

4d: Raby Lowland Farmland and Estates

Summary

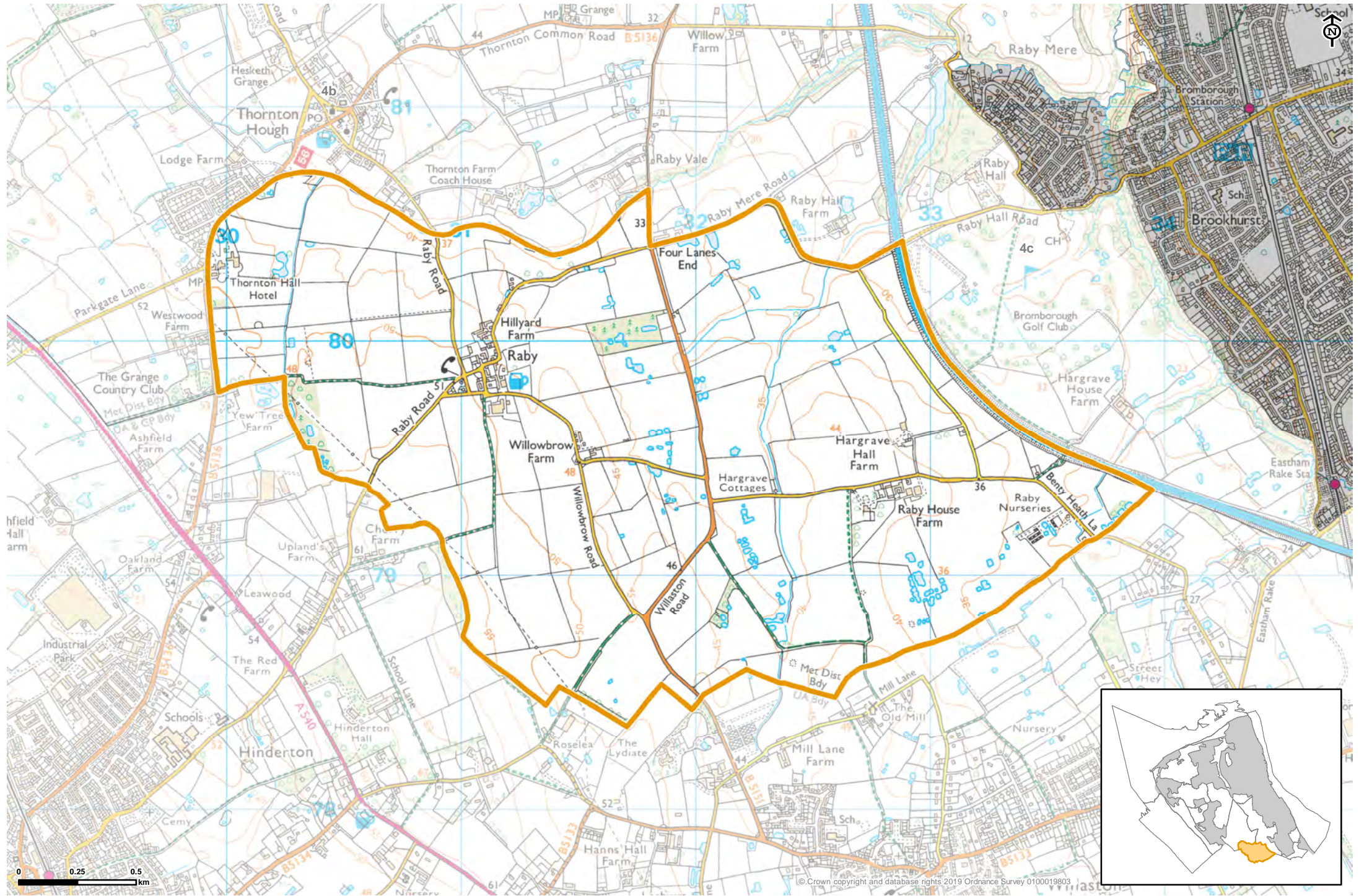
Raby Lowland Farmland and Estates LCA lies along the southern boundary of Wirral. A rural and tranquil farmland area with numerous field ponds, and settlement limited to the hamlet of Raby. There are few urbanising features, and woodland to the south, north and east provides an enclosed character.

The southern boundary is formed by the borough boundary, and the eastern boundary by the M53. The western and northern boundaries follow the road pattern and field boundaries along the Raby Brook.



