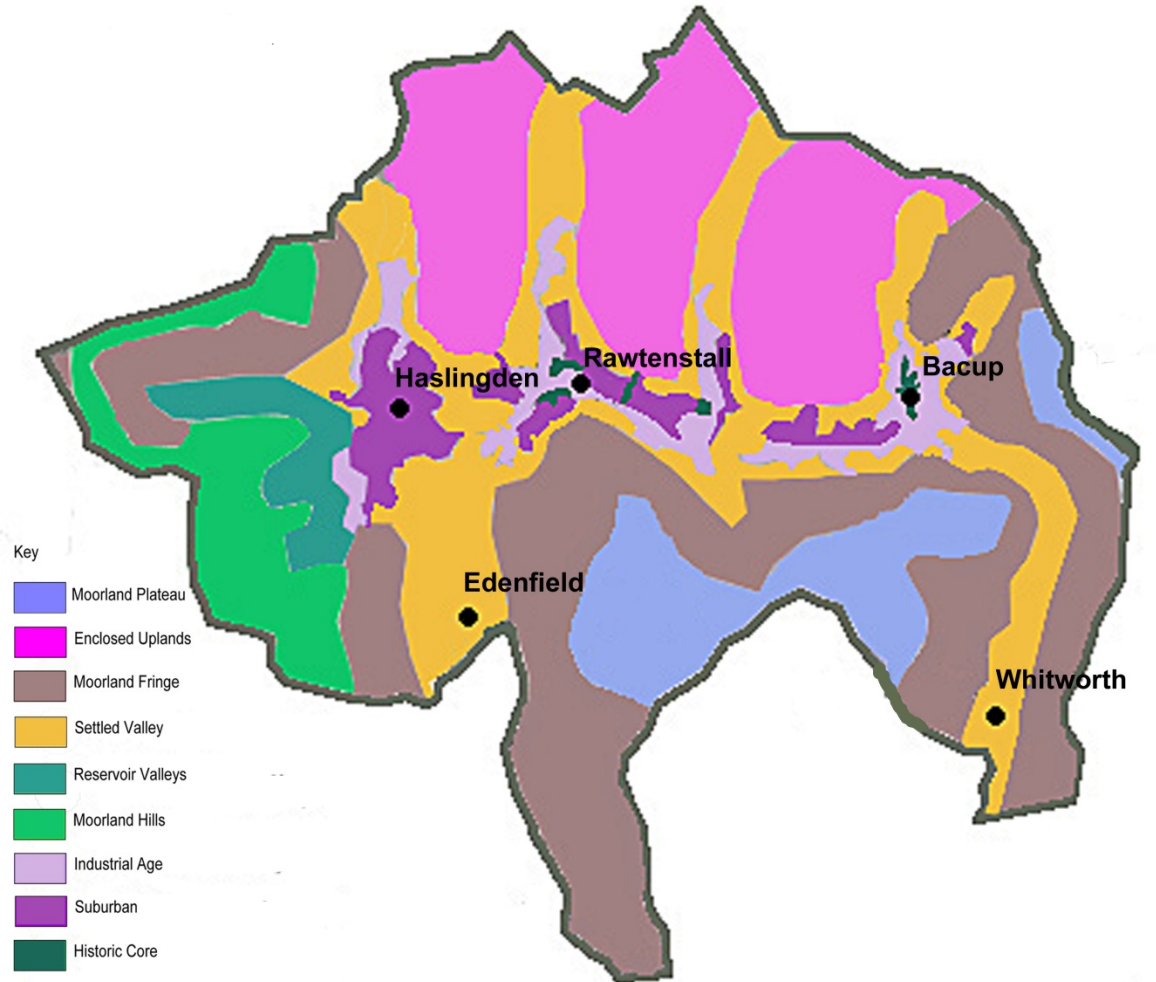
More detailed analysis of the landscape character is given in Lancashire County Council's Lancashire Landscape Strategy. This considers the different character types within the overall profile, and maps and describes them. An overall map of the character areas of Lancashire is included in Appendix 2.

The Landscape Character Types of Rossendale are shown in figure 2.

The landscape character of Rossendale itself is defined by a series of interlocking valleys, with ribbon development extending along the main valley between Rawtenstall and Bacup, over the watershed into Whitworth, and up the northern tributaries. The southern part of the borough is perceived as more rural in character, with little development of the valley floor. Main routes follow the ribbon development up and down the valleys, which has implications for the protection of views from the road network into the wider countryside.

As can be seen from figure 2, the landscape character of Rossendale is complex and varied, the topography, geology and the legacy of the industrial revolution has resulted in a unique and valuable landscape.

Rossendale possesses one of the most complete historic environments in the Pennine Lancashire sub region, patterns of settlement reflecting the usefulness of different parts of the landscape to diverse groups over time. The signs of quarrying, mining, farming and industry are visible in layers on the valley sides. The result is a fascinating landscape of contrasts and variety, often of high scenic quality and great interest.

Key

Moorland Plateau

Enclosed Uplands

Moorland Fringe

Settled Valley

Reservoir Valleys

Moorland Hills

Industrial Age

Suburban

Historic Core

Haslingden

Rawtenstall

Bacup

Edenfield

Whitworth

Landscape Character Types within Rossendale

Source: Lancashire Landscape Strategy: LCC

Figure 2

This landscape also brings challenges for development. The rapid industrialisation of the upper valleys, such as Bacup and Stacksteads during the industrial revolution led to dense development of the valley floor and sides, yet within a matter of less than 100 m sometimes, the landscape changes completely to open moorland fringe or enclosed upland, which today is a wonderful resource for outdoor recreation. Similarly the much more rural area in the south of the Borough around Edenfield is under pressure for development because of its easy access to the motorway network via the A56/M66.

The topography of Rossendale means that the landscape character changes very significantly perhaps in three, four or even five different tiers from the valley bottom to the hill tops, and this may be in quite narrow bands, see figure 3. This has an important impact on whether different areas can be developed or not, as what may be appropriate at one point on the valley side will be quite inappropriate higher up.

The landscape character areas are specific to Lancashire and the South Pennines, and these are subdivided into different landscape types, which are specific to Rossendale. Those referred to in this report are described more fully in the appendices.

