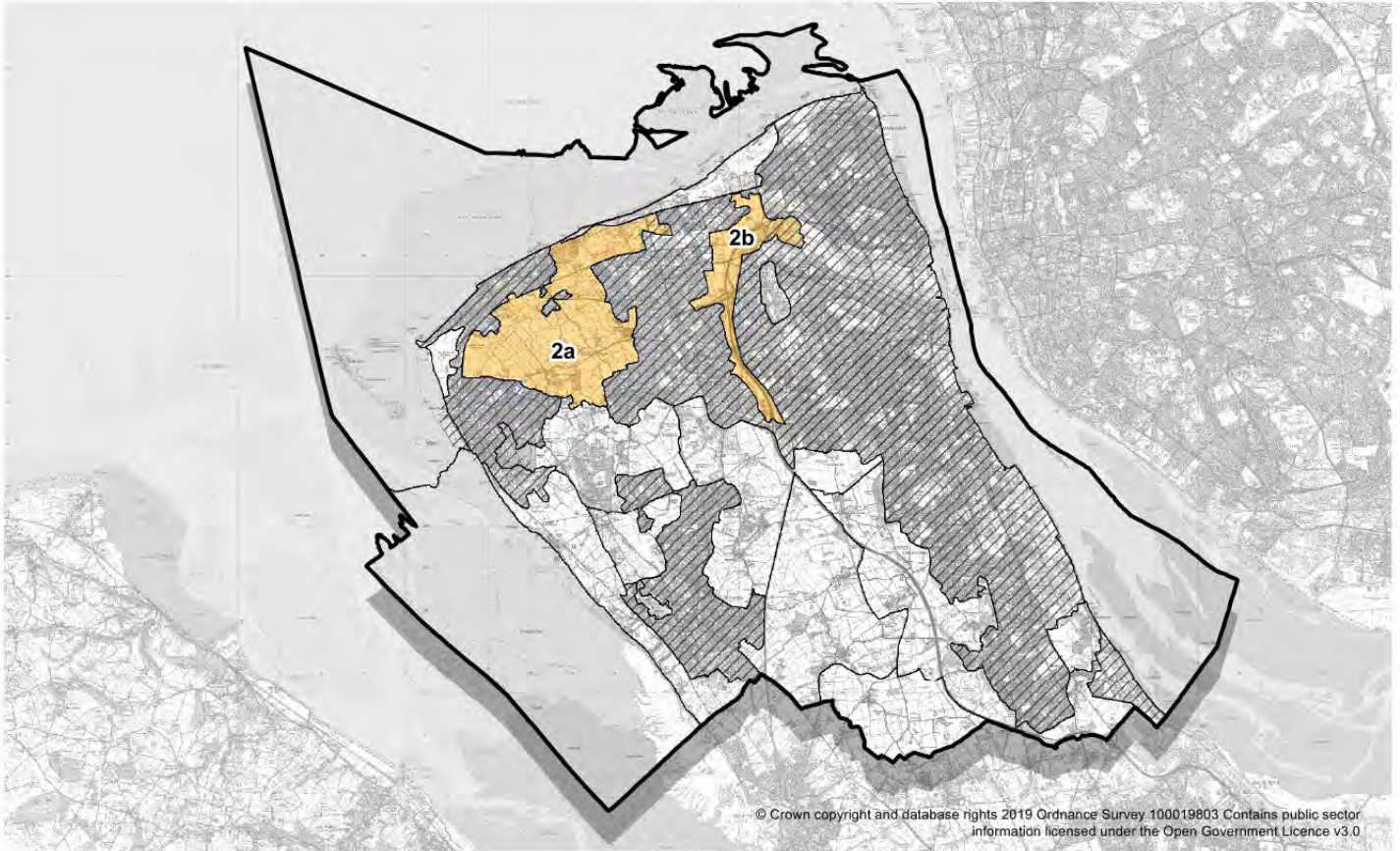


## Chapter 7

### LCT 2: River Floodplains



#### Description

The LCT is distinguished by flat low-lying land, draining into a linear pattern of streams and engineered watercourses. These are surrounded by wetland habitats. The areas themselves have a sparse settlement pattern although industry, infrastructure and settlement are common along the edges. A generally open and exposed character, although woodland within the areas and on wooded ridgelines outside the area provide some sense of enclosure. Agricultural land is a mix of arable and pasture, predominately horse grazing. The LCT is popular for recreation, although there are large areas of underused land.

#### Landscape Character Areas

The River Floodplains LCT is subdivided into two Landscape Character Areas:

- 2a: The Birket River Floodplain
- 2b: The Fender River Floodplain

## 2a: The Birket River Floodplain

### Summary

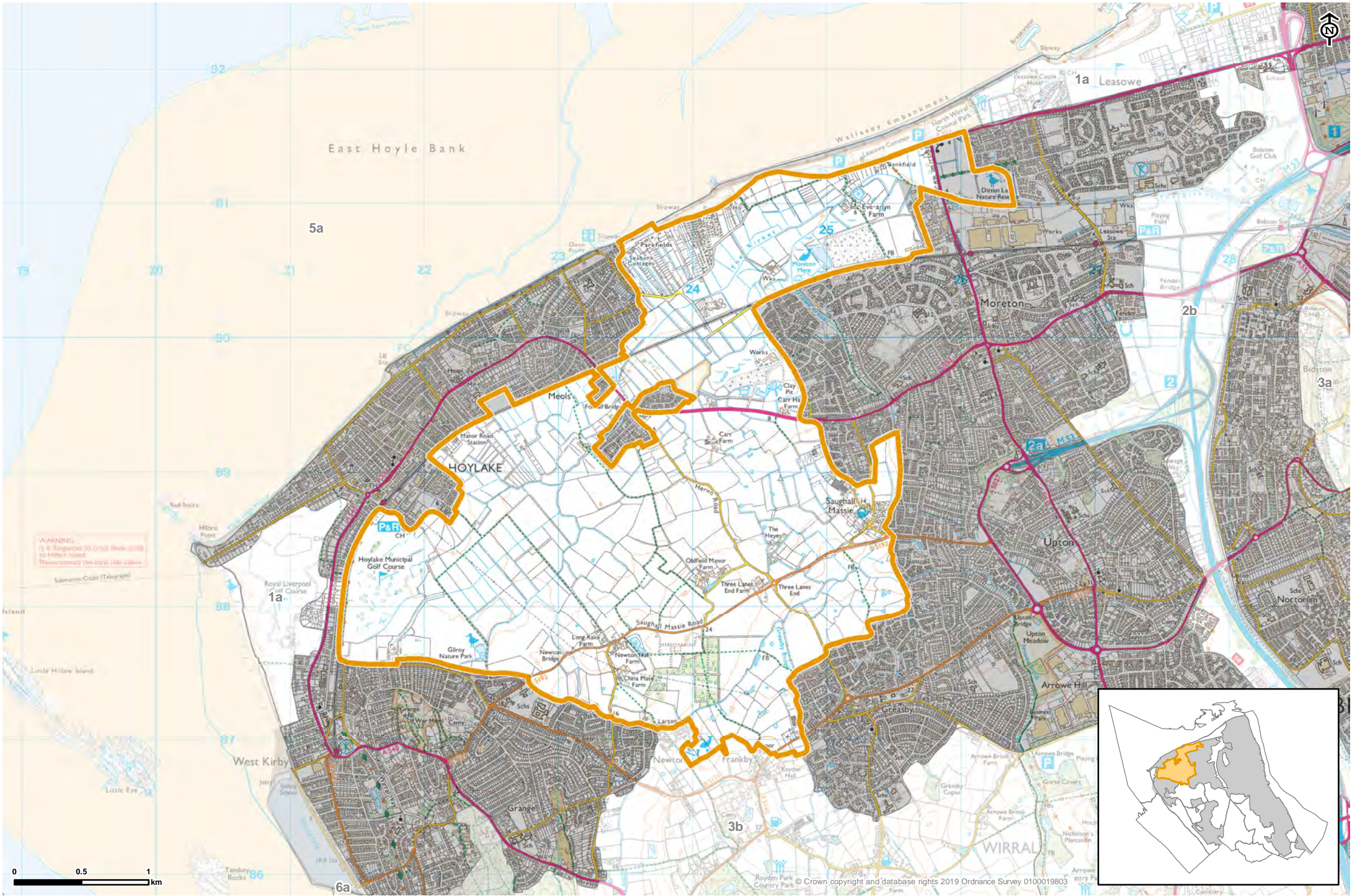
The Birket River Floodplain lies in the north-west of the Wirral peninsula. It is a flat open area of mixed farmland, with a geometric field pattern defined by watercourses. The area has a sparse settlement pattern and good public access. Despite proximity to Hoylake, West Kirby, Greasby and Moreton, wooded horizons screen much of the urban development. The northern boundary follows the coastal footpath, North Wirral Coastal Park and the settlement edge. The east and west boundaries also follow the settlement edges, while the southern boundary follows field boundaries, and includes all the river floodplain land between Newton and Greasby.



Looking north from Saughall Massie Road



# 2a: The Birket River Floodplain





## Key Characteristics

- Flat, low-lying farmland inland from the coast generally between 5m and 10m AOD, rising to 25m AOD in the south and east.
- Numerous tributary streams and ditches drain the surrounding farmland into the engineered River Birket. Field ponds are common and manmade pools from former quarrying and industry, many of which contain priority habitat reedbeds.
- Inland wetland and grassland habitats, including Meols Meadows SSSI and Meols Field LWS, are designated for their nature conservation value and their importance for overwintering migrating and breeding birds.
- The area is open with low woodland cover except for small copses and linear woodlands along ditches and settlement edges.
- Large scale arable farmland with pasture and horse paddocks more common in the north, although some land is under-utilised. Geometric fields are bounded by ditches and grassed bank with scrub, trees or fragmented hedgerows.
- Formed by draining marshland, the area retains extensive areas of pre-1600s field patterns including Medieval Townfields around Saughall Massie.
- A sparse settlement pattern limited to red sandstone farmhouses with large outbuildings. Saughall Massie is the only historic clustered settlement, with a number of Grade II listed buildings within its Conservation Area.
- Limited road access with roads and tracks bordered by tall intact hedgerows. The A553 is more open, with wide verges and no hedgerows. The railway crosses the north of the area, but is not dominant.
- Recreational opportunities are provided by the good network of footpaths, part of North Wirral Coastal Park and Hoylake Municipal Golf Course.
- Large scale open and exposed character with increasing tranquillity away from settlement edges.
- Development on exposed urban edge of adjacent settlements, landfill and mineral operations and overhead powerlines are discordant features.
- The coastline is mostly screened by the wooded edge of settlements to the north or the Wallasey Embankment, although off-shore wind turbines are often visible on the skyline beyond.