Raby

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Key Characteristics

- Rural gently rolling farmland, between 30m and 55m AOD.
- Small watercourses in the north and east, running into adjacent Raby Mere. Numerous field ponds in groups of two or more, occasionally visible from roads, and frequently surrounded by priority habitat deciduous woodland and reedbeds.
- Infrequent copses of mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland, including areas of priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous and broadleaf woodland.
- Mixed pasture and arable farmland in medium to large regular fields. Fields mostly bound by low hedgerows, with some small groups of hedgerow trees or Cheshire rail fencing which provides an estate character.
- Sparse settlement pattern, concentrated at Raby, which has a number of Grade II listed buildings. Large red sandstone farmsteads with agricultural out buildings are scattered in the south.
- Roads are bound by hedgerows and in some places by Cheshire rail fencing. Roads within Raby are lined by distinctive avenues of sycamore.
- Limited public rights of way, extending from Raby to the south.
- Views to wooded ridgelines to the east create an enclosed character, with only the Liverpool cathedrals visible above the treeline. Many internal views across farmland are limited by woodland blocks, creating an enclosed character.
- A rural and remote character, despite proximity to the M53 and the adjacent settlements beyond it. Overhead powerlines in the west are one of the few urbanising features.

Natural Landscape

9.80 The area is underlain by Triassic bedrock Chester Sandstone Formation, with an area of Wilmslow Sandstone Formation in the south east. Much of the area is overlain by Quaternary till, and there are overlays of alluvium along the watercourses.

9.81 This is a gently undulating landscape with landform flattening around Raby House which is on a small plateau around 40m AOD. Land generally rises towards Raby village. The lowest elevations are along Raby Brook, which marks the northern boundary of the character area, and along the M53 cutting.

9.82 Raby Brook in the north is lined by mixed woodland, a small amount designated as priority habitat lowland mixed broad-leaf woodland. Another watercourse flows through the east of the area. Most of its route is fairly open with small pockets of woodland present at field margins which intersect with the stream and around field ponds. Both watercourses flow into Raby Mere (within LCA Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley).

9.83 There are numerous field ponds of various sizes through the character area. They often occur in groups of two or more within one field, and in the south these groups are often clustered. A high proportion of the ponds are situated close to field margins, with a number bordering Willaston Road and Raby Mere Road. Glimpsed views of the ponds themselves are possible where they border roads. Elsewhere their location is only discernible as small copses within fields, as the ponds are often surrounded by priority habitat deciduous woodland and reedbed. The Benty Heath Lane Ponds are designated as a Local Wildlife Site and Site of Biological Importance. There is also an area of priority habitat purple moor grass and rush pastures north of Hargrave Cottages.

9.84 Woodland is fairly scarce within this character area, although a sense of a wooded landscape is created through the numerous wooded field ponds, small groups of hedgerow trees and small copses around private properties. Trees and woodland are generally mature, and oak is the most common tree species, much of which is priority habitat lowland mixed broadleaf and deciduous woodland, including at Willaston Copse Local Wildlife Site and Site of Biological Importance.

9.85 There are some geometric single species plantations of poplar and willow. These are prominent, but uncharacteristic vertical features.



Raby Mere Road looking east

Cultural Landscape

9.86 Land cover is a mix of arable and pasture farmland. Fields are medium to large in size and regular in shape although closer to houses and small watercourses the field pattern tends to become irregular. The fields are mostly bounded by low hedgerows with some mature hedgerow trees and in some places by Cheshire rail fencing. Close to farmsteads there are a number of fields which have become subdivided for horse paddocks.

9.87 A small pocket of parkland is present around Raby House, which includes large fields and individual trees and small groups of trees within grass. The area is used as both horse paddocks and rough grazing.

9.88 The historic field pattern predominantly dates from 19th century reorganised fields, with a small area of pre-Parliamentary enclosure fields around Hargrave Cottages.

9.89 Settlement is limited to the small village of Raby and scattered farms. The village is strongly associated with farming, with a small number of houses in the centre and the fringes characterised by large farms. Properties are semi-detached or detached with a few smaller cottages. The majority of properties are associated with farm buildings. There are a number of Grade II listed buildings including The Wheatsheaf thatched pub.

9.90 Other development comprises a few scattered farms and a collection of buildings around Raby House within the southern part of the character area. Farmhouses are often large with a number of associated farm buildings present. Their boundaries sometimes contain trees and woodland which reduce their influence within the landscape. Farm buildings are a mixture of smaller brick and sandstone barns

adjacent to smaller farmsteads and larger more noticeable modern agricultural barns surrounding larger farmsteads.

9.91 Some of the main roads through the area, including Willaston Road and Raby Mere Road, are bound by Cheshire rail fencing which adds an element of distinctive formality to the landscape. The majority of the roads are edged by low hedgerows, with a few mature hedgerow trees. Within Raby village, sycamore is planted in avenues along some of the roads. This softens the village fringes and provides an element of formality within the village. In other places oak and beech are also used as specimen and avenue tree planting along roads.

9.92 There are some public rights of way within the area, allowing access between the settlements within the area and those in Cheshire West and Chester. One footpath in the south east allows access across the M53. There are no other recreation uses within this area.



The Crossway looking west

Perceptual Landscape

9.93 The area has a strong rural character and retains a clear sense of separation from the larger settlements of Heswall to the west and Eastham and Bromborough to the east. Wooded hills to the east limit views to Eastham and Bromborough, although some church spires can be seen. There are a few longer views of the two Liverpool Cathedrals above the wooded ridgeline from higher ground.