As the level of manufacturing in the valleys has dwindled, new opportunities have been explored to attract people into Rossendale and tourism has played an important role. Key developments and enterprises such as the Adrenalin Gateway in Lee Quarry for mountain bikers and the East Lancashire Railway bring new visitors into the area. The promotion of long distance footpaths, cycleways and bridleways, is also important with the Pennine Bridle Way, Route 66, Rossendale Way and Irwell Sculpture Trail / Irwell Valley Way being the most important examples.

Steam engine on the East Lancashire Railway at Irwell Vale

The two long distance footpaths and the railway are particularly relevant to this report as many of the sites under consideration are visible from these routes and the quality of the landscape is an important part of the experience to the walker or passenger.

This assessment has been prepared from a landscape character perspective, to identify areas which are suitable for development and suggest mitigation measures if required. It also identifies areas that are unsuitable for development on landscape grounds.

Moorland plateau - rough pasture and heather

Rough grazing land enclosed by stone walls

Wooded clough and reservoir

Improved pasture enclosed by stone walls

Woodland on lower slopes - Oak, Beech and Sycamore

Farms and weavers cottages located between upper and lower pasture areas and close to springlines

Mill owners houses set in their own grounds

Pre industrial settlement pattern on the valley side

Main road (19th / 20th century

Line of former railway

River Irwell

Coal seams

Opencast quarrying - some disused sites redeveloped for recreational use

Geological structure (simplified representation) - alternating layers of sandstone and softer shales produce a characteristic valley profile of stepped plateaus with springs emerging above the less permeable rocks

Main settlement pattern on valley floor - linear pattern of 19th century urban expansion around mill sites. Stone built mills, civic and religious buildings and terraced housing line main routes and arranged in rows on level ground and climbing the lower valley slopes.
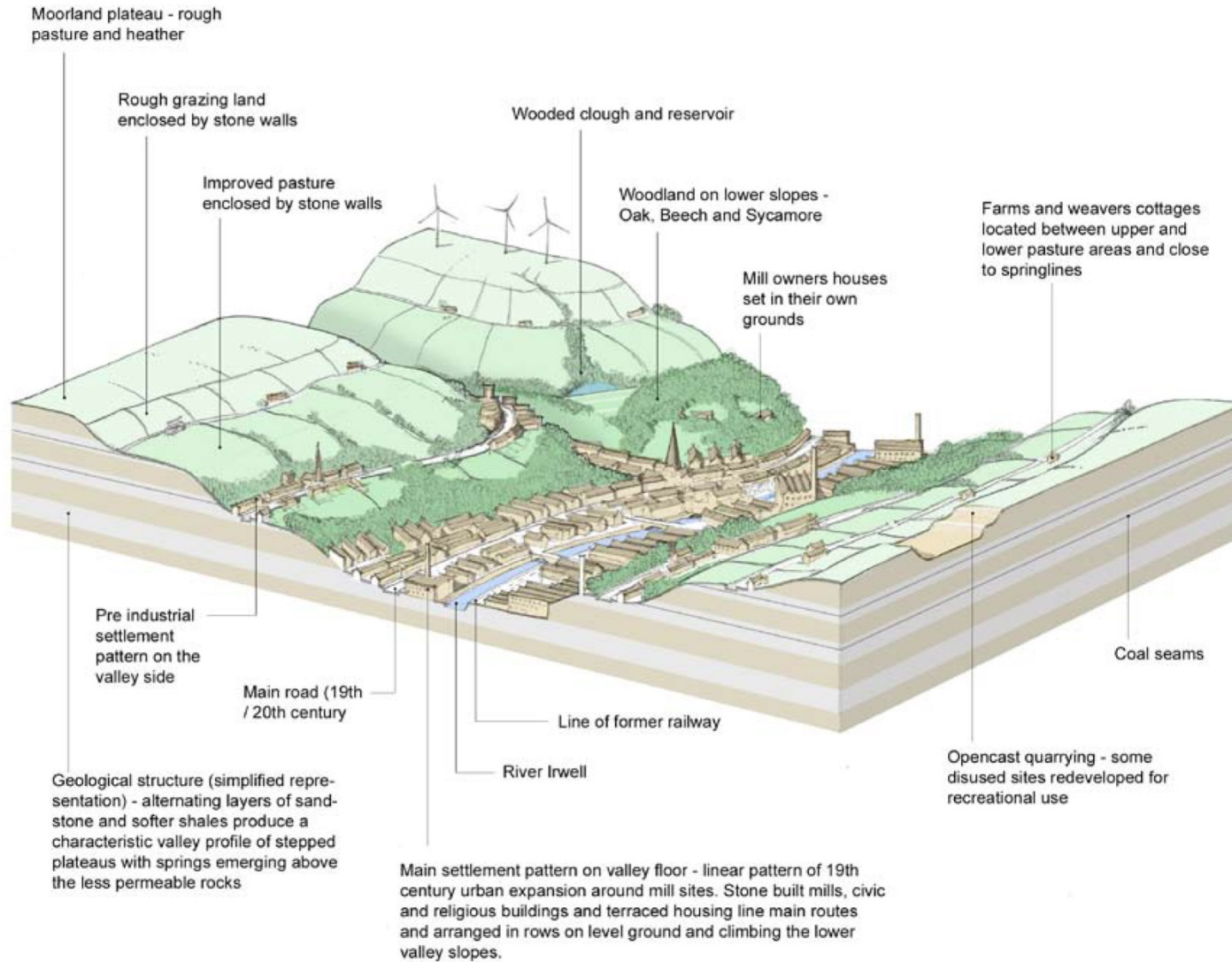
Figure 3 Typical Cross Section through Rossendale, from RBC Core Strategy

Typical view showing change of land use up valley sides

3 Landscape Character Types and Area Recommendations

3.1 Landscape Character Types in Rossendale

The primary Landscape Character Type (LCT) that is considered within this report is Settled Valleys. Other Landscape Character Types that have been considered as part of this report are Enclosed Uplands and Moorland Fringe. Reservoir Valleys is touched on briefly. Moorland Hills and Moorland Plateau are not considered because none of the sites being assessed are in these areas. The townscape types Suburban, Industrial Age and Historic Core are also considered.