## Natural Landscape

**7.1** The area is underlain by Triassic sandstone, siltstone and mudstone. This is overlain by Devensian till in the south of the area, and Quaternary tidal flat deposits in the north.

**7.2** The landscape is mostly flat and open farmland between 5m AOD and 10m AOD. The land rises slightly to 25m AOD in the south and east further inland, east of China Plate Farm. Man-made embankments around industrial areas in the north are prominent in the generally flat landscape.

**7.3** There are a high number of small streams and drainage ditches throughout the area which provide drainage to the farmland. The Birket is a small engineered and locally prominent river, with a wide floodplain, which flows through the north of the area, rising south of Hoylake and flowing east towards the Mersey with a wide floodplain. The land is also protected from flooding by the Wallasey Embankment. There are numerous small ponds within the fields in the east of the character area and larger man-made lakes and pools associated with former quarrying and industry. There are also areas of lowland wetland and standing water on lower ground.

**7.4** Semi-natural habitats include areas of priority habitat lowland meadow and wetland reedbeds concentrated along the River Birket and at Moreton Mere. Meols Meadows SSSI is located between Arroe Brook and the River Birket and is notified for rare damp unimproved neutral grassland. The area contains the best example of crested dog's-tail-common knapweed type of grassland in Greater Manchester and Merseyside. It also supports a large colony of chimney sweeper moth and locally rare saltmarsh money spider. The Former RAF Camp, Greasby and Meols Field are designated as Local Wildlife Sites and Sites of Biological Importance for their grassland and wetland habitats. The small Gilroy Nature Park in the south-west is a pond which attracts duck, warblers and other birds, and is part of the larger Hoylake Langfields potential Local Wildlife Site. These inland wetland areas provide supporting, feeding and roosting habitat for overwintering, passage and breeding birds that provide an extension to the internationally important sites along the Wirral coast and beyond.

**7.5** Woodland is confined to pockets of small linear regular and irregular shaped woodlands along ditches, the settlement edges and the West Kirby Birkenhead railway line, much of which is priority habitat mixed deciduous woodland. There is a plantation south of Saughall Massie Road, and groups of trees within the Hoylake Golf Course. Willow and poplar are common tree species.

**7.6** Much of the area is part of the River Birket Corridor Nature Improvement Area, where priorities are to; create and enhance existing wetlands including the River Birket, support

the existing wetland habitats; create new hedgerows and trees to join existing networks, maintain the extent and diversity of wetlands and grasslands and maintain the value of supporting habitat for overwintering migrating and breeding birds south of Hoylake, Saughall Massie and Leasowe.



Looking south from Lingham Lane

### Cultural Landscape

**7.7** Land use is predominantly agricultural, with a mix of arable and pasture, although there are areas of under-used open land. Horse paddocks are common north of the railway line, with smaller fields often subdivided with horse tape. Field boundaries are often formed by ditches. These are accompanied by associated vegetation including dense trees, scrub and grassed banks, and unmanaged or fragmented hedgerow, often reinforced or replaced by post and wire fencing. Patches of scrub and isolated bushes are sometimes the only remaining signs of a hedgerow. The dominant hedgerow species is hawthorn although black thorn occurs in places.

**7.8** The former coastal marshes were drained in the middle ages and the area retains a significant area of irregular pre-1600s field pattern west of Heron Road and Medieval Townfields around Saughall Massie. The rest of the field pattern is of later origin, encompassing pre-Parliamentary marsh enclosure and Parliamentary planned enclosure. The landscape is protected from flooding by the Wallasey Embankment.

**7.9** The settlement pattern is sparse and consists of large red sandstone farmsteads with large out-buildings and prominent agricultural sheds. A caravan park is situated off Park Lane in the north.

**7.10** Saughall Massie is the only historic cluster of development within the area; the small rural village has grown from its medieval origins. It contains six Grade II listed buildings and is designated as a Conservation Area. The vernacular is soft red brick or sandstone with Welsh slate roofs. Stone buff sandstone boundary walls are common. The Grade II listed bridge over the Arrowe Brook is the first known work of the 19<sup>th</sup> century engineer and railway contractor Thomas Brassey.

**7.11** The proximity of adjacent towns and related industrial and commercial developments on the urban edge, particularly in the north are often untidy and visible from the surrounding landscape. This includes landfill, mineral extraction, water treatment works and commercial units along the A553 Hoylake Road consisting of urban edge land uses such as garden centres and kennels. Industrial units along Carr Lane, on the edge of Hoylake are also visible, although slightly filtered by scrub and planting on the edges of Hoylake Golf Course. Overhead powerlines cross the area and are a detracting feature.

**7.12** Modern residential expansion on the edge of the surrounding settlements at West Kirby, Hoylake, Greasby and Moreton is sometimes visible and contrasts with the rural character of the landscape. The urban edge of Meols is generally well contained by woodland, including three small areas of development along the A553 Birkenhead Road and Heron Road, which are excluded from this LCA as they form part of the urban area.

**7.13** Road access is limited and the two main roads crossing the area are busy and dilute perceptions of tranquillity. Saughall Massie Road was realigned in the early 2000s, however plans to recontour the windy narrow lanes further west towards West Kirby and at Heron Road and Pump Lane have yet to be implemented. Roads are often bordered by hedgerows, which provide a rural enclosed character. The A533 which runs along the north of the area connecting Moreton and Meols is much more open with wide verges and very few hedgerows. The railway line in the north of the area is well contained by woodland and has little impact on rural character.

**7.14** There is a good network of public rights of way particularly west of Heron Road, including the Wirral Circular Trail which runs along the coast and includes part of a traffic-free cycle route. North Wirral Coastal Park offers informal recreation. Hoylake Municipal Golf Course is also popular for more formal recreation. North of the railway line there is a golf centre and driving range, and recreational fishing at Lingmere Fishery.



Grade II listed Poplar Farmhouse, Saughall Massie

### Perceptual Landscape

**7.15** The landscape is low and flat with few trees, woodland or other visual barriers, which gives an exposed and open character. There are long views over farmland to the rising slopes outside the character area to the south at Caldy, West Kirby and Thurstaston and to the east at Bidston Hill.

**7.16** North of the railway line (east of Meols) there is a more enclosed character due to trees and hedgerow boundaries around small fields subdivided for horse paddocks. However engineered bunds around industrial areas, landfill and water treatment works give this area a degraded appearance.

**7.17** The coast itself is largely obscured by the wooded settlement edge and the Wallasey Embankment, although Leosowe Lighthouse, off-shore wind turbines and occasional ships out to sea are visible in the distance.

**7.18** The landscape is relatively screened from outside the character area although there are views possible from Thurstaston Hill, Bidston Hill and Grange Hill, and from the Wallasey Embankment.

**7.19** Man-made embankments around landfill and mineral operations, large farm buildings, transport infrastructure and overhead powerlines appear larger in the landscape as there are so few other vertical elements. Hedgerow fragmentation and sub-division of fields with horse tape are also detracting elements. These all reduce the rural nature of the landscape particularly along the settlement edge.

**7.20** The intrusion of built development into the landscape, and views to modern industrial, commercial and residential development along the surrounding settlement edge, along with the busy nature of the main roads crossing the area,

affects rural quality and tranquillity, particularly near the coastal settlements.

### Valued Landscape Attributes

- Flat landscape provides an open character, with views across rural farmland.
- The geometric pattern of streams and drainage ditches which add interest to the landscape.
- Ecologically important grassland and wetland habitats associated with the River Birket and its tributaries, man-made ponds and ditches which provide important habitats for birds and are valued locally and nationally as Local Wildlife Sites and SSSI.
- Sparsely settled character, including the historic village of Saughall Massie, with its Conservation Area and concentration of historic field patterns.
- Recreational value including woodlands, playing fields, caravan parks and public rights of way which enable enjoyment of the landscape.
- Contrast of views to coastal features on the horizon and views inland to wooded hills at Bidston, West Kirby, Caldy and Thurstaston.



The Birket, from A551 Pasture Road

### Landscape Condition

**7.21** The area has a relatively coherent character, created by flat lowland farmland with streams and drainage ditches and limited settlement. The surrounding urban edges are often screened by woodland, but industrial and commercial development intrudes into the landscape. Detracting features include transport infrastructure and overhead powerlines.



Hedgerow fragmentation, sub-division of fields with horse tape, and horse paraphernalia create a slightly neglected appearance, and weaken landscape character in some areas.

### Key Issues

- Increased flooding due to sea level rises and climate change leading to further engineering of rivers and watercourses to prevent flooding resulting in open channels with severe bank sides
- Degradation of the existing ditch networks and scrub encroachment.
- Changes in agricultural practices that could result in further loss and fragmentation of valued grassland habitats.
- Wetland and lowland meadows are influenced by seasonal variation in the water table. They will therefore be sensitive to changes in rainfall pattern due to climate change.
- Hedgerow fragmentation and loss, and sub-division of fields with horse tape.
- Conversion of farmland to horse and pony paddocks with temporary fencing and structures, resulting in a decline in rural intactness.
- Replacement of traditional farm buildings with larger modern agricultural sheds.
- Urban expansion of surrounding settlements which could be highly visible across the flat landscape.
- Increase in areas of under-used or degraded land which detracts from the attractiveness of the landscape.

### Landscape Strategy

**7.22** The overall strategy for the Birket River Floodplain is to conserve and enhance existing grassland and wetland habitats. The key aspects to be conserved, enhanced and actively managed are the streams, ditches and linear woodland. Hedgerow field boundaries should be restored, and the sparse settlement pattern retained. The wooded ridgeline which visually separates the area from surrounding development should also be maintained and enhanced.