9.94 Internal views are often extensive, across gently undulating farmland interspersed with small woodland copses and hedgerow trees. The undulating nature of the land enables the field pattern to be discernible from footpaths and the local road network. Around Raby House the parkland character provides more formal channelled views through a

number of copses surrounding field ponds. Thornton Hall Hotel is visible as its white colouring contrasts with the more muted colours of the surrounding development.

9.95 The M53 is in cutting within this character area, and therefore does not have a significant visual impact on the area. An overhead powerline running across the western edge of the area is prominent on the skyline, but is the only urbanising feature within the landscape.

Valued Landscape Attributes

- Scattered clusters of field ponds, often surrounded by priority habitat deciduous woodland, provide important ecological habitats and variation in the landscape.
- Intact historic field pattern bounded by mature hedgerows or Cheshire rail fencing, interspersed with large sandstone farmsteads provides time-depth.
- The intimate character of Raby village, its listed buildings, and distinctive sycamore avenues provides a sense of place and time-depth.
- Rural and remote character, enclosed by the wooded ridgelines to the east, with distant views to Liverpool cathedrals above the treeline.

Landscape Condition

9.96 The area has a distinctive pattern formed by the largely intact 19th century open field pattern, field ponds and sandstone vernacular of Raby and farmsteads. Urban intrusions are limited, and the area retains a clear rural character. There has been some hedgerow fragmentation, and some sub-division of fields for horse paddocks using post and rail and horse tape. The creation of single-species plantations is also an incongruous feature within the area. However, these only have a localised influence on the character of the area, which generally remains intact.

Key Issues

- Loss of the distinctive pattern of field ponds and associated habitats.
- Diversification of agricultural land uses, including equestrian, leading to the sub-division of fields for horse paddocks using timber and electric fences which have an untidy appearance.
- Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and their replacement with post and wire fencing, or amalgamation resulting in the loss of more intimate

landscapes and the fragmentation of the historic field pattern.

- Single species plantations of willow and poplar.
- Agricultural intensification leading to the expansion of farms and construction of large modern agricultural buildings.
- Conversion of traditional farm buildings to private residences.
- Pressure for development on the edge of Raby village and adjacent settlements outside the character area.



The Crossway looking south

Landscape Strategy

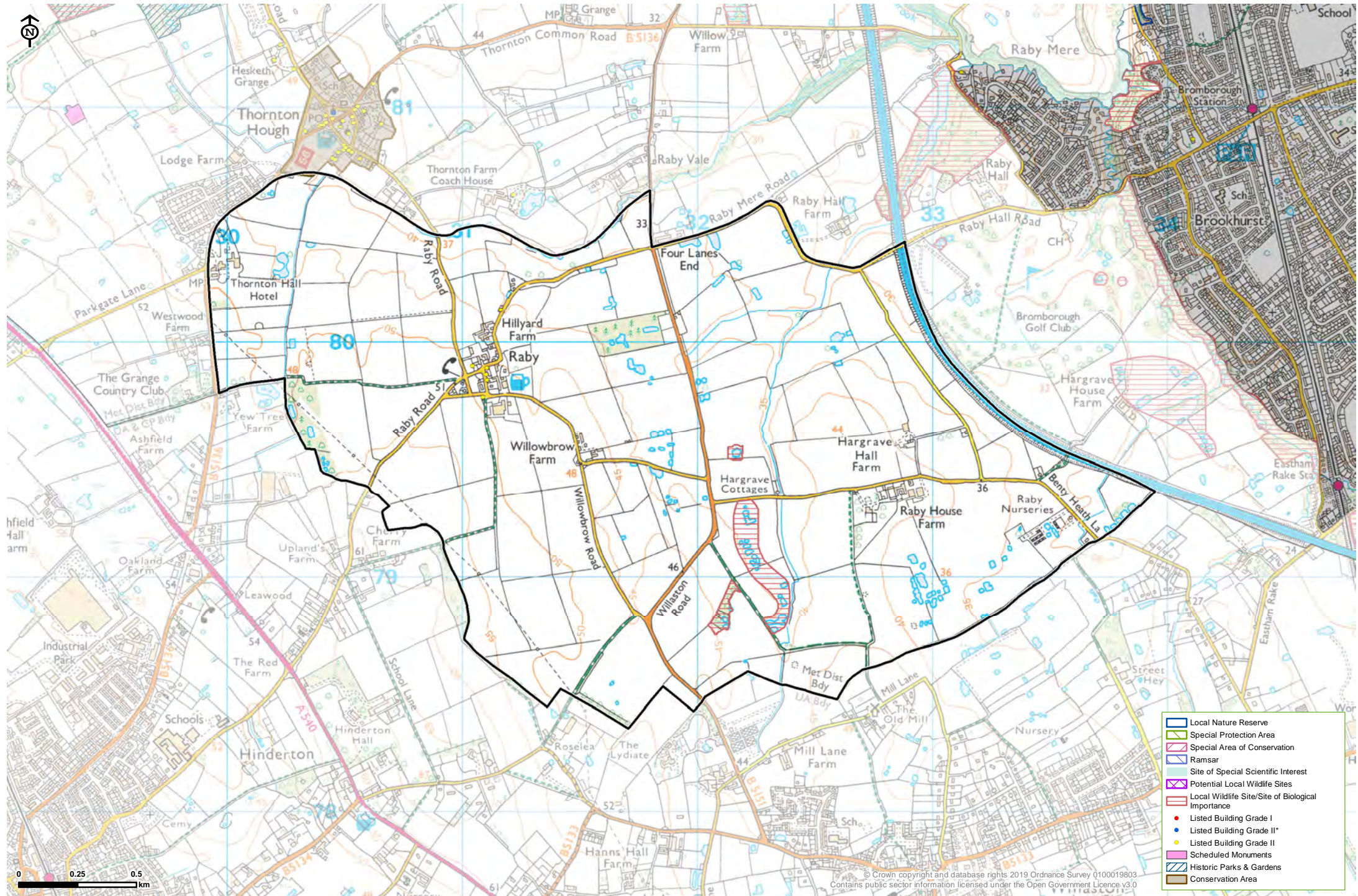
9.97 The overall landscape strategy for Raby Lowland Farmland and Estates is to conserve and enhance the coherent field pattern and rural agricultural landscape. The key aspects to conserve are the limited settlement pattern and the enclosed character from the wooded horizons and copses. Key aspects to enhance are hedgerow boundaries and single species plantations.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve, enhance and manage the wide distribution of field ponds, with their associated wetland habitats.
- Conserve and enhance deciduous woodland and small copses. Promote appropriate woodland management.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, particularly along the edges of single species plantations, to integrate these woodlands into the landscape.