The Enclosed Upland Landscape Character Type is only found within Rossendale, and originates from the historic settlement of these upland areas, and their exploitation for small scale mining and quarrying, as well as marginal agriculture. In contrast to the Moorland Fringe Areas, the Enclosed Upland type extends over the whole of the upland plateau which is almost entirely enclosed by a network of gritstone walls. While Moorland Fringe and Enclosed Upland share many characteristics, the Moorland Fringe in Rossendale (Character Area 4C Rossendale Moorland Fringe) is closely related to the Moorland Hills and Moorland Plateaus it surrounds. Moorland Fringe is a transitional landscape and in Rossendale occurs between the more densely populated Settled Valley and the wilder upland hills.

The Reservoir Valleys LCT in the west of the Borough covers the Haslingden Grane Area of Special Landscape, and includes Calf Hey, Ogden and Holden Wood Reservoir, and includes the hillsides to the west of Helmshore. The area is well served with public footpaths and popular with visitors.

The majority of the development sites that have been considered are located within Settled Valleys. This landscape type is scarcely evident

outside Rossendale in Lancashire, but does extend over the border into Yorkshire. The Settled Valleys character type epitomises Rossendale: narrow steep sided valleys with a ribbon of dense settlement along the valley bottom characterised by grit stone terraces and textile mills with distinctive chimneys.

3.2   Settled Valleys Landscape Type

Early on in this assessment it became clear that the single definition of Settled Valleys as 8a Irwell, while entirely appropriate for the northern part of the Borough and Whitworth, was not an accurate description of the landscape of the southern section of the Irwell Valley between Rawtenstall and Edenfield, which is much more rural in nature and importantly has little or no development in the valley bottom. It was decided to create a new Settled Valleys character area: 8b Irwell Valley south which more accurately describes this situation and a summary is given below:

- The valley opens out and the profile of the lower valley sides becomes less steep;

- The density of housing and industry becomes much less, with extensive areas of open pasture and woodland within the valley bottom;

- Some ribbon development continues along the main roads but it is not continuous;

- There are views across the valley which are predominantly rural in character with a lesser proportion of the view being made up of built development; in some places long views to the surrounding hills and moorland reinforce the South Pennine character;

- South of Rawtenstall, the Irwell Valley becomes a major transport corridor, with the East Lancashire Railway and the A56 dual carriageway making north south communications much easier;

- Farmland is more intensively used than in the 8a type;

- The characteristic textile mills are less conspicuous than in the 8a type.

View north along southern section of Irwell Valley, 8b Irwell Valley south showing rural nature of valley bottom

Landscape Character map of Rossendale showing the two Settled Valley Landscape Character Areas
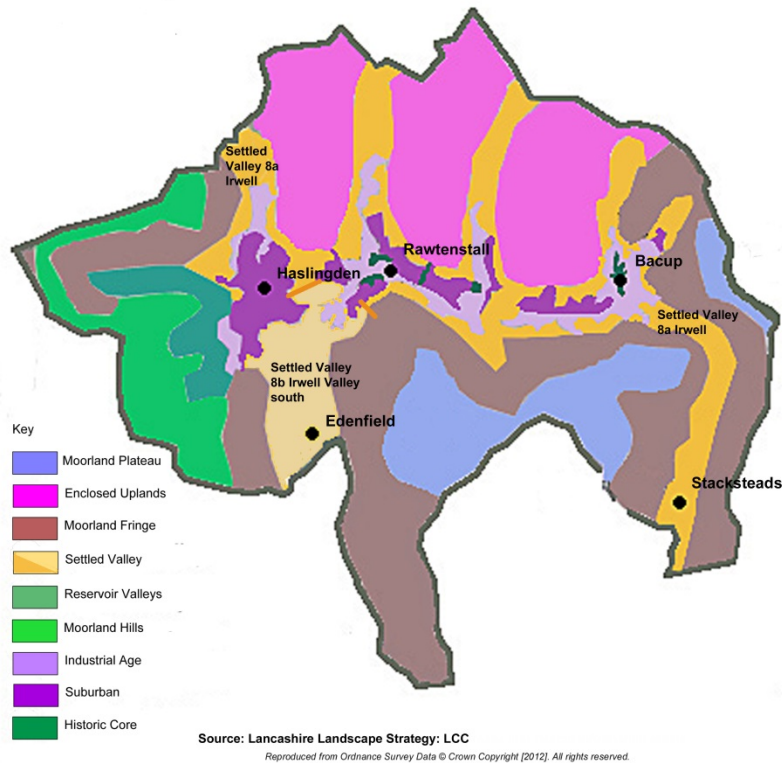

Figure 4

This description is based on field observations, the Settled Valleys type in a Landscape Strategy for Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment, and with reference also to Settled Valleys description in Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy Development in the South Pennines

(2010) Julie Martin Associates and the Pennine Settled Valley Pasture LCT by Bury MBC which describes the area south of Ramsbottom. Further information on this is given in the appendices. Figure 4 shows the extent of the two different Settled Valley character areas.

3.3 Sensitivity of Landscape to Development

Most development in Rossendale has taken place within the Settled Valleys LCT and the townscape types, Industrial Age, Suburban and Historic Core. Development outside these areas is generally inappropriate on landscape grounds, although many upland areas have already been degraded by mining, quarrying, power lines and wind turbines. More recently new housing has crept high up the hillsides beyond the Settled Valleys, LCT particularly around the east side of Bacup

The Enclosed Upland and Moorland Fringe Landscape Character Types are both open landscapes lying above 300 and 350 m respectively. At these heights, woodland is sparse, and often inappropriate, as long views across the uplands are a typical and compelling feature. Both Landscape Character Types are sensitive to development on landscape grounds because their elevation makes them highly conspicuous, from the valleys and from neighbouring hillsides which are crisscrossed with footpaths and long distance routes like the Rossendale Way. Mitigation can be challenging because of the nature of the topography and the impracticality of using trees for screening in many areas.

Much of the Reservoir Valleys LCT is lies within the Haslingden Grane Area of Special Landscape and its' popularity as a visitor attraction and high scenic quality make it very sensitive to development.

Settled Valleys LCT, extending from the valley bottom in many areas to elevations of 300 m or more, can be an appropriate location for development, though dense development on the valley floor is not appropriate in 8b Irwell Valley South because of the much more rural nature of the valley. In both 8a and 8b Landscape Character Areas, there is a gradual decrease in the density of built development up the valley sides, so in the higher zones abutting Moorland Fringe and Enclosed Upland only low density development is appropriate. In some particularly sensitive areas, e.g. adjacent to Conservation Areas or on areas of local importance for wildlife, development may not be appropriate, and these would be considered on a case by case basis.