#### Landscape Guidelines

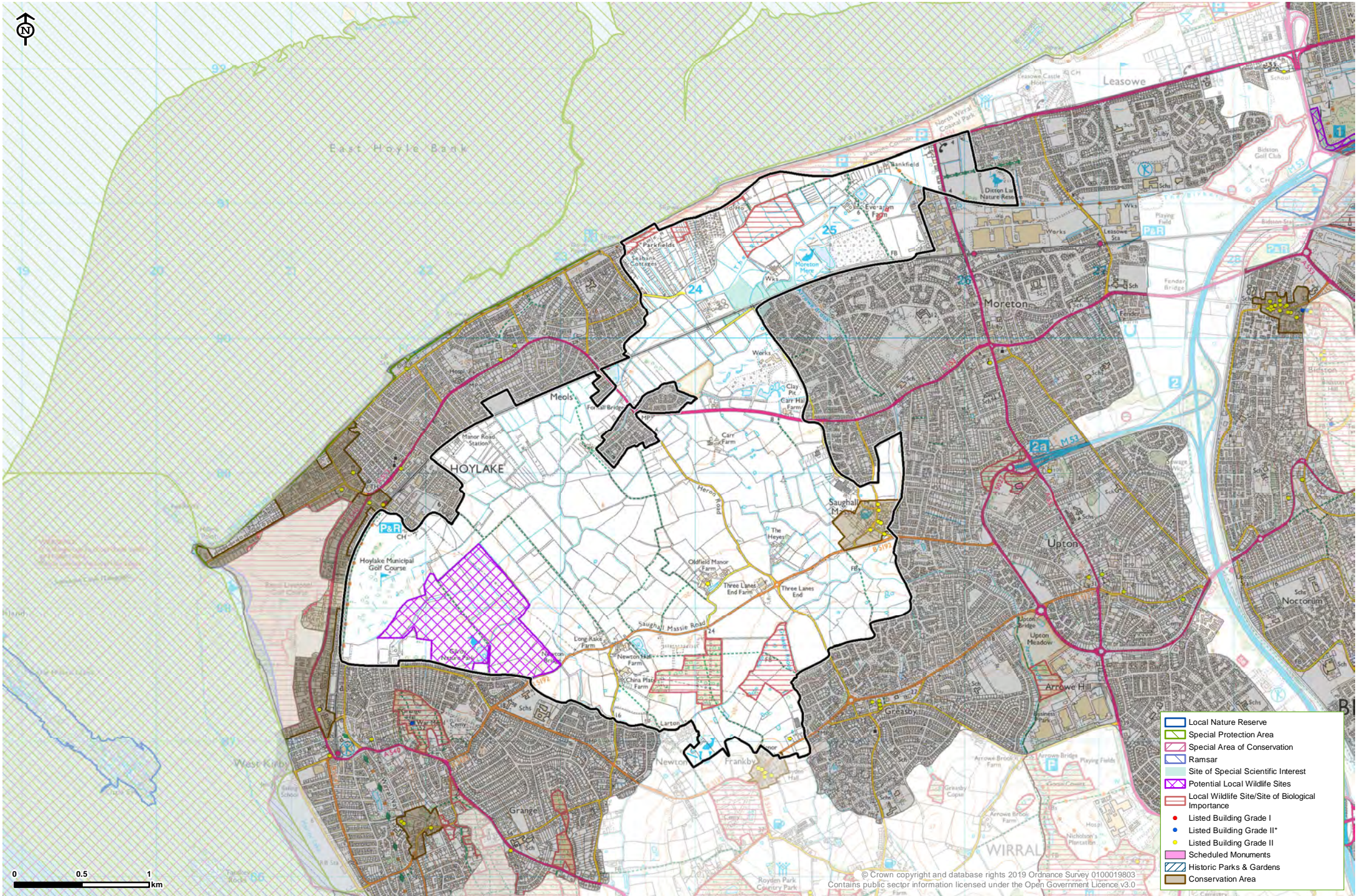
- Conserve and restore the use of linear ditch networks. Enhance ditch vegetation by managing scrub encroachment.
- Conserve, enhance and manage valued grassland and wetland habitats, open water and ponds

maintaining their value for overwintering, passage and breeding birds. Implement habitat creation along the narrow river corridor as part of the River Birket Corridor Nature Improvement Area.

- Conserve and enhance woodland belts, particularly where trees are becoming over mature. Promote appropriate woodland management.
- Conserve and manage hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species. Put in place a programme of hedgerow and hedgerow tree replacement.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement for areas of degraded or underused land through habitat creation, including woodland, wetland and grassland planting.
- Enhance the appearance of horse paddocks through use of consistent boundary materials, either timber fencing or stock proof fences set within hedgerows.
- Conserve and enhance the dispersed settlement pattern of isolated farms through control of new development.
- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and settlements, particularly within Saughall Massie Conservation Area.
- Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges, through native wooded boundaries and hedgerows to provide visual screening.
- Enhance the sense of place through careful design (including siting, massing, scale and materials) to minimise the impacts of any new development. Ensure new industrial or agricultural development is designated to integrate into the landscape.
- Conserve the open qualities of the landscape, with its long views over the farmed landscape, and the strong perceptions of tranquillity away from the settlement edge.



# 2a: The Birket River Floodplain



0 0.5 1 km

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## 2b: The Fender River Floodplain

### Summary

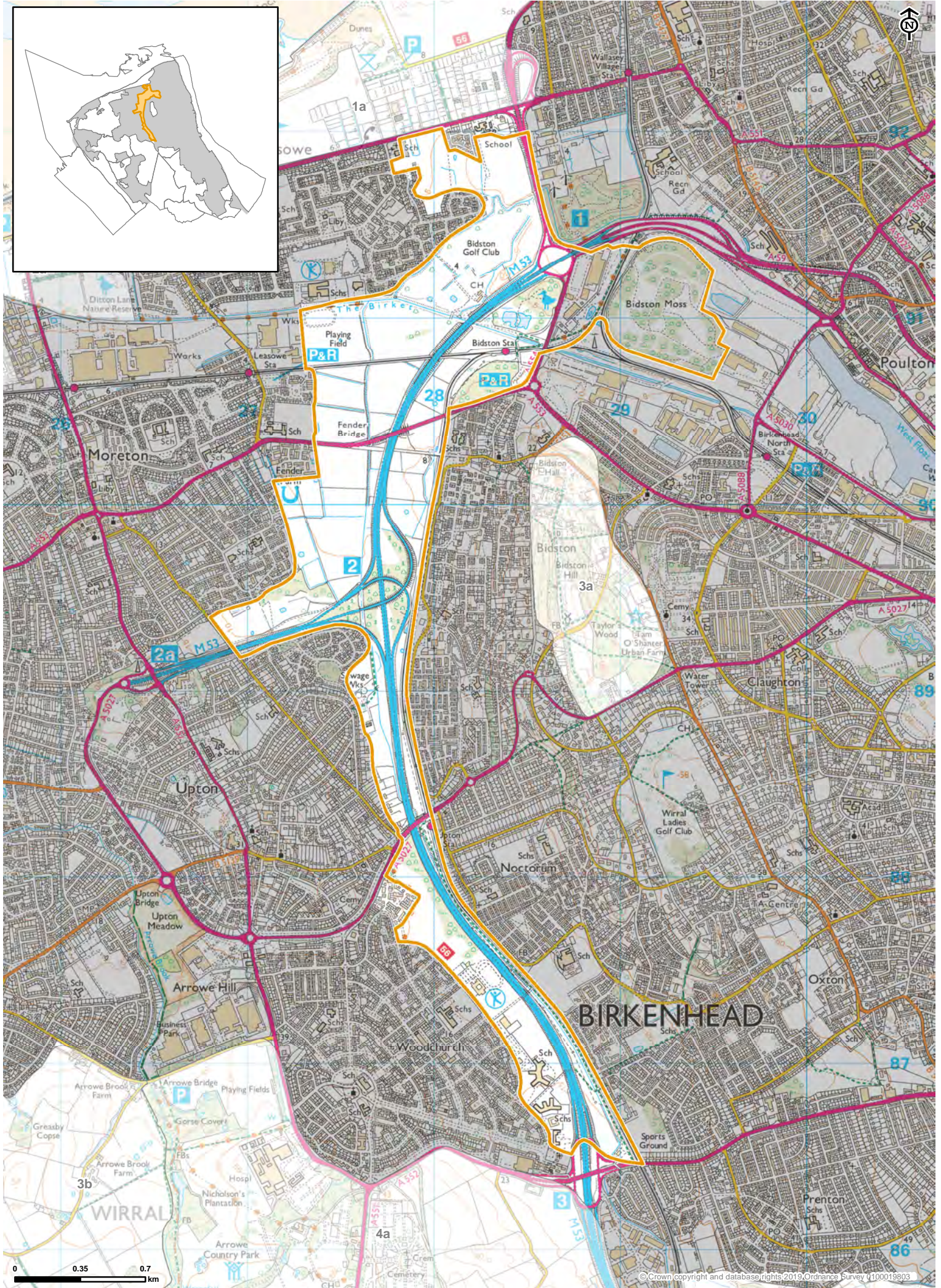
The Fender River Floodplain is a narrow linear area of floodplain between the mid-Wirral settlements of Leasowe, Moreton, Upton, Woodchurch and Birkenhead. Its character is strongly associated with the adjacent urban settlements. There are areas of farmland, recreation land and open space as well as transport corridors including the M53. The boundaries are mainly formed by roads and settlement edges, including the A551 to the north, the A554 and the Bidston Wrexham and Liverpool to West Kirby railway lines to the east and Junction 3 of the M53 to the south. The settlement edges of Woodchurch, Upton, Moreton and Leasowe form the western boundary.



River Fender with the M53 in the background



## 2b: The Fender River Floodplain





## Key Characteristics

- Flat low-lying area around 8m AOD interrupted by small hills up to 30m AOD formed by former landfill sites and waste pits from the construction of the M53.
- A linear pattern of engineered watercourses flow through the area into the River Birket and its tributary the River Fender. Wetland habitats associated with these watercourses are often locally designated for their nature conservation value.
- Deciduous woodland is concentrated along the M53 and along urban fringes. Bidston Moss Local Nature Reserve contains smaller woodland blocks.
- Land use is dominated by the M53 and land uses associated with the urban edge, including recreation and horse pasture. Some land is naturalised and under-utilised.
- Recreational opportunities are provided by playing fields, informal paths at Bidston Moss and more formally at Bidston Golf Club.
- A largely 20<sup>th</sup> century landscape, influenced by the construction of the M53 in the 1970s. The remaining farmland around Fender Bridge has a small and irregular pre-Parliamentary enclosure. Where present, field boundaries are formed by fragmented hedgerows reinforced by post and wire fencing.
- Transport links dominate, including the M53 and railways. School grounds in the north and south of the area include the Grade II listed Solar Building. A small housing estate south of the A5027 is the only residential development within the area.
- Views to wooded hills including Bidston Hill provide an enclosed setting.
- Surrounding industrial and residential areas and transport routes are largely screened by woodland, although the M53 is aurally intrusive.

## Natural Landscape

**7.23** The area is underlain by Triassic period Tidmouth Mudstone Formation in the north and Wilmslow Sandstone Formation in the south, overlain by Quaternary period tidal flat deposits, till and alluvium.

**7.24** The land is generally flat across the area, around 8m AOD. Small hills of up to 30m AOD are present in the north at Bidston Moss and south of the Bidston golf club, as a result of former landfill sites and waste pits from the construction of the M53. These hills contrast with the surrounding flat landscape and provide local viewing points.