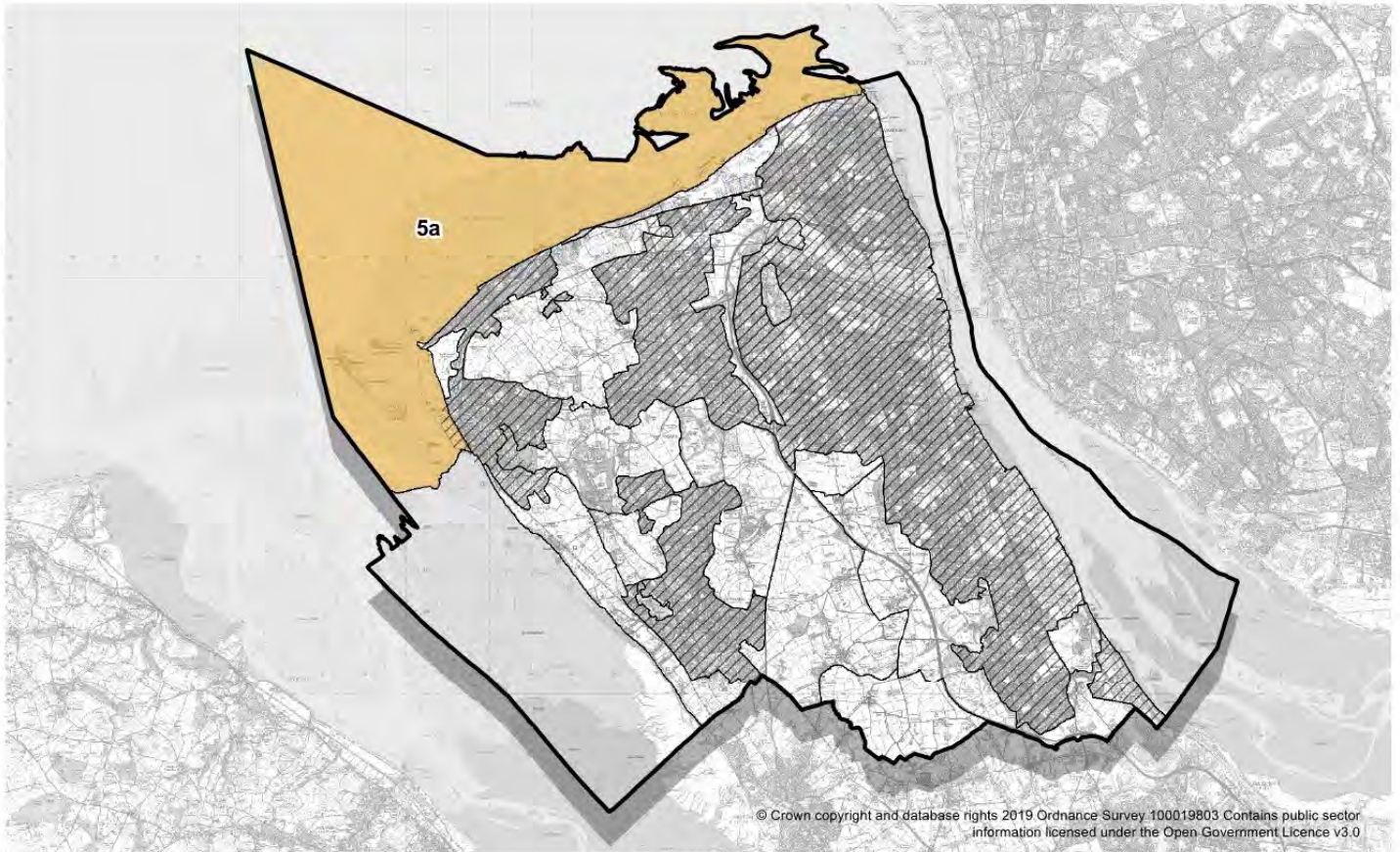
- Conserve the historic field pattern with intact hedgerows or Cheshire rail fencing. Conserve and manage hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features.
- Enhance and augment fragmenting field boundaries through planting new native hedgerows and putting in place a programme of hedgerow tree replacement. Trees should be situated in small groups and close to built form to maintain an open character through the landscape.
- Conserve, enhance and manage valued grassland, wetland and woodland habitats.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Conserve and enhance the sparse settlement pattern of the nucleated village at Raby and scattered farms through control of new development.
- Conserve the rural character and strong vernacular of Raby village and its historic buildings, and strong association with farm buildings.
- Enhance the appearance of the Raby village car park through reinstatement of hedgerow boundaries, new hedgerow trees and further trees within the car park to reduce its scale.
- Maintain and enhance the character of the rural lanes. Resist unsympathetic highway improvements that would threaten their rural character.
- Enhance the sense of place through careful design (including siting, massing, scale and materials) to minimise the impacts of any new development or agricultural buildings.
- Ensure the distinctive rural character of agricultural buildings is not significantly altered if they are converted for alternative uses.
- Protect open views across the landscape, towards skyline features on the wooded horizon, including views to the Liverpool cathedrals.
- Protect the rural and remote character of the landscape by avoiding visually intrusive development along the wooded horizon.