Development is generally acceptable within the townscape character areas, Industrial Age, Suburban, though where Suburban areas abut Moorland Fringe or Enclosed Uplands this is more sensitive and new development needs to be considered carefully. The legacy of the industrial age means that there is a wealth of buildings of historic importance within the urban areas, and the pattern and style of new of development should reflect this. Development within the Historic Core requires particularly sensitive treatment as these areas frequently coincide with Conservation Areas and high concentrations of listed buildings.

View over the hillside above Whitworth from the Rossendale Way, showing graduation up the valley side from denser development to scattered farmsteads and open moorland

4 Methodology for the assessment of individual sites

4.1 Defining the Landscape

The European Landscape Convention 2000 clearly recognised that that the ordinary and everyday landscapes are as important to communities as those special and designated areas recognised in National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The convention defined the **landscape** as:

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

Rossendale's landscape comprising high flat topped hills, steep sided valleys and tight knit towns filling the valley floor, is an important asset to the community, offering scenery unique to the locality and to the wider South Pennine landscape. Rossendale Borough Council is keen to develop a clear vision for the landscape and ensure that the character is retained for future generations. By commissioning this study the Council are proactively considering the potential effects of development on the landscape in a thorough and considered way that will benefit both the landscape and the development within it.

4.2 Assessing the Effects of Development upon the Landscape

The approach adopted in this study follows recognised national guidance produced by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in particular 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) Third Edition 2013.

LVIA is a tool to identify the effects of change resulting from development and to assess the significance of those effects. It can be applied *formally* as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or *informally* as in this study, as a contribution to the 'appraisal' of development proposals and planning applications. This 'methodology' has been developed over several months specifically for the Rossendale sites and has been reviewed and modified as the final assessments for this study have been developed. The full technical description for the methodology is contained in Appendix 7. The following summarises the philosophy underpinning the assessment and the **FIVE** key STEPS in the process.

4.3 Assessment and Outcomes Proportional to the Scale and Nature of Development

LVIA guidance clearly states that assessment should be relevant to the scale and nature of development. This assessment considers 38 potential development sites across the borough, identified by RBC and/or developers. It considers the *sites suitability to accommodate development* and not the impact of a particular development proposal
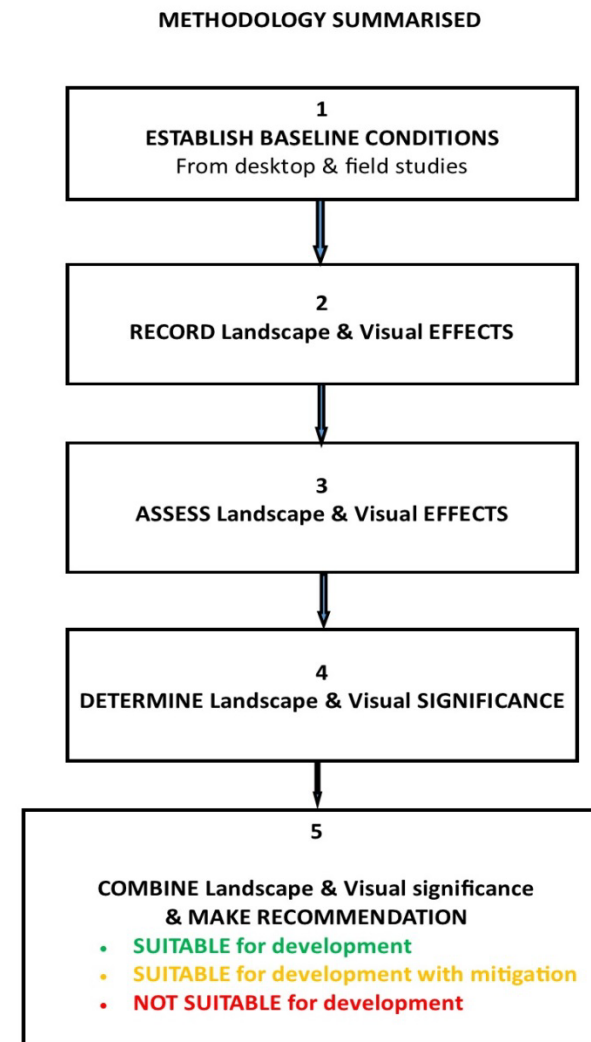
either during or post construction. The approach was consistent throughout, following the same basic steps and as such allows comparison to be drawn between sites. Where the terms '*significant*' and '*impact*' have been used, they are relevant to the Rossendale site assessments and do not imply any requirement for EIAs to be produced.

The results for each site are contained in Volume 2 and further details on each site are provided in Volume 4 appendix 9. It is recognised that these are appropriate to the level of detail required at this stage, but that each site assessment will require a more detailed narrative and report for suitability to be presented at Public Inquiry. The assessments include tables and matrices with supporting narrative, underpinned by the professional judgement of the two assessors.

4.4 The FIVE Steps to Assessment

These can be summarised as:

METHODOLOGY SUMMARISED

1
ESTABLISH BASELINE CONDITIONS
From desktop & field studies

2
RECORD Landscape & Visual EFFECTS

3
ASSESS Landscape & Visual EFFECTS

4
DETERMINE Landscape & Visual SIGNIFICANCE

5
**COMBINE Landscape & Visual significance
& MAKE RECOMMENDATION**
- **SUITABLE for development**
- **SUITABLE for development with mitigation**
- **NOT SUITABLE for development**

STEP 1: Identify the Baseline Conditions

The **FIRST** step in the assessment process is to establish the existing or 'baseline' conditions that will form the basis for identifying and describing the changes that will result from a development proposal.

For the *landscape baseline* the aim is to understand the landscape in the area that might be affected and identify the *landscape receptors* including: its character area and type; the individual features; its condition; the way the landscape is experienced and the value attached to it (both nationally or as perceived by the local community); the local green infrastructure and cultural heritage.

For the *visual baseline* the aim is to establish the area in which the development may be visible and identify the *visual receptors* ie the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the nature of views and visual amenity at those points.