**7.25** There are a number of watercourses which flow through this area into the Birket and its tributary the Fender. The majority of watercourses are engineered in straight lines along field boundaries and contained within grass banks with no trees and therefore only evident in the landscape when close by. Small ponds occur throughout the area but are concentrated around Bidston Golf Course. Local Wildlife Sites and Sites of Biological Importance at Old Birket, Leasowe; Leasowe Pond and Reedmarsh; and Sandbrook Lane Pond are designated for their wetland habitats including priority habitat reedbeds.

**7.26** Bidston Moss Local Nature Reserve was used as a borrow pit during construction of the M53. It now contains a variety of habitats including ponds, wetlands, marshes and establishing woodland. The presence of priority habitat mixed deciduous woodland and reedbed has resulted in designation as a Site of Biological Importance and Local Wildlife Site.

**7.27** Woodland is concentrated along the M53, Cross Lane and Bidston Moss with smaller blocks and linear strips of woodland along the settlement edge of Moreton. Woodland is a mix of broadleaf species with a high proportion of oak, rowan, birch and ash and includes priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Willow and poplar trees are frequent within the landscape close to watercourses or on other areas of low-lying ground. Most planting has been provided as part of environment improvements to soften the urban fringes and the impact of the M53.

**7.28** The area north of Junction 2 of the M53 forms part of the River Birket Corridor Nature Improvement Area. This promotes the creation of supporting wetland habitats including swamp, open water and ponds, and creating, maintaining and strengthening the habitat links through the rural and urban landscape.





Upton Park looking towards the M53

### Cultural Landscape

**7.29** Land use is one of the most varied within the borough owing to the close association with urban development. There are transportation routes, formal and informal recreation and areas of pasture close to the Birket and around Fender Bridge. There are also areas of undeveloped and under-used open land adjacent to the M53. Much of the undeveloped land is amenity grass verge bordered by fencing, the railway or young woodland.

**7.30** The field pattern tends to be small and irregular in shape bordered by scrubby fragmented hedgerows, in some places reinforced by post and wire fencing. Fields have often been subdivided by horse tape, which is often variable in condition and appearance. The majority of the land is pasture, with horse grazing prominent, particularly adjacent to the road junctions and roundabouts.

**7.31** The field pattern of the area has predominantly been shaped by 20<sup>th</sup> century infrastructure and recreation. The area still in agricultural use around Fender Bridge retains a pre-Parliamentary enclosure field pattern.

**7.32** The area has good opportunities for recreation, including Upton Park, footpaths and National Cycle Route 56 within Bidston Moss and the Bidston Moss Local Nature Reserve itself. More formal recreation uses are available at Bidston Golf Club, and playing fields attached to school buildings and Woodchurch Leisure Centre.

**7.33** Infrastructure has a strong influence on the character of this landscape. The elevated M53 runs north to south parallel to the railway which runs on a slight embankment. Where other roads cross these routes, they are also elevated e.g. the A554 and A553. However, these are all largely screened by

vegetation except for signage, associated overhead lines and lighting columns.

**7.34** A new cul-de-sac development at New Hey Road (the former St Benedict's High School) consisting of 2 and 3 storey housing is the only residential development within the area. There are three schools in the south of the area, between New Hey Road and the M53. The Solar Building, part of the former St George's School on Leasowe Road, in the north of the area, is the only Grade II listed building within the area, listed for its pioneering use of passive solar energy.

**7.35** A retail park at Junction 1 of the M53, east of the A554, is formed of large warehouse-type buildings. There is also a line of wind turbines at Cross Lane. Other detracting features include a sewage works south of Junction 2 and an overhead powerline running parallel with the railway line. The area is surrounded by the settlements of Birkenhead, Woodchurch, Upton, Moreton and Leasowe.



Upton Park

### Perceptual Landscape

**7.36** Views are fairly complex with many elements including farmland, housing, industry, recreational land, woodland, motorway and railway. Distant views are generally prevented by urban development, although from Bidston Moss there are some views towards the Wirral and North Wales coasts, and of churches within Wallasey. Bidston Hill is a prominent wooded ridgeline with the Bidston Observatory and Windmill clear visible landmarks.

**7.37** Surrounding development and the M53 have a strong influence on landscape character. The overhead power lines, fenced railway, post and wire fencing and areas of neglected scrub also add to the neglected character.





East of Upton Park Drive

#### Valued Landscape Attributes

- The river corridors along the Birket and the Fender which provide open space between the surrounding urban areas.
- The geometric pattern of watercourses which feed into the Fender, which add interest to the landscape.
- Semi-natural wetland habitats associated with watercourses which are valued locally through nature conservation designation.
- Bidston Moss Local Nature Reserve is important for its wetland and woodland habitats, and for informal recreational opportunities.
- Time-depth from the pre-Parliamentary enclosure field pattern around Fender Bridge.
- Recreational value, for both formal and informal recreation through the presence of parks, footpaths and playing fields.
- The wooded horizon and woodland planting along transport corridors which provide screening and enclosure.

#### Landscape Condition

**7.38** The wooded horizon and woodland planting along the transport corridor provide unity to the area. However, in general the area does not have a coherent or distinctive character. Although the recreational areas are well maintained, unmanaged land and fragmented or absent field boundaries create a neglected appearance to much of the landscape.

#### Key Issues

- Increased flooding due to sea level rises and climate change leading to further engineering of rivers and watercourses to prevent flooding resulting in open channels with severe bank sides.
- Degradation of the existing ditch networks and scrub encroachment.
- Further loss and fragmentation of valued wetland habitats. Wetland habitats are influenced by seasonal variation in the water table and will therefore be sensitive to changes in rainfall patterns due to climate change.
- Loss of field pattern through hedgerow decline and replacement with post and wire fences.
- Increase in areas of under-used or degraded land which detract from the attractiveness of the landscape.
- Expansion of urban areas resulting in further fragmentation and isolation of farmland.
- Insensitive expansion of large public infrastructure.

#### Landscape Strategy

**7.39** The overall strategy for the Fender River Floodplain is to restore and enhance the rural character of the remaining agricultural landscape and the screening woodland along the settlement edges and transportation routes. The key aspects to be restored are the wetland habitats associated with the watercourses. There are opportunities to integrate the landscape with the surrounding urban environment to alter its unmanaged character.

#### Landscape Guidelines

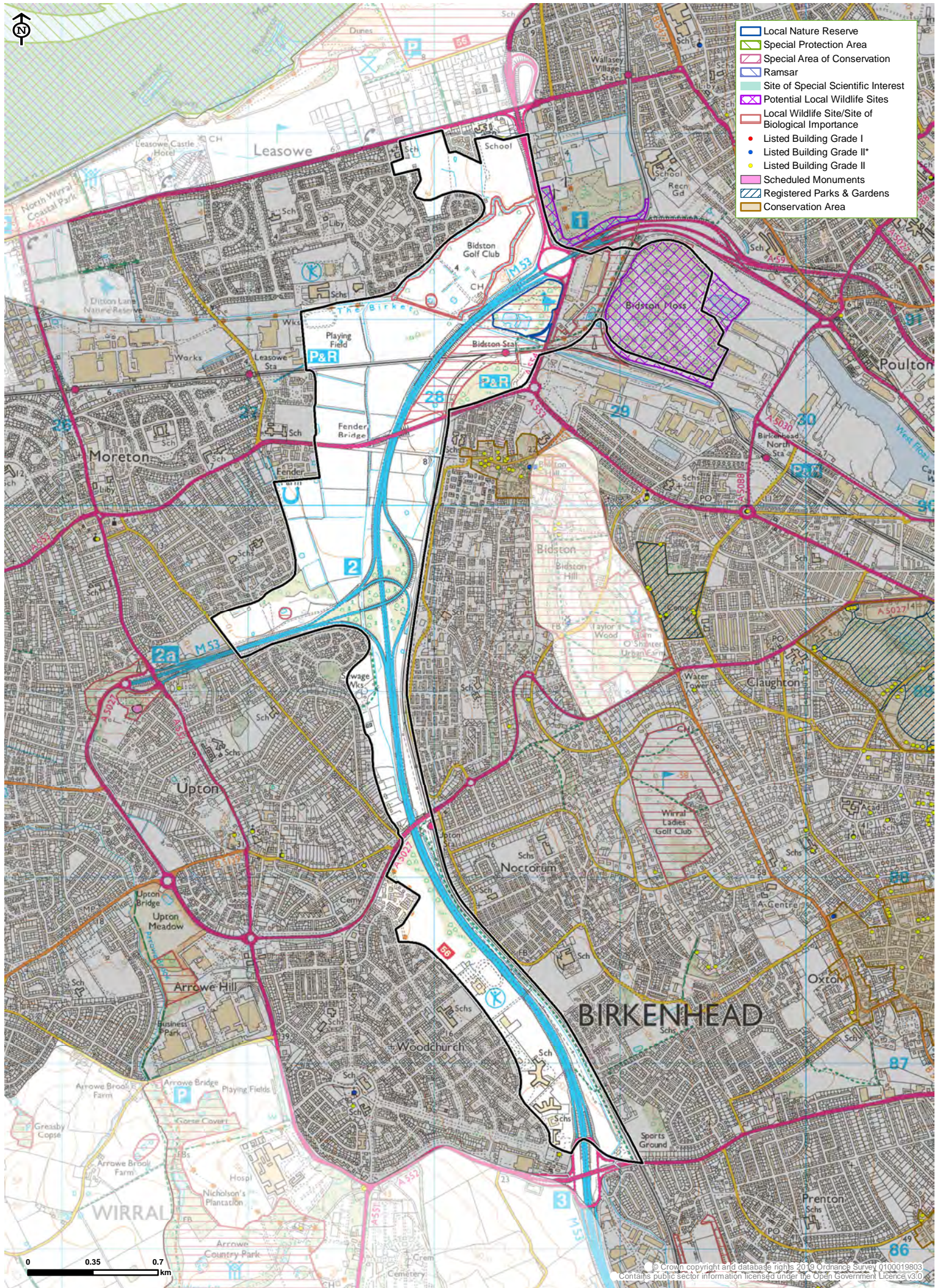
- Conserve and restore the existing linear ditch networks, enhance ditch vegetation by managing scrub encroachment.
- Conserve, enhance and manage valued wetland habitats. Implement habitat creation along the narrow river corridors of the Birket and Fender, as part of the River Birket Corridor Nature Improvement Area.
- Conserve and enhance linear copses and woodland planting along transport corridors and the urban edge to reduce their influence on the landscape, using locally occurring native species in order to link existing woodland.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing with native hedgerows and put in place a programme of hedgerow tree replacement.



- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of areas of neglected or underused land through habitat creation, including new woodland, wetland and grassland planting.
- Conserve and enhance the integration of the urban edges and infrastructure through native wooded boundaries and mature trees to provide visual screening.