4d: Raby Lowland Farmland and Estates



Chapter 10

SCT 5: Coastal Waters



Description

This SCT is distinguished by the surrounding estuaries and coastal waters off the Wirral coast. Extensive areas of coastal sand dunes, saltmarsh and inter-tidal mudflats, provide internationally important habitats for breeding and overwintering birds. Expansive views are available out to busy coastal waters with offshore windfarms, and south to the estuary waters (described in SCT6: Estuaries)

Seascape Character Area

The Coastal Waters SCT contains one Seascape Character Area:

- 5a: North Wirral Foreshore and Coastal Waters

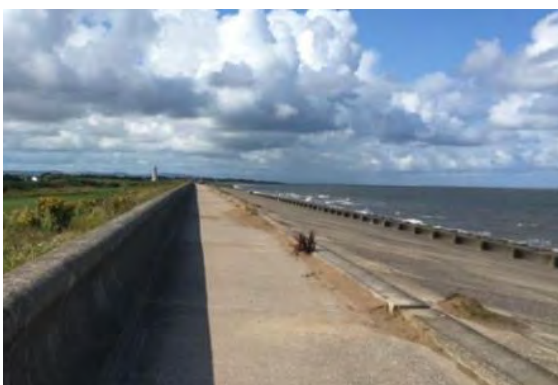
5a: North Wirral Foreshore and Coastal Waters

Summary

The North Wirral Foreshore and Coastal Waters SCA comprises the coastal waters off the north Wirral coast, extending from the shoreline to the borough boundary in Liverpool Bay, a maximum of 18km from the shore. The area includes the East Hoyle Bank, North Bank and Great Burbo Banks. On the landward boundary it is bordered by LCA 1a: North Wirral Coastal Edge. It extends to the Perch Rock breakwater in the east and from the edge of the West Kirby Marine Lake to the borough boundary in the west where it includes Hilbre Island, Little Hilbre Island, Little Eye and Tanskey rocks. SCA 6a: Dee Estuary lies to the southwest and SCA 6b: Mersey Estuary lies to the southeast.