STEP 2: Record the Effects

The **SECOND** step in the assessment distinguishes between:

- Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right
- Effects on specific views and general visual amenity experienced by people

Landscape – a professional judgement is made as to how the proposed development would interact with the landscape receptors, including:

- positive/beneficial & negative/adverse effects
- Indirect, short term and cumulative effects
- Is there potential for mitigation to reduce the effects, for example through discrete siting of the buildings in the landscape or through existing or new planting

Visual – the effect on the receptors is recorded including:

- Places where the receptors will be affected
- Nature of the views
- Importance of the visual amenity
- Value attached to the views by users

STEP 3: Assess the Effects

Recording the landscape and visual effects identifies *what* will be affected by development. Step **THREE** determines the *extent* of those effects. This depends mainly upon the *sensitivity* of the landscape and how susceptible it is to changes brought about by development. A consideration of the size or scale of the development is undertaken and recorded as the *magnitude* of the effects noted as large, medium, small or negligible. This is done in a systematic way for both landscape and visual effects for each site and recorded in the summary tables and matrices.

STEP 4: Determine the Significance

The **FOURTH** step in the assessment is to combine the results for sensitivity and magnitude of the effects of development on both the landscape and the visual amenity. This provides a concluding judgement for each on how significant the effects would be.

STEP 5: Make Recommendation

Finally, in step **FIVE** Professional judgement is used to combine the landscape and visual significance and the site (or parts of the site) recommended as:

- **Suitable for development**
- **Suitable for development with mitigation**
- **NOT suitable for development**

The complete assessment process is summarised in Figure 5 and described in greater detail in Volume 3 Appendix 7.
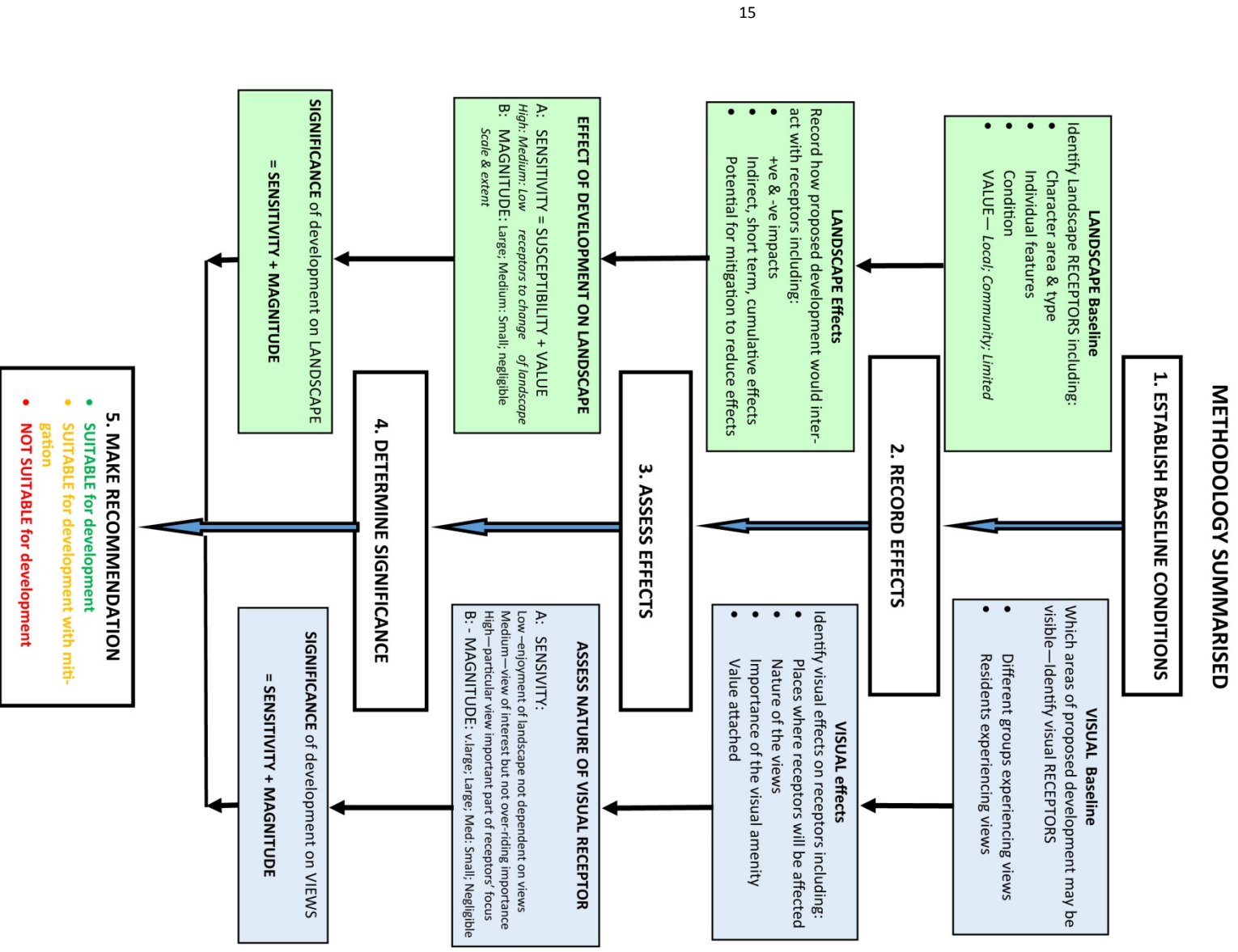
METHODOLOGY SUMMARISED

Figure 5

1. ESTABLISH BASELINE CONDITIONS

LANDSCAPE Baseline
Identify Landscape RECEPTORS including:
- Character area & type
- Individual features
- Condition
- VALUE— *Local; Community; Limited*

VISUAL Baseline
Which areas of proposed development may be visible—Identify visual RECEPTORS
- Different groups experiencing views
- Residents experiencing views

2. RECORD EFFECTS

LANDSCAPE Effects
Record how proposed development would interact with receptors including:
- +ve & -ve impacts
- Indirect, short term, cumulative effects
- Potential for mitigation to reduce effects

VISUAL effects
Identify visual effects on receptors including:
- Places where receptors will be affected
- Nature of the views
- Importance of the visual amenity
- Value attached