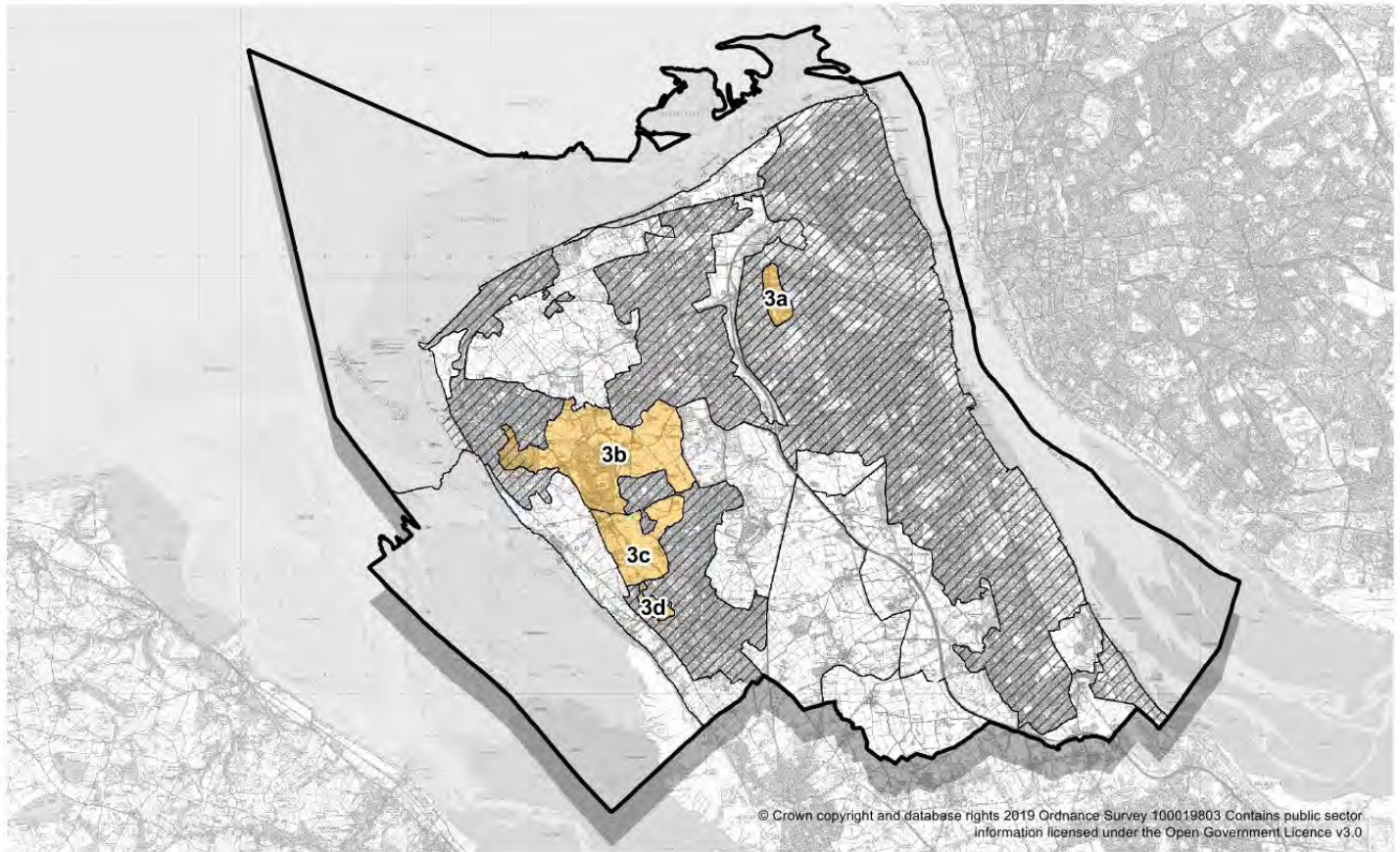
# 2b: The Fender River Floodplain





## Chapter 8

### LCT 3: Sandstone Hills



#### Description

This LCT is distinguished by prominent sandstone ridgelines interspersed with rolling farmland. The ridgelines often have exposed sandstone pavements and contain important woodland and heathland habitats. From the highest ground there are expansive views across Wirral, east across the Mersey towards Liverpool and west across the Dee towards North Wales. Land use is predominantly recreational, with a very limited settlement pattern.

#### Landscape Character Areas

The Sandstone Hills LCT is subdivided into four Landscape Character Areas:

- 3a: Bidston Sandstone Hills
- 3b: Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills
- 3c: Irby and Pensby Sandstone Hills
- 3d: Heswall Dales Sandstone Hills



## 3a: Bidston Sandstone Hills

### Summary

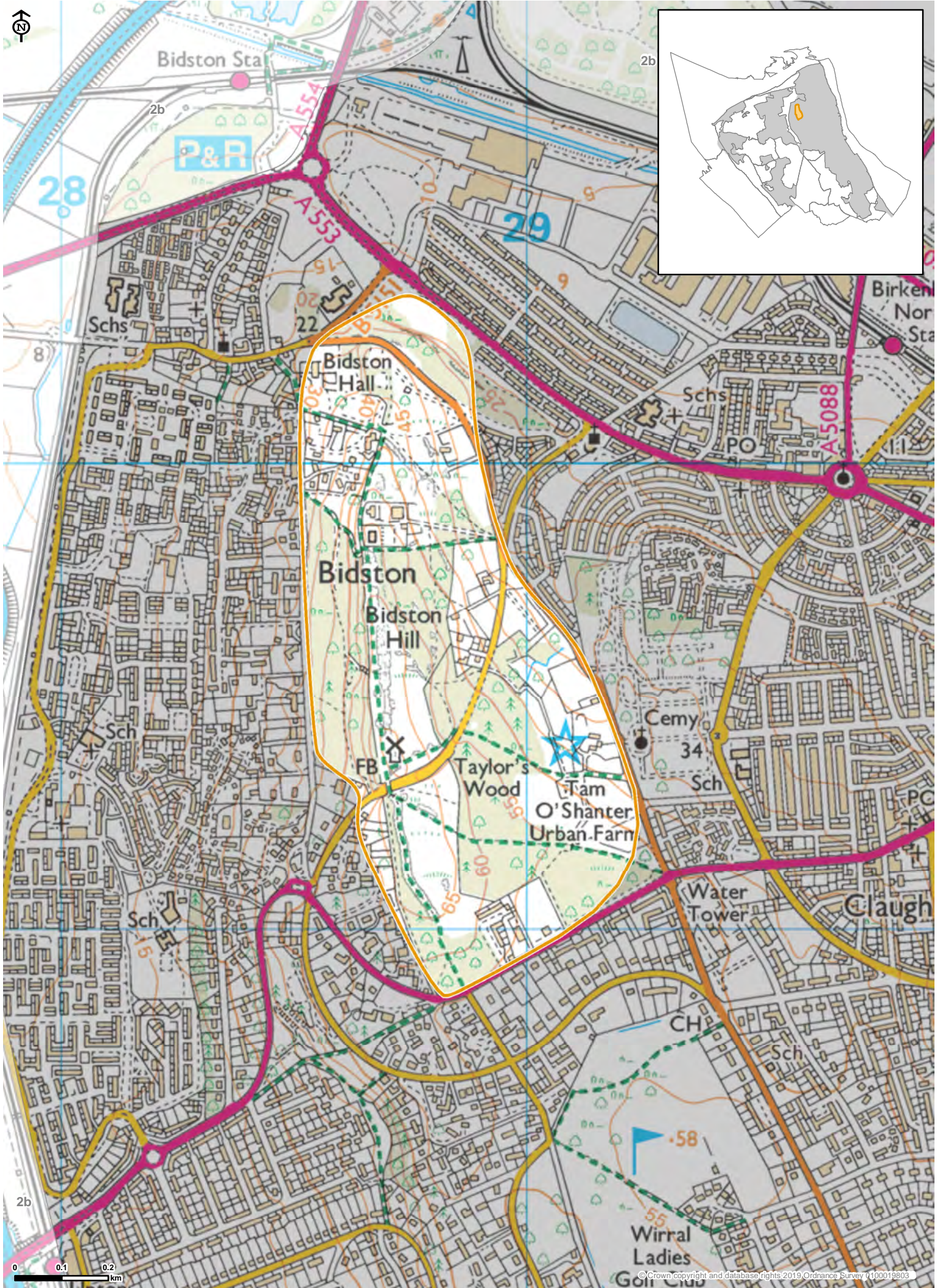
Bidston Sandstone Hills LCA lies in the east of the borough, within the Birkenhead urban area. It is a high ridge of wooded sandstone, which is prominent within the wider landscape. It is very popular for recreation and retains a remote and natural character. The boundaries are formed by the settlement edge.



Bidston Hill



### 3a: Bidston Sandstone Hills





## Key Characteristics

- Prominent wooded hill at Bidston Hill, part of a sandstone ridgeline which extends south into the urban area. Characterised by distinctive sandstone pavement outcrops, it is one of the highest points in Wirral at 70m AOD.
- Small bogs and wetlands are establishing in depressions on the exposed sandstone.
- Characterised by mature priority habitat deciduous woodland and lowland heathland with areas of scrub and establishing birch woodland.
- The area is managed for informal recreation and contains a number of public rights of way and the Tam O'Shanter urban farm.
- Bidston Lighthouse, Bidston Observatory (Grade II listed) and Bidston Windmill (Grade II\* listed) are landmark features set within woodland on the highest ground.
- Limited settlement except for small scale housing and allotments extending from the surrounding urban areas and the historic Bidston village which lies on the north-west edge of the area, including the Grade II\* Bidston Hall. Strong local vernacular of buff sandstone particularly for boundary walls.
- Heavily wooded minor roads run through the area, providing connection between the settlements, and access to the area.
- Panoramic framed views from viewing points along the ridgeline across Birkenhead towards Liverpool and the Pennines to the east and to the North Wirral coast and North Wales to the north-west and west.
- An area of natural 'wilderness' which, although surrounded by urban development, has some sense of remoteness.

## Natural Landscape

**8.1** The area is underlain by Triassic period Wilmslow Sandstone Formation and Helsby Sandstone Formation and is designated as a Local Geological Site. On frequently used routes and where the soils are shallowest, the sandstone rock is exposed. This is particularly evident on the highest ground. The extent of bare rock is gradually reducing as grassland and scrub re-establishes.

**8.2** This landscape is one of a series of sandstone ridges within Wirral and rises to a height of 70m AOD. The lowest land is on the outskirts of the character area, at 25m AOD in the north and 55m to 60m AOD in the south. The ridgeline continues to the south beyond the character area as part of the urban area and is covered by a mix of housing and Wirral Ladies Golf Course.

**8.3** There are pockets of bog and wetland establishing where shallow depressions occur on the sandstone rock. No watercourses are present, although there are small drains to the north of Tam O'Shanter Farm and Nursery House.