Leasowe Bay beach looking north out to Liverpool Bay

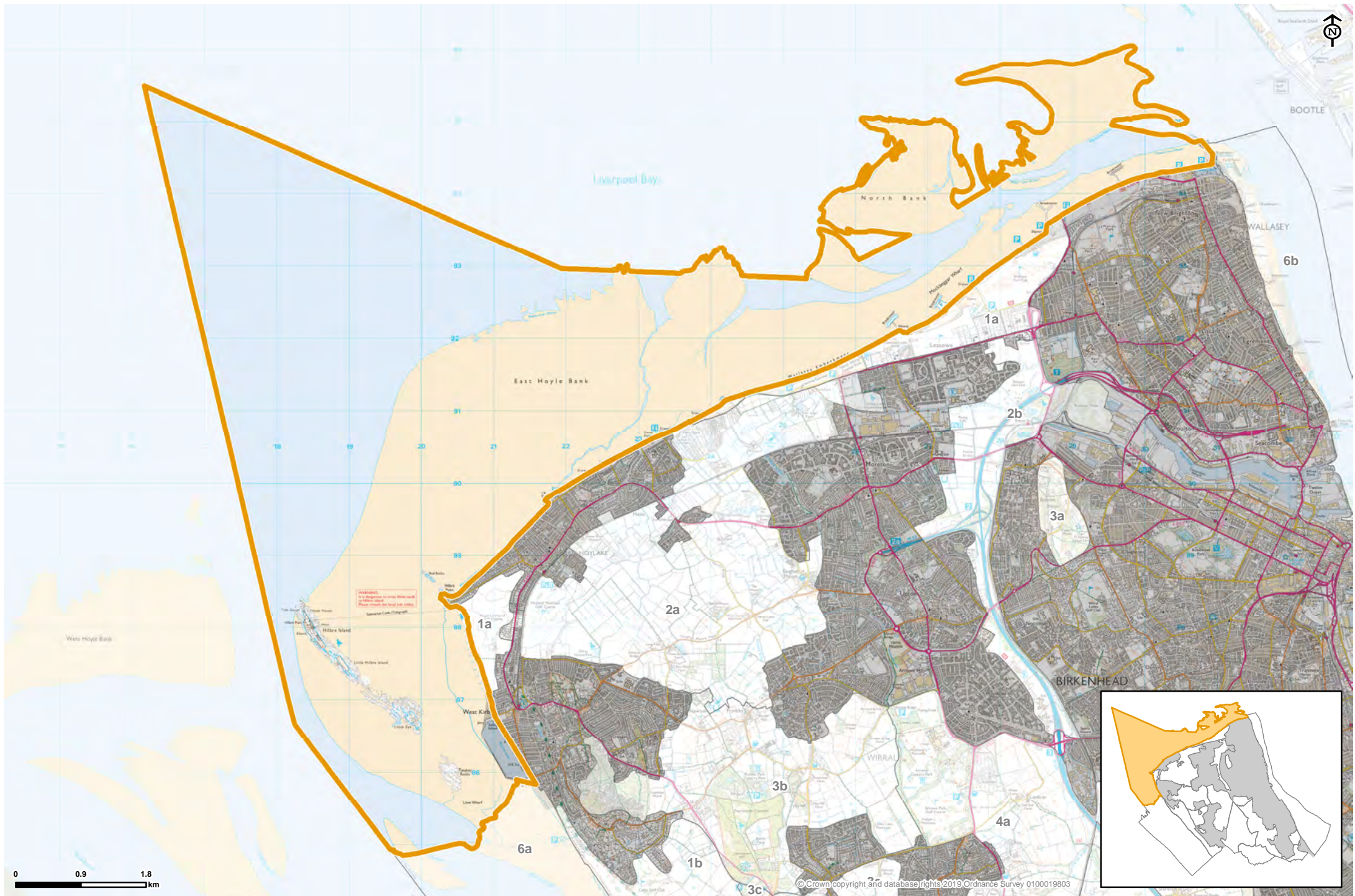


Wallasey Embankment looking west towards Leasowe Lighthouse and Wales



Recreation along Wallasey Embankment looking east towards Liverpool

5a: North Wirral Foreshore and Coastal Waters



Natural Landscape

- Coastal area north of the Wirral peninsular between the Dee and Mersey estuaries.
- Low-lying coastline underlain by Triassic sandstones, which form distinctive, isolated, rock outcrops at the mouth of the Dee including the Hilbre Islands and Hilbre Point/Red Rocks which are recognised as Local Geological Sites.
- A high tidal range with shallow, very gently shelving coastal waters with extensive sand banks and mudflats exposed at low tide on East Hoylake and North Banks. These are incised with small water channels, particularly between West Kirby and the Hilbre Islands.
- Sand dunes and a wide sandy foreshore along the length of the frontage provide natural protection to the settlements of Hoylake, Moreton, Leasowe, Wallasey and New Brighton as well as the golf clubs along the coast. Nascent sand dunes forming to the front of coastal defences give them a more natural appearance.
- The frontage is defended by seawalls and the Wallasey Embankment providing flood protection to the low-lying hinterland, except for a small section of undefended natural coastline at the mouth of the Dee Estuary.
- Mudflats, sand flats and saltmarshes are important as breeding grounds and overwintering sites for a range of wildfowl, wading and migratory bird populations, reflected in overlapping international designations including Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore; Liverpool Bay; and Dee Estuary SPA, SAC, Marine Protection Area and Ramsar Sites.
- The coast is covered by the North Wirral Foreshore and Liverpool Bay and Dee Estuary Nature Improvement Areas, which prioritise the management of the designated sites.
- Priority habitat coastal sand dunes, coastal saltmarsh and intertidal mud and sand flats are notified as the Dee Estuary and North Wirral Foreshore SSSI.
- The Hilbre Islands contain important semi-natural habitats including cliff vegetation and maritime heathland and grassland, which are designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