3. ASSESS EFFECTS

EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT ON LANDSCAPE

A: SENSITIVITY = SUSCEPTIBILITY + VALUE
High; Medium; Low receptors to change of landscape
B: MAGNITUDE: Large; Medium: Small; negligible
Scale & extent

ASSESS NATURE OF VISUAL RECEPTOR

A: SENSIVITY:
Low —enjoyment of landscape not dependent on views
Medium—view of interest but not over-riding importance
High—particular view important part of receptors' focus
B: - MAGNITUDE: v.large; Large; Med: Small; Negligible

4. DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE of development on LANDSCAPE

= SENSITIVITY + MAGNITUDE

SIGNIFICANCE of development on VIEWS

= SENSITIVITY + MAGNITUDE

5. MAKE RECOMMENDATION
- SUITABLE for development
- SUITABLE for development with mitigation
- NOT SUITABLE for development

5 Planning Context

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework

National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This states in Paragraph 109 that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by "protecting and enhancing valuable landscapes, geological, conservation interests and soils", "recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services", and "minimise the impact on biodiversity providing net gains in biodiversity where possible". It also states that new and existing development should be prevented from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from pollution, and that remediation of de-graded, derelict, despoiled contaminated or unstable land should be undertaken where appropriate.

Paragraphs 115 to 118 specifically consider the importance of biodiversity and geodiversity. Paragraph 117 states that policies should "plan for biodiversity at a landscape scale across local authority boundaries" and "identify and map components of the local ecological networks including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them", reinforcing the importance of retaining the interconnectedness of wildlife sites. It also states that policies should "promote preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations linked to national and local targets".

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that "Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character, and for areas where there are major expansion options assessments of landscape sensitivity."

Other guidance on good design is set out in Paragraph 58 of the NPPF stating that "Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments: respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation", "establish a strong sense of place" and "are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."

5.2 National Planning Practice Guidance

Further guidance is offered in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which recommends that "As a core planning principle, plan-makers and decision takers should always seek to secure high quality design;" and that "Achieving good design is about creating places, buildings, or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well, and will adapt to the needs of future generations. Good design responds in a practical and creative way to both the function and identity of a place. It puts land, water, drainage, energy, community, economic, infrastructure and other such resources to the best possible use – over the long as well as the short term". The NPPG also advocates the use of Landscape Character Assessments as a planning tool "to help understand the

character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place."

5.3 Local Planning Policy

Local policy guidance is set out in the Adopted Core Strategy, November 2011.

Area Visions and Policies which aim to address local issues and problems and maximising local strengths and opportunities, for each of the communities in the Borough have been considered. The Area Visions and Policies set out the principles for new development within specific areas.

Topic Planning Policies are the second strand of policies in the Core Strategy, these "cover the different types of development that will occur in Rossendale over the next 15 years and set out the Council's approach to managing new development at the same time as protecting and enhancing our natural and man-made assets." Topic Planning Policies are to be read in conjunction with the Area Visions and Policies, and are complementary to them.

The most relevant policies for this report are:

- Policy 17: Rossendale's Green Infrastructure
- Policy 18: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Landscape Conservation states that:

"The Council will seek to avoid any harmful impacts of development on all aspects of Rossendale's natural environment–including its biodiversity,

geo-diversity and landscape assets, priority habitats and species and statutory and locally designated sites. Current and future biodiversity and geo-diversity assets will be given full and appropriate protection, and enhanced where possible. Development which would affect a species or habitat protected by law will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no adverse impact on the species and/or habitats concerned; and

Where negative effects on biodiversity, geo-diversity or landscape character are unavoidable, suitable measures will be required to mitigate any negative impacts. The Council will require that full compensatory provision is made where mitigation is not possible.

Other significant policies are:

- Policy 1: General Development Locations and Principles
- Policy 2: Meeting Rossendale's Housing Requirement
- Policy 3: Distribution of Additional Housing
- Policy 4: Affordable and Supported Housing
- Policy 14: Tourism
- Policy 16: Preserving and Enhancing Rossendale's Built Environment
- Policy 19: Climate Change and Low and Zero Carbon Sources of Energy
- Policy 22: Planning Contributions