**8.4** The area is used for informal recreation, with a network of paths through the establishing and mature woodland, scrub and heathland. There are allotments on low ground adjacent to Boundary Road where the soil is deeper and more fertile, surrounded by mature woodland.

**8.5** This is one of the most wooded areas within Wirral, with areas of priority habitat mixed deciduous woodland distributed across the landscape. Mature woodland is present at Taylors Wood and Park Wood. Woodland species include a mix of beech, oak, silver birch, whitebeam, rowan, holly, sweet chestnut, Scots and Corsican pine. Mature laurel and rhododendrons add an element of formality although their dense foliage prevents the regeneration of tree saplings. All of the undeveloped area is designated as the Bidston Hill Local Wildlife Site and Site of Biological Importance.

**8.6** On the higher ground, Bidston Hill contains areas of priority habitat lowland heathland, which include common heather; bell heather; cross-leaved heath and tormentil. In many places natural succession is occurring reducing the extent of heathland and species such as gorse, silver birch and Scots pine are frequently present.

**8.7** On lower ground adjacent to car parks there are small areas of frequently mown grassland surrounded by mature woodland.

**8.8** The area forms part of the East Wirral Heathlands Nature Improvement Area, and ecological priorities are to create, restore, maintain and enhance heathland habitats; create, maintain and enhance species diversity of grassland; and enhance the existing woodland to support the heathland.





Bidston Hill

### Cultural Landscape

**8.9** The area is popular for recreation, with the lighthouse, observatory and windmill opening regularly for public visits. There are a series of footpaths across Bidston Hill, and a designated Heritage Trail. There is some small-scale car parking at the observatory and Tam O'Shanter urban farm. The urban farm includes a collection of farm animals and is used as an educational and recreational resource for local communities. A formal area of open space, the Rhododendron Gardens, borders the woodland and scrub on the lower slopes of Bidston Hill; however, this has been neglected in recent years.

**8.10** The lighthouse, observatory and windmill are landmark buildings on the top of the ridgeline and provide a link to the industrial and maritime history of the region. There are a number of rock carvings close to the observatory, including a 'Sun Goddess' of possible Norse- Irish origin, dating from c1000AD and an ancient carving of a horse.

**8.11** Bidston Lighthouse was built in 1873 and used in conjunction with Leasowe Lighthouse to ensure ships avoided sandbanks in the channel on their approach to Liverpool. It is a distinctive tower constructed from local stone and is Grade II listed.

**8.12** The Grade II listed Bidston Observatory was built in 1866, originally to rate mariners' chronometers and later to analyse tidal flows, which led to reliable tidal predictions worldwide. The observatory is a distinctive building faced in local stone excavated from the site, with a domed roofline.

**8.13** Bidston Windmill (Grade II\* listed) dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and was restored in 1894 and again in 1971. It is a circular tapering tower with boarded cap and sails.

**8.14** There are few buildings within the character area; settlement is restricted to the edge of Bidston in the north-west and small housing estates on Vyner Road North and Upton Road. Bidston Village Conservation Area extends into the north of the area, and includes the Grade II\* Bidston Hall, set within mature gardens and constructed from yellow sandstone. There is a strong vernacular of local buff sandstone, particularly for boundary walls, and the houses are largely well integrated into the surrounding woodland.

**8.15** Bidston village retains a rural character and has an agricultural setting despite being surrounded by more recent suburban development. The tower of St Oswald's Church is a prominent feature of the village roofline and is visible from the M53. The village retains a medieval pattern set around the civic grounds of the church. Buildings are predominantly farmsteads and cottages within an irregular layout. Features include stone mullioned windows, stone coped gables and steeply pitched roofs.

**8.16** The character area is surrounded by urban areas of Birkenhead. Housing is at its highest density on the lowest ground and contains little woodland or trees.

**8.17** Vyner Road North and Boundary Road cut through the area. Vyner Road North effectively separates the north and south of the woodland, and a footbridge is provided for pedestrian access between the two elevated areas.



Bidston Windmill

### Perceptual Landscape

**8.18** This character area exerts a strong influence over the surrounding landscape and urban area and forms a wooded backdrop in views from Liverpool, central and northern Wirral.



Bidston Lighthouse, Observatory and Windmill are landmark features set within woodland on the highest ground.

**8.19** Extensive panoramic views are possible from viewing points along the sandstone ridgeline, although these are being gradually reduced to selectively managed viewpoints due to encroaching woodland and scrub.

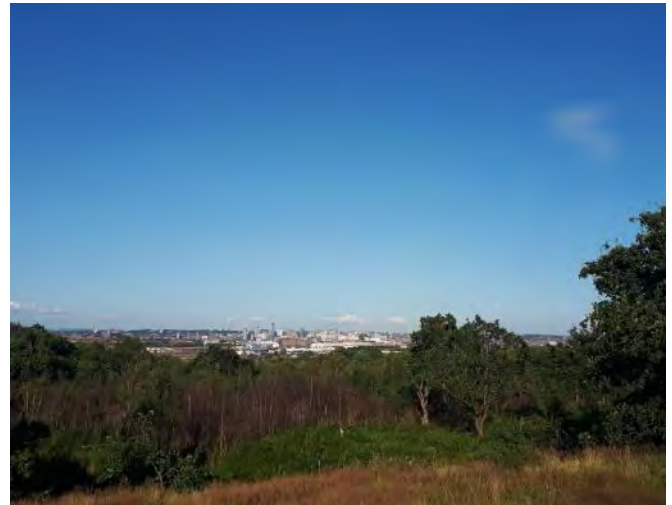
**8.20** Views to the east are characterised by housing and industry around the docks in Birkenhead at East and West Float, the Liverpool waterfront and landmark buildings within the city, including the two cathedrals, Radio City tower and the Three Graces. On clear days it is possible to see the Pennine hills beyond Liverpool.

**8.21** Viewpoints are less frequent to the west but where present include views to the Thurstaston ridgeline and Caldley Hill, and across to the hills within North Wales.

**8.22** On lower ground views are enclosed by woodland and are only possible across a short distance. These views tend to be of woodland and small pockets of grassland and heathland. Built development is generally not visible.

**8.23** Despite its proximity to the urban environment, the elevation of the area above surrounding development and woodland along its fringes provides a sense of separation and remote naturalistic character, particularly along the windblown ridgeline. However, the noise of the urban area below, particularly of traffic on the M53 detracts from the sense of tranquillity.

**8.24** The visual values and landscape quality of the area are recognised as an Area of Special Landscape Value. The visually prominent and distinctive ridge of wooded high ground, the archaeological and historic associations and fine views of the rest of Wirral are considered to be of considerable importance to the borough's landscape.



View east to Liverpool

#### Valued Landscape Attributes

- The distinctive sandstone pavement along the ridgeline and the surrounding heathland and woodland provides a sense of place and a distinctive backdrop to surrounding areas.
- Heathland and mature deciduous woodland are important habitats, designated as a Local Wildlife Site and Site of Biological Importance.
- Historic landmark buildings, Bidston Windmill, Observatory and Lighthouse, provide a link to the maritime and industrial history of Wirral.
- Recreational value as an informal public park and country park with a linked network of footpaths and visitor attractions.
- Panoramic views from the ridgeline across Birkenhead to the Liverpool waterfront and towards the Thurstaston ridgeline and Welsh hills.
- An area of 'natural wilderness', which has a remote character despite surrounding development.
- The area is recognised locally as an Area of Special Landscape Value, considered to be of considerable importance to the landscape of Wirral.

#### Landscape Condition

**8.25** Bidston Hill has a strong coherent character due to its elevation, wooded hillsides, sandstone pavement and heathland. The heathland is declining as natural succession takes place to birch and ultimately oak woodland. The



maturing woodland is also starting to impact on the expansive views from the ridgeline.

### Key Issues

- Loss of heathland through fire damage and natural colonisation.
- Lack of natural regeneration within existing woodlands.
- Decline in the condition of the historic windmill, observatory and lighthouse on Bidston Hill.
- Recreational pressures on the landscape, resulting in erosion of the sandstone rocks and habitats and accidental fires.
- Demand for additional car parking and upgrade of walking routes, which threatens the 'wilderness' character.
- Pressure for development leading to urban encroachment along the fringes of Bidston Hill.
- Maturing woodland and scrub encroachment leading to a loss of expansive panoramic views.

### Landscape Strategy

**8.26** The overall strategy for the Bidston Sandstone Hills is to conserve and manage key features including the wooded hills, landmark historic buildings, and heathland and woodland. Far reaching views from the ridgeline should be conserved.