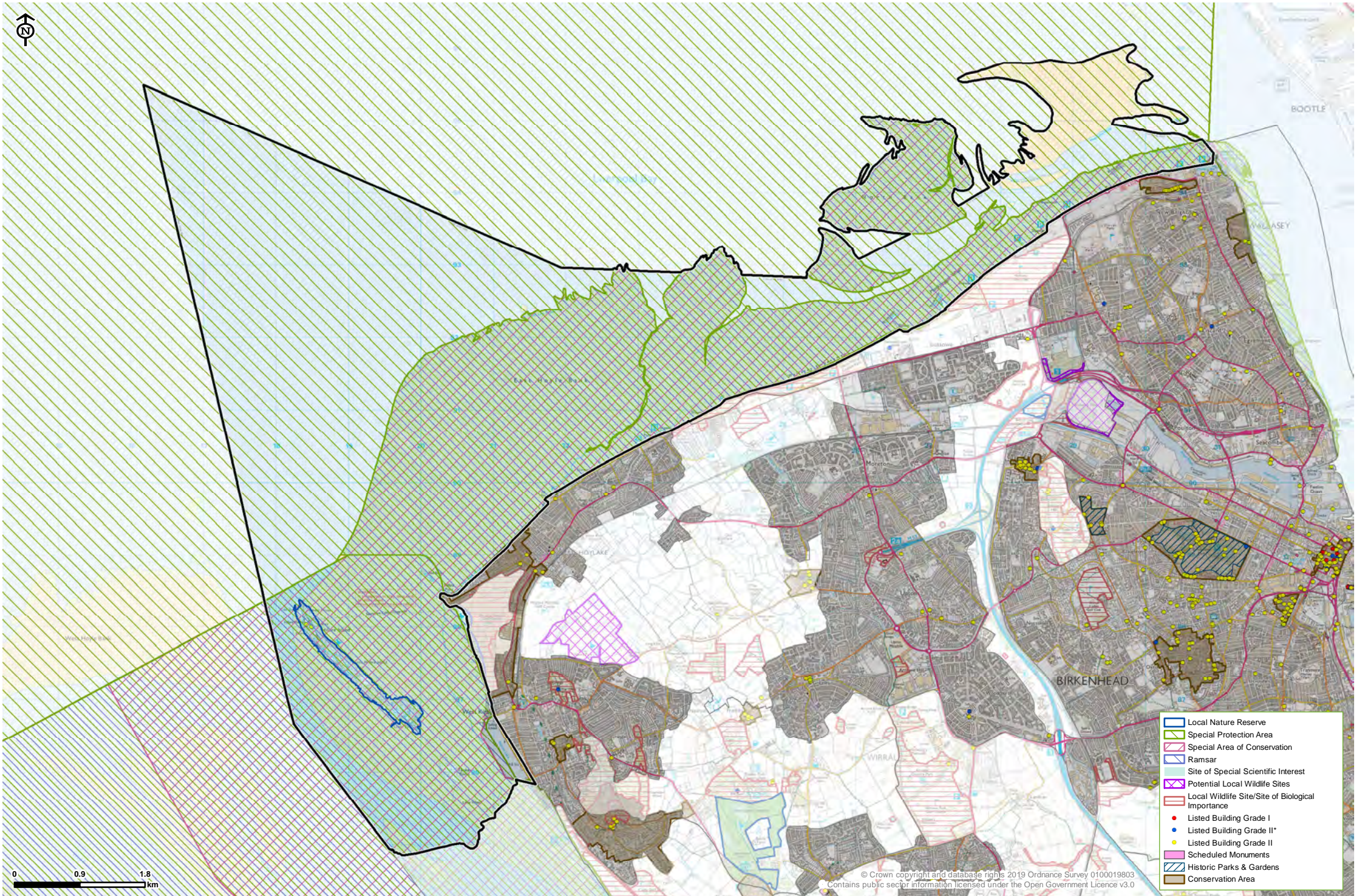
Cultural Landscape

- Important nursery grounds for herring, plaice, Dover sole and bass. Commercial fisheries include cockles, mussels, shrimps, bass, plaice, Dover sole, flounder, dab, turbot, brill, codling, whiting, cod, mackerel and mullet.
- At the end of the last glaciation the coast was c.15km further west. Rising sea levels covered ancient landscapes and prehistoric sites and artefacts have been discovered in the intertidal zone.
- The combination of high shipping volumes and numerous sandbanks has resulted in hundreds of shipwrecks. The coast was also known for smuggling, particularly between the Isle of Man and the mainland.
- Hilbre Island has two Grade II listed historic buildings: the telegraph station built in 1841 as part of a relay of seven stations from Point Lynus to Liverpool and the 1836 Buoy Master's house and buoy store.
- Wide sandy beaches fronting coastal towns are tourism draws. The Hilbre Islands are popular for bird watching and visitors can walk out at low tide to the unbridged tidal islands from West Kirby.
- Recreational sailing is available from Wirral Sailing Centre (based at West Kirby Marine Lake) and Hoylake Sailing Centre, and RYA racing and sailing areas extend along the North Wirral coast and Dee Estuary.
- Public access is available along the coastline, especially at low tide.