- Policy 23: Promoting High Quality Design and Spaces

- Policy 24: Planning Application Requirements

5.4   Good practice guidance

The Landscape Institute offers the following guidance on housing development: "Housing developments have a major impact on the fabric of landscapes. Equally, an approach to housing development which works within the constraints and opportunities provided by the landscape will not only minimise adverse effects but will also offer environmental, social and economic benefits." They put forward a 10 point plan which is included in Appendix 6.
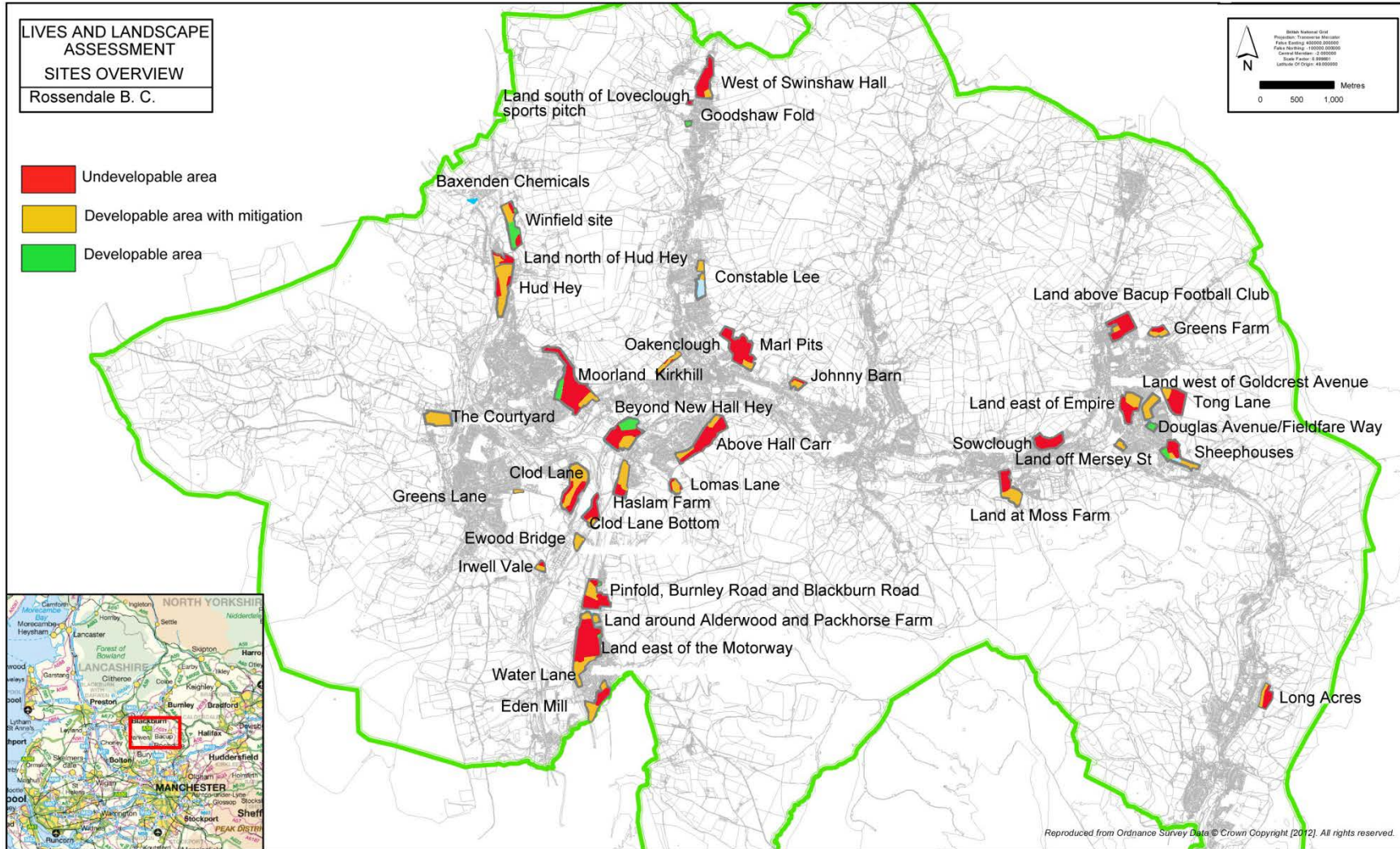
Figure 6

LIVES AND LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
SITES OVERVIEW
Rossendale B. C.

Legend:
- Undevelopable area (red)
- Developable area with mitigation (orange)
- Developable area (green)

Site labels:
- Land south of Loveclough sports pitch
- West of Swinshaw Hall
- Goodshaw Fold
- Baxenden Chemicals
- Winfield site
- Land north of Hud Hey
- Constable Lee
- Hud Hey
- Land above Bacup Football Club
- Greens Farm
- Oakenclough
- Marl Pits
- Moorland Kirkhill
- Johnny Barn
- Land west of Goldcrest Avenue
- Land east of Empire
- Tong Lane
- The Courtyard
- Beyond New Hall Hey
- Douglas Avenue/Fieldfare Way
- Above Hall Carr
- Sowclough
- Land off Mersey St
- Sheephouses
- Clod Lane
- Greens Lane
- Lomas Lane
- Haslam Farm
- Clod Lane Bottom
- Land at Moss Farm
- Ewood Bridge
- Irwell Vale
- Pinfold, Burnley Road and Blackburn Road
- Land around Alderwood and Packhorse Farm
- Land east of the Motorway
- Water Lane
- Eden Mill
- Long Acres

Lives and Landscapes Assessment for Rossendale RBC

Volume 1: Appraisal Report

Penny Bennett
Landscape Architects

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Over thirty sites throughout Rossendale have been assessed as part of this appraisal, see figure 6, and these are described in Volume 2.

With a general overview of potential development sites within the Borough, a number of conclusions can be drawn from the study and recommendations made.

Our conclusions show that there is a clear rationale between the different Landscape Character Areas and their suitability for development. Generally development may be appropriate within areas of Settled Valleys and Industrial Age, though Suburban character indicates that development has already taken place, it is not always appropriate, so it's not necessarily a guide to good practice.

The dramatic topography of Rossendale means that there is much inter-visibility between different sites across the Borough, so the cumulative effects of any development needs to be taken account of: while the separate effects of individual housing developments may not be significant, the combined effects of a number of developments may have a much greater effect on the landscape character and visual receptors. This would be the case in Bacup for instance, where there are a number of potential sites in close proximity, and again in Edenfield and Rawtenstall. The recommendations and mitigation measures outlined in each assessment take account of these effects.

Dense housing at Onchan Drive Bacup close to the boundary with Moorland Fringe LCA

Further conclusions indicate that the development of sites within the urban boundary, on previously developed sites and adjacent to existing development tend to be the least sensitive on landscape grounds. Those sites at a higher altitude, and on the upper boundary of existing development, where woodland and hedgerows are scarce, are particularly sensitive to development. These boundary sites often coincide with the boundaries of landscape character areas too, particularly where Settled Valleys meets Moorland Fringe. Sites adjacent to, or highly visible from, key routes through Rossendale, such as the East Lancashire Railway, Rossendale Way and Irwell Sculpture Trail are more sensitive on landscape grounds. The sequential cumulative effects on

receptors using these routes has also been considered in the assessments.

On a few sites where some development may be appropriate on landscape grounds, building at low density has been recommended as a means of reducing the overall effect of development. This is particularly appropriate on sites in the upper sections of Settled Valleys, where it abuts Moorland Fringe, where the pattern of existing settlement is scattered farmsteads. A report prepared by Dickman Associates Ltd considers six sites where low density has been recommended on landscape grounds and suggests minimum densities based on the NPPF, RBC's Core Strategy and the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment). These figures would be used except were lower densities are needed to achieve the landscape objectives. A copy of the report can be found in Volume 3 Appendix 8.

The following recommendations set out general guidance for good practice on landscape grounds, to protect the special landscape of Rossendale.

The policy recommendations advise how issues relating to landscape and design quality could be addressed in development plan policies.

The purpose of these recommendations is to prevent inappropriate development and ensure that where new development does take place the opportunity is taken to implement suitable mitigation where necessary.