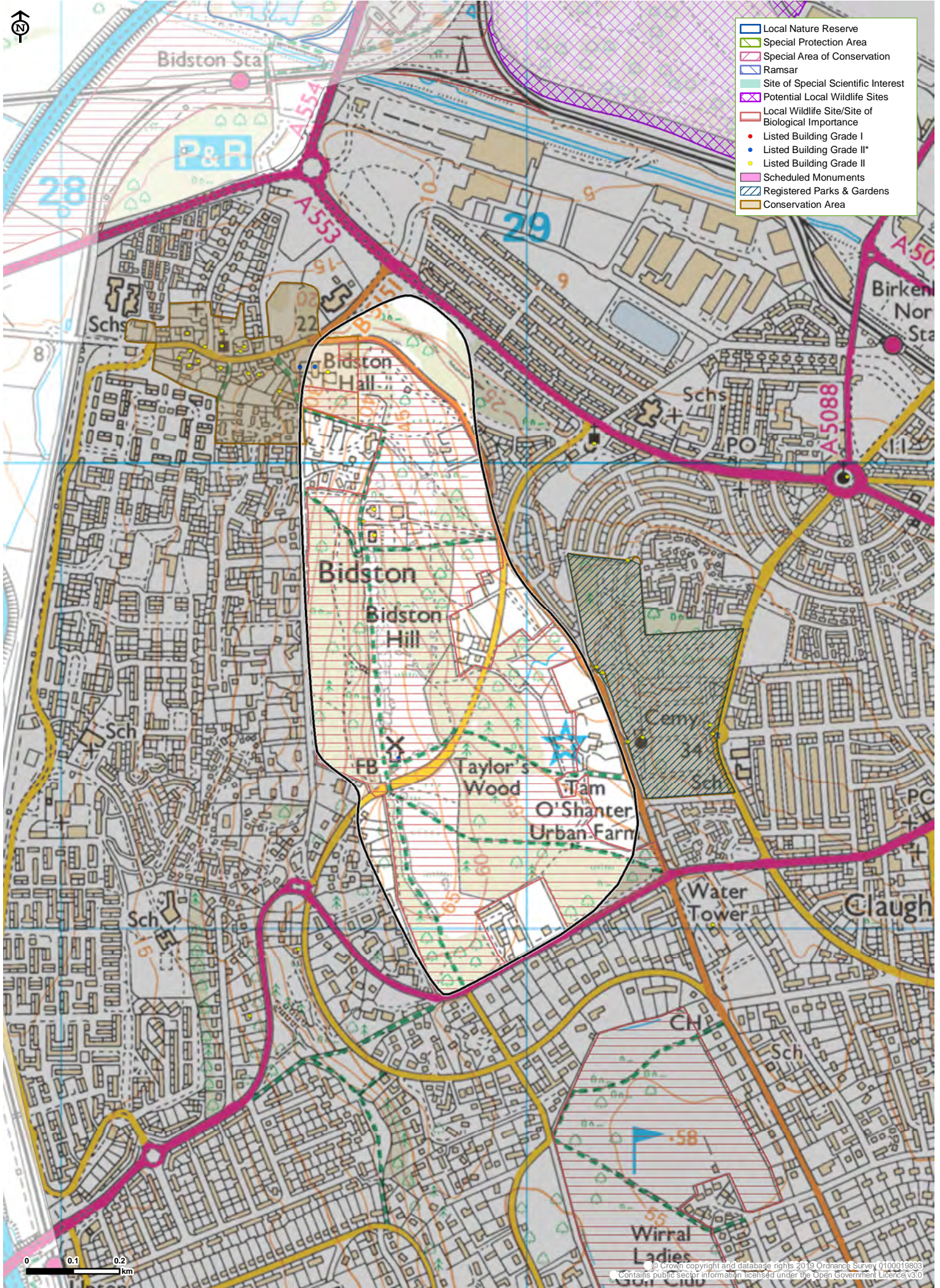
- Conserve the open character of the ridgeline between the windmill and observatory to retain views between these landmarks.
- Conserve the historic visual connection between Bidston Lighthouse and Leasowe Lighthouse through management of scrub and woodland.
- Protect the traditional building styles of buff sandstone, particularly within the Bidston Village Conservation Area.
- Carefully manage visitor pressures within the area, ensuring the retention of inherent levels of tranquillity and lack of built development. Retain informal character to any new recreational features such as car parks, footpaths and interpretation.
- Avoid visually intrusive development on the ridgeline, and any development which would detract from the distinctive character of the landmark historic buildings on the skyline.
- Protect the landscape's far reaching views across Wirral by maintaining the open character of high points along the ridgeline through management of vegetation.
- Conserve the sense of 'wilderness' and remoteness within the character area.

### Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the openness of the sandstone ridge with its distinctive rocky outcrops and heathland through vegetation management.
- Conserve and enhance the wooded character of the area, promoting appropriate woodland management.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species and thin some of the dense evergreen shrubs. New woodland should not detract from the key landmark buildings on Bidston Hill or result in the loss of heathland.
- Conserve, enhance and manage valued heathland and grassland habitats, through clearance and control of areas of trees and scrub adjacent to existing heathland to allow for natural expansion. Implement habitat creation and management as part of the East Wirral Nature Improvement Area.
- Conserve and protect the historic landmark buildings along the ridgeline.



# 3a: Bidston Sandstone Hills





## 3b: Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills

### Summary

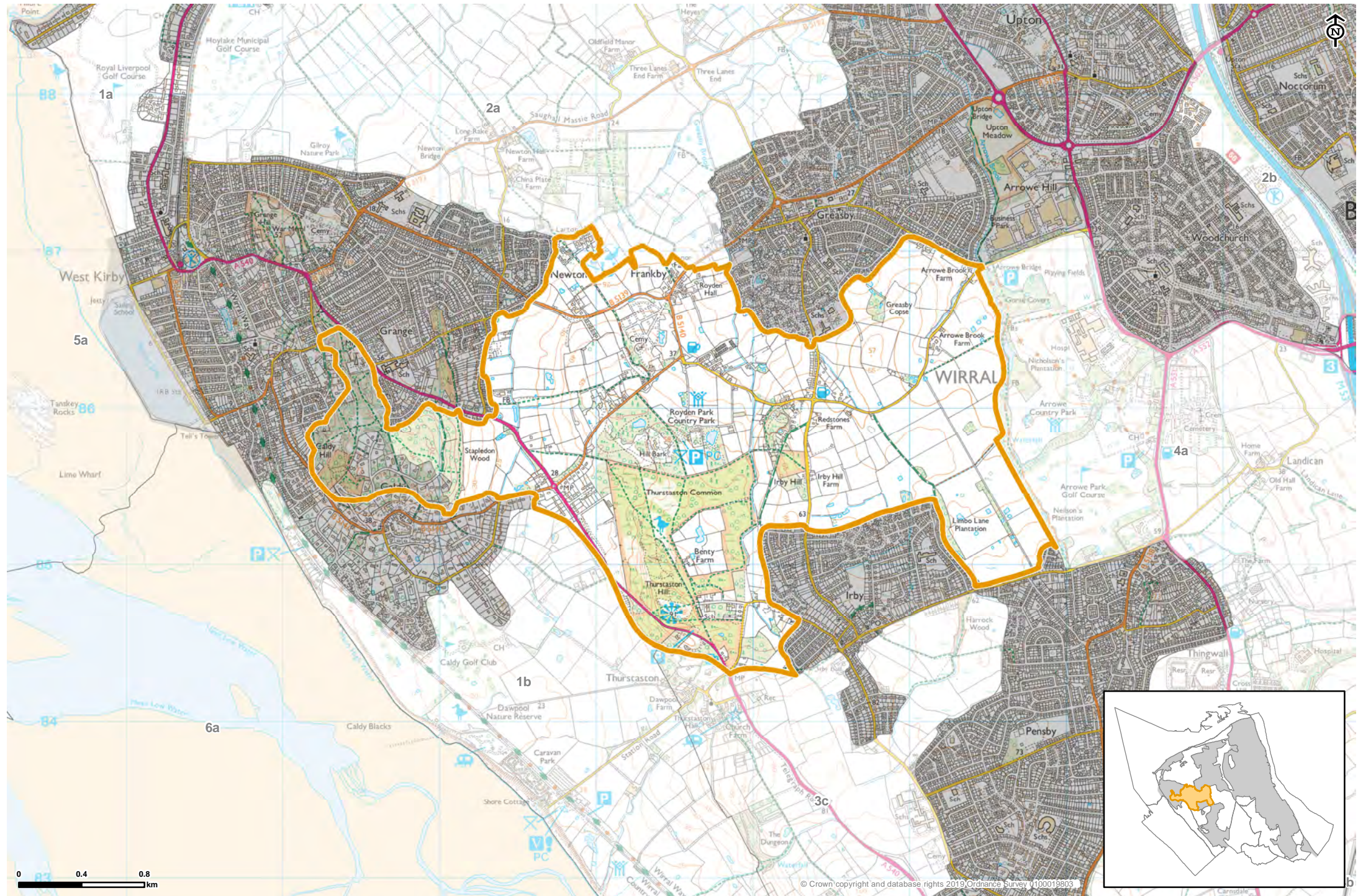
Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills LCA lies in the centre of Wirral and is largely surrounded by urban development which forms the boundary to the character area. It is a rural area of undulating farmland with distinctive wooded sandstone hills. The area is popular for recreation and includes Royden Park, Thurstaston Common and Caldly Hill.



Thurstaston Common



### 3b: Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills





## Key Characteristics

- Wooded hills which form part of a prominent sandstone ridge running north west to south east, interspersed with rolling farmland. The highest point at Thurstaston Hill (91m AOD) has distinctive sandstone pavement outcrops.
- Small wooded brooks flow through the area. Field ponds are common, often surrounded by reedbeds and woodland. There are man-made pools and meres within Royden Park.
- A densely wooded landscape, with mature deciduous woodland on higher slopes and along the fringes of brooks, emphasising the landform.
- Thurstaston Common, designated as a SSSI, is the largest and best example of lowland heathland in Merseyside, supporting dry acid grassland, lowland heathland and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.
- Mixed farmland with a higher proportion of pasture to arable. A varying field pattern bordered by mature hedgerows and trees and narrow woodland belts.
- Much of the area is managed for informal recreation, with a good network of footpaths linking Royden Country Park and open access land at Thurstaston Common and Caldly Hill.
- Historic landscapes include Medieval Townfields around Newton and Frankby and parkland at Royden Park.
- Sparsely settled except for scattered farms and the compact historic village of Frankby, nestled within woodland with a strong vernacular of sandstone or red brick. Small scale ribbon development extends from the urban areas.
- Roads are rural, except for the A540, bound by intact hedgerows or low sandstone walls around settlements.
- Expansive views from the ridgeline across Wirral towards Liverpool and Frodsham and over the Dee Estuary to the Welsh hills. The wooded slopes of Thurstaston Hill and Caldly Hill are prominent features within the wider landscape.
- Strong naturalistic qualities and tranquillity despite the proximity of urban settlement, which is mostly screened by woodland.
- The landform and vegetation create variety between the enclosed woodland and exposed and windswept ridgeline.

## Natural Landscape

**8.27** The area is underlain by a variety of Triassic era sandstones, mostly overlain by Devensian till. The red sandstone pavement outcrops on the ridge are a distinctive feature, including Thor's Stone, once believed to be the site of Viking ceremonies but now thought to be a natural formation, as a result of periglacial weathering. Irby Quarry, Thurstaston Common, and Telegraph Road Cutting, Thurstaston are all designated as Local Geological Sites.

**8.28** The area includes some of the highest land in the borough with a series of small hills which form part of a prominent sandstone ridgeline. High points include Thurstaston Hill at 91m AOD and Caldly Hill at 77m AOD. Lower-lying land between the hills drops to 35m and 25m AOD at the Arrowe and Greasby Brooks respectively.

**8.29** A series of small wooded brooks and streams flow south to north through the northern part of the character area and to the east of Thurstaston Common. Field ponds are common with many fields containing more than one pond. These are designated as Local Wildlife Sites and Sites of Biological Importance for their reedbed and deciduous woodland at Arrowe Brook Farm Ponds, Limbo Lane Pond and Greasby Copse and Ponds. Smaller seasonal ponds and wetlands are beginning to form within Thurstaston Common where depressions exist in the rocks.

**8.30** This is one of the most wooded character areas within Wirral with woodland concentrated around Thurstaston Hill, Caldly Hill and Royden Park. Deciduous woodland is mostly located on the slopes of the hills, although there is some tree cover on the ridgeline. Narrow bands of mature woodland along the fringes of fields and periphery of public open spaces create the impression of a densely wooded landscape, particularly when viewed from high ground.

**8.31** Woodlands contain a high proportion of oak and beech with sycamore and pine present within the central part of the character area. Where the underlying soils support heathland pine and birch woodlands, a strong understory of gorse and ferns are frequent, particularly around Irby Hill. In these locations, sessile and turkey oak and downy birch are also common. Woodlands are of variable age with the most mature along brooks, within Royden Park and at Caldly Hill. There are a number of areas designated for deciduous woodland habitats as Local Wildlife Sites and Sites of Biological Importance including Irby Quarry, Royden Park, Stapledon Wood, Caldly Hill, Caldly Hospital Grounds, and Frankby Cemetery (SBI only).

**8.32** Within Royden Country Park, the presence of large mature holly and rhododendron bushes and the mature plantation woodland including beech, ash, Scots pine and



Norway maple add an element of formality to woodland character.

**8.33** Along the ridgeline at Thurstaston Common, sections of sandstone rock outcrops are surrounded by a mosaic of heathland and regenerating scrub of birch and gorse. The woodland is predominantly birch woodland, although if left, will ultimately succeed to oak woodland. Thurstaston Common is notified as a SSSI for dry heath, wet heath and acidic marshy grassland in damp peaty hollows. Succession to birch-oak woodland is well developed on the eastern side, and the area provides important habitat for passage, wintering and breeding birds.

**8.34** Farmland is mixed with a higher proportion of pasture to arable. Field pattern varies; to the south, fields are often long and linear, and bordered by heavily wooded boundaries, while to the north and on the urban edge, fields are smaller and irregular, their shape influenced by a number of small watercourses.

**8.35** Hedgerows are mostly tall with numerous hedgerow trees, usually oak although sycamore is present along roads. Towards the northern part of the character area, the hedgerows become smaller and more fragmented. Hawthorn is the most prominent species within hedgerows although in places gorse, blackthorn and holly are present.

**8.36** The small brooks are part of the River Birket Corridor Nature Improvement Area, where the priorities are to create wetlands supporting the existing habitats, particularly field ponds. Areas to the east and west of the LCA form part of the West Wirral Heathlands and Arrowe Park Nature Improvement Area, where the priorities are to create heathland, by clearing areas of scrub and tree adjacent to existing heathland habitat to allow natural expansion of heathland, and also by planting heathland species and altering management.



West towards Stapledon Wood

## Cultural Landscape

**8.37** There are extensive recreational land uses within this area, particularly at Royden Park. The country park contains a number of formal pools and meres, and has two miniature railways. A number of footpaths and bridleways cross the area, and there is open access land at Thurstaston Common, Caldly Hill and Irby Common, much of which is managed by the National Trust.

**8.38** The landscape has a field pattern of diverse historic origin. The Cheshire HLC notes areas of Medieval Townfields around Newton and Frankby in the north, pre-Parliamentary enclosure and 19<sup>th</sup> century reorganised field pattern in the centre of the area and formal ornamental parkland at Royden Park.

**8.39** Royden Park was laid out in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as part of larger country estates owned by Sir Ernest Royden, a wealthy Liverpool ship owner. Hill Bark, a Grade II\* listed country house was built in 1891 on Bidston Hill but dismantled and re-erected at Royden Park 1929-31. It is now the UK's smallest 5\* hotel.

**8.40** Frankby, which lies in the north of the character area, is a small compact historic village centred around a village green and nestled within woodland. The Frankby Conservation Area includes a cluster of Grade II listed buildings. Buildings are typically small, with a strong vernacular of sandstone or red brick with Welsh slate roofs. The properties are generally set back with small front gardens and red sandstone walls, while larger properties have gate post entrances. Royden Hall, Manor Farm and farm buildings characterise the fringes of the village, although many farm buildings have been converted into private residences. Trees and hedgerows within the village soften and integrate the properties with the surrounding landscape. There is a large cemetery to the south west of Frankby in the former grounds of Old Frankby Hall.

**8.41** Small scale 20<sup>th</sup> century ribbon development extends along roads at Irby Hill, Montgomery Hill and Hillbark Road. Large farms, such as Redstones Farm, Arrowe Brook Farm and Larton, contain a mixture of small-scale residential buildings and large agricultural barns. Thurstaston village to the south of the A540 Telegraph Road is designated as a Conservation Area, and housing on the western edge of the area is part of Caldly Conservation Area. Roads tend to be small scale and bound by hedgerows or red sandstone walls, except for the A540.

**8.42** The adjacent urban fringes of Irby, Greasby and Caldly are located on rising ground with housing typically set within mature wooded gardens. Mature hedgerows around adjacent fields limit and contain the prominence of the urban fringe



maintaining a sense of separation when viewed in the wider landscape.



North towards Limbo Lane Plantation

### Perceptual Landscape

**8.43** There are expansive panoramic views across Wirral from the ridgeline at Caldy and Thurstaston Common which has a promoted viewpoint. To the east, there are views towards Liverpool across a series of wooded ridgelines, including Bidston Hill, with glimpses of small pockets of farmland and housing. Prominent landmarks include the observatory and windmill on Bidston Hill, the Mersey, and the two cathedrals, Radio City tower and Liver Building in Liverpool. To the west, views are strongly characterised by the coast, the mudflats and saltmarsh within the River Dee, pockets of urban and industry along it and the mountains and hills within Wales beyond. In good weather the high points within the Clywdian Range such as Moel Famau are visible above the sloping countryside bordering the River Dee.

**8.44** Within the central part of the character area, views are enclosed and channelled towards the northern coast, wind turbines and ships at sea. Although the area is surrounded by the larger urban areas of Greasby, Irby, Caldy and Newton, views of urban development are largely obscured by wooded belts and hedgerows, with the exception of Arrowe Park Hospital and incinerator tower, which is visible above the surrounding woodland.

**8.45** The mature wooded boundaries around fields and open spaces provide a unified character to the area, integrating the different land uses. The woodland creates a rural and remote character to the area, and is impacted by few modern intrusions, with the area around Thurstaston Common and Royden Park particularly tranquil. The vegetation and topography create variety between the enclosed woodland,

open formal parkland and exposed and windswept ridgeline with its dramatic views over the estuary and out to sea.

**8.46** Thurstaston Common, Royden Park, Irby Hill, Stapledon Wood and Caldy Hill are recognised locally as Areas of Special Landscape Value. These areas are considered to be among the most outstanding landscapes within Wirral and provide an important and positive contribution to the distinctive attractiveness of the peninsula.

### Valued Landscape Attributes

- The distinctive form of the sandstone ridge with rocky outcrops, particularly at Thurstaston and Caldy, which provide a sense of place.
- The wooded hillsides which provide a backdrop to the wider landscape and surrounding urban areas.
- Valued semi-natural habitats including woodland, heathland and wetland, reflected through local and national designation.
- The wooded parkland and historic field patterns giving the landscape a strong sense of time-depth.
- The recreational value of the country park, open access common land and the network of public rights of way.
- Strong vernacular of the historic buildings at Frankby which provides a rural and coherent character to the settlement.
- The contrast of enclosed views within the wooded landscape and expansive views from the ridgeline east towards Liverpool, and west to Wales and channelled views to the north Wirral coast.
- An area retaining a strong rural character, with a sense of remoteness particularly along the ridgeline.



East towards Greasby Copse



## Landscape Condition

**8.47** The sandstone ridgeline with heathland, wooded hills and rolling farmland provide a coherent character. The surrounding urban edges of Irby, Greasby and Newton are not in keeping with the rural nature of the area. However, the landscape is generally well maintained with little evidence of loss of features.

## Key Issues

- Loss of heathland through natural colonisation of scrub and woodland.
- Scrub and woodland establishment on wetland meres, field ponds and formal ponds within parkland.
- Diversification of agricultural land uses, including equestrian, leading to the subdivision of fields for horse paddocks.
- Agricultural intensification leading to the expansion of farms and construction of prominent large-scale farm buildings.
- Hedgerow fragmentation through field amalgamation, lack of management or lack of replacement planting.
- Recreational pressures on the landscape, especially within Thurstaston Common, resulting in erosion of sandstone rocks and habitats, or accidental fires on heathland. Increased car traffic and demand for additional parking and related development near popular sites.
- Expansion at Arrowse Park Hospital further increasing its prominence in views.
- Pressure for development leading to urban expansion of villages or encroachment of adjacent settlements along the fringes of the character area.
- Maturing woodland and scrub encroachment leading to a loss of expansive panoramic views from the ridgeline.

## Landscape Strategy

**8.48** The overall strategy for the Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills is to conserve the existing landscape pattern. The key aspects to be actively managed are the heathland habitats, particularly at Thurstaston Common and Caldly Hill. There are also opportunities to strengthen the wooded hills and field pattern with wooded boundaries. Expansive views from Thurstaston Common and Caldly Hill should also be conserved.

## Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the openness of the sandstone ridge with its distinctive rocky outcrops through vegetation management.
- Conserve the pattern of field ponds and meres across the area through appropriate land management regimes, selectively removing and thinning encroaching woodland vegetation, particularly along the brooks as part of the River Birket Corridor Nature Improvement Area.
- Conserve and enhance the wooded character of the area, particularly on the hills and ridgeline. Promote appropriate woodland management.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to set these within slopes and high ground reflecting the long and linear character of existing woodland.
- Conserve, enhance and manage valued heathland habitats, through clearance and control of areas of trees and scrub adjacent to existing heathland to allow for natural expansion. This is particularly important within Thurstaston Common, Stapledon Wood and Caldly Hill as part of the West Wirral Heathlands and Arrowse Park Nature Improvement Area.
- Conserve and manage the distinctive historic field patterns with their mature hedgerows and wooded field boundaries as important wildlife habitats and landscape features and encourage replanting where appropriate. Conserve and protect the parkland landscape at Royden Park and plan for the next generation of parkland trees.
- Conserve the sparse settlement pattern of dispersed farms and the rural compact character of Frankby. Protect the traditional building styles of local red sandstone, particularly within Frankby Conservation Area.
- Maintain the well-defined distinction between the rural landscape and urban areas of Greasby, Irby and Newton.
- Maintain and enhance the character of rural roads, particularly the approach to Royden Park. Resist unsympathetic highway improvements that would threaten their rural character.
- Carefully manage the use of the area for recreation, especially at Thurstaston Common, ensuring the retention of inherent levels of tranquillity and



absence of built development. Retain a rural character to new tourist features such as car parks, footpaths and interpretation.

- Avoid visually intrusive development on prominent ridgelines and wooded hills.
- Enhance the sense of place through careful design (including siting, massing, scale and materials) to minimise the impacts of any new development/agricultural buildings.
- Maintain the open character of high points along the ridgeline, particularly at Thurstaston Hill, protecting far-reaching views through management of vegetation.
- Conserve the rural and naturalistic qualities of the landscape with its strong perceptions of tranquillity and remoteness.



### 3b: Thurstaston and Greasby Sandstone Hills