Development off Douglas Road Bacup lacking any green infrastructure buffer with open space

In the past there has been some inappropriate development in Rossendale which has been detrimental to the landscape character of the area. The visual inter-relationship between the settlements and the surrounding hillsides is a fundamental element of the character of the Borough. Examples of poor quality design which need to be avoided include:

- Skylining where development appears on the horizon, like rows of "gappy teeth";

- Where development extends too far above the existing building line on the valley side and encroaches onto the edge of the moorland ;

- Where development does not follow the contours, breaking the historic settlement pattern and is not in harmony with other development in the vicinity; and

- Where development has not incorporated a buffer of native planting between the edge of the open country and new housing, and there is a harsh edge defining the development boundary.

6.1   Recommendations

Landscape Character

- Development should not generally take place within Enclosed Upland or Moorland Fringe Landscape Character Types. These character areas are determined by altitude and landform, and development in these areas would be highly visible and intrusive.
- There should be a graduation in density of development in the Settled Valley character area. In the uppermost areas where scattered settlement is typical, and abutting the upland landscape character types only low density development is acceptable.
- Development in hillside locations should generally follow the contours horizontally around the hillsides.
- Good quality drystone walls as boundaries fronting the highway may be more successful than planting at higher elevations.

Green Infrastructure

- Native screen planting should be used as a buffer to soften the edge of the building line in valley side locations, to reduce the visual impact of the development, provide green infrastructure and offer shelter and screening.
- Existing watercourses should be retained and enhanced and incorporated within new sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) wherever possible.

- Important Green infrastructure links which allow dispersal and movement of wildlife across the borough should be retained.

Recreation and tourism

- The East Lancashire Railway is an important resource and development should not turn its back on the railway. Opportunities should be taken to protect views along the railway corridor and incorporate open space alongside the railway for the benefit of passengers, local people and photographers who want to capture images of the trains.
- The Irwell Valley Way/Irwell Sculpture trail goes through or passes close to several potential development sites. Where this happens the walkers using the trail must be considered, and the design must take account of the need of walkers by ensuring that views are maintained as far as possible, and by avoiding channelling the path into a narrow corridor.

Views

- Key views to important landmarks should be recognised, and site layouts designed so that these can be retained where appropriate.
- Recognise key views to important landmarks through a development site and use these to inform the design layout.

- Opportunities should be taken to exploit views from the road network as part of the overall consideration of development site locations.

Sense of Place

- Ensure that where possible industrial heritage is protected and retained to give a sense of place.
- Ensure that features particularly characteristic of Rossendale are retained, e.g. dry stone walls and vaccary stone flag walls to reinforce local distinctiveness.

View north along the Irwell Valley Way south of Rawtenstall

Stone flag vaccary walls in Stacksteads near Springhill Avenue

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Volume 1: Appraisal Report

Penny Bennett
Landscape Architects

Glossary

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Ancient woodland: Woodland which has had a continuous woodland cover since at least 1600AD and has only been cleared for underwood or timber production. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, with an exceptionally high diversity of flora and fauna.

Ancient Enclosure: Fields where the likely enclosure dates from pre 1603.

Ancient and post medieval settlement: Settlement dating before around 1850.

Baseline studies: work done to determine and describe the environmental conditions against which any future changes can be measured or predicted and assessed.

Cumulative effects: are the incremental effects that occur through the interaction of two or more developments on the landscape and visual baseline context.

Ecosystem services: The benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living.

Enhancement: Where the effects of a proposal would be an improvement in landscape terms to the baseline situation, through restoration, reconstruction or creation.

Green infrastructure: Network of green spaces and watercourses and water bodies that connect rural areas, villages, towns and cities.

Heritage: The historic environment and especially valued assets and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions.

Historic Landscape Classification: The identification and interpretation of the historic dimension of the present day landscape or townscape within a given area.

Horsiculture:- Term used to describe areas on the fringes of settlements which are dominated by horse paddocks, stable buildings and associated paraphernalia.

Indirect effects: Effects that result indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effects, often occurring away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway.   They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects.

Key characteristics: Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.

Land cover: The surface cover of the land, usually expressed in terms of vegetation cover or lack of it. Related to, but not the same as land use.

Land use: What land is used for, based on broad categories of functional land cover such as urban industrial use and the different types of agriculture and forestry.

Landform: The shape and form of the land surface which has resulted from combinations of geology, geomorphology, slope, elevation and physical processes.

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 Areas (LCAs): These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.

Landscape Character Assessment: The process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape, and using his information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive. The process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.

Landscape Character Type (LCTs): 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 the occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage, patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern, perceptual and aesthetic attributes.

Landscape classification: A process of sorting the landscape into different types using selected criteria but without attaching relative values to different sorts of landscape.

Landscape effects: Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.

Landscape quality (condition) A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.

Landscape receptors: Defines aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by the proposal.

Landscape value: The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.

Magnitude of effect: A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.

Methodology: The specific approach and techniques used for a given study.

Mitigation: Measures, including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project.

Perception: Combines the sensory (that we receive through our senses) with the cognitive(our knowledge and understanding gained from many sources and experiences).

Post medieval enclosure: Fields where the enclosure dates from a Parliamentary Enclosure Act dating from 1603 onwards**,** the greatest number of parliamentary enclosures took place in the mid 18thC.

Sensitivity: A term applied to specific receptors combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.

Sequential cumulative effects: where the effects are experienced as the receptor moves through the landscape, as a pedestrian e.g. on a long distance path, as a passenger on a train, as a traveller on the road.

Significance: A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic.

Susceptibility: The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences.

Stepping stone habitats: Habitats which are close to each other and allow species to move easily from one to another.

Townscape: The character and composition of the built environment including the buildings and the relationship between them, the different types of urban open space, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.

Tranquility: A state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape.

Vaccary walls: Stone flags set on edge and placed edge to edge in a line to form a narrow solid boundary. Common in East Lancashire, where the horizontally bedded sandstones occur in large flat beds. In Stacksteads in the vicinity of the large flagstone quarries (Lee Quarry etc) the vaccary walls are enormous, measuring 2m x 2m, almost 4x the size of 'normal' vaccary walls which generally extend about 1m out of the ground. The word vaccary comes from the latin vacca "cow" as the walls formed cattle enclosures.

Vernacular:-Buildings constructed in the local style, from local materials; concerned with ordinary rather than monumental buildings.

Visual amenity: The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provide an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working recreating visiting or travelling through an area.

Visual effects: Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

Visual receptors: Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.