Perceptual Landscape

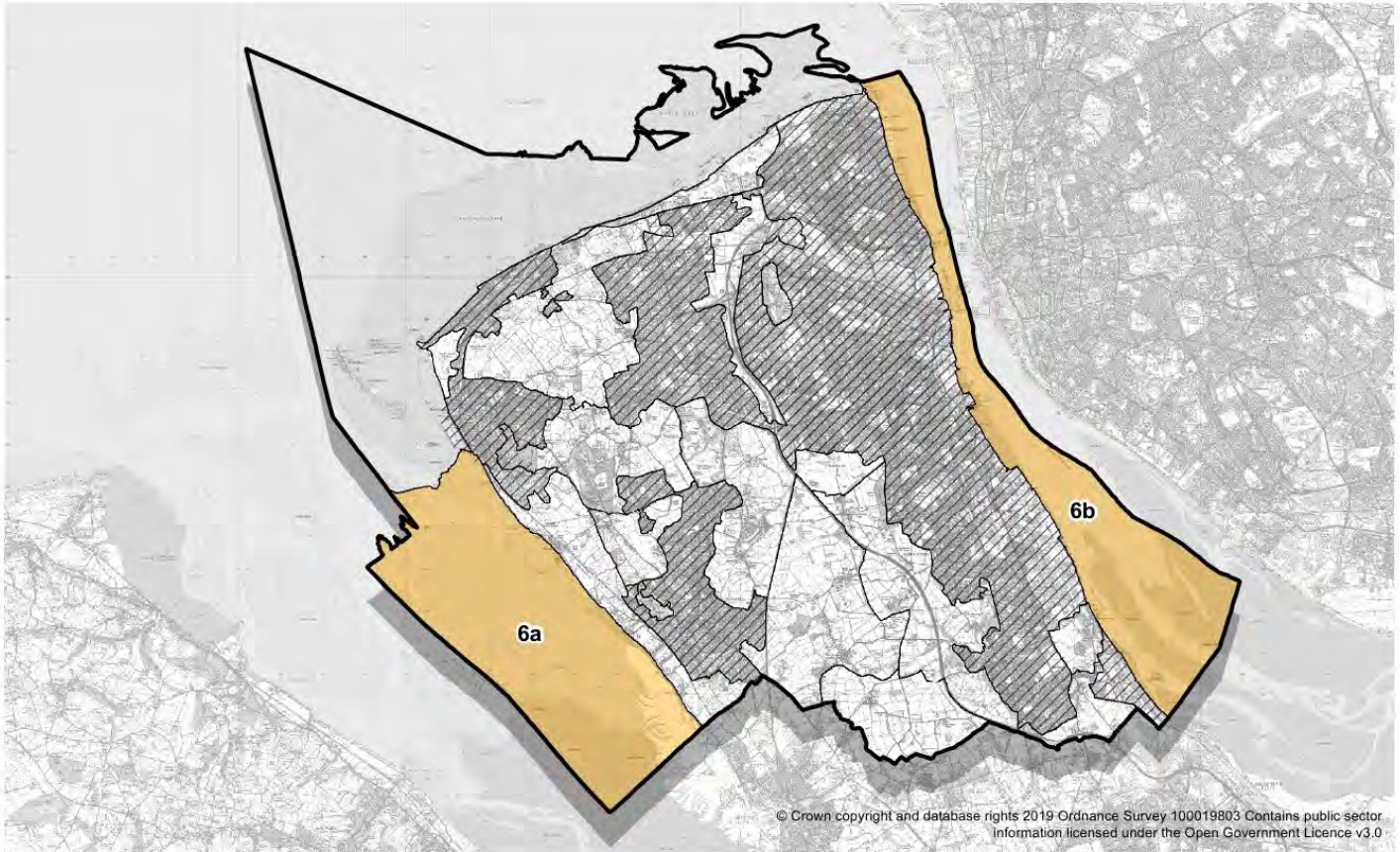
- Expansive and spectacular views over the open water of Liverpool Bay and adjacent estuaries. On a clear day views are possible to Blackpool and the Lake District. Industrial buildings, cranes and wind turbines at Liverpool Docks are visible to the east. The Welsh coastline and Clwydian Range are visible to the west.
- Offshore windfarms including Burbo Bank, Burbo Bank Extension and North Hoyle and Gwynt y Mor are prominent vertical structures in views out to sea.
- Views back to the Wirral shoreline include Leasowe Lighthouse, tower blocks and church at Wallasey, and wooded hills at Bidston, Caldy and Thurstaston.
- A good experience of dark skies at sea, although this is reduced due to the predominance of linear settlements along the coast and busy shipping lanes out to sea.

5a: North Wirral Foreshore and Coastal Waters



Chapter 11

SCT 6: Estuaries



Description

This SCT is distinguished by the estuary waters to the east and west of Wirral. The estuaries contain mudflats, sandflats and saltmarsh, and are internationally important habitats for overwintering and breeding birds. Expansive views are available up and down the estuaries, and at their mouths out to the wider coastal waters (described in SCT5: Coastal Waters).

Seascape Character Areas

The Estuaries SCT is subdivided into two Seascape Character Areas:

- 6a: Dee Estuary
- 6b: Mersey Estuary

6a: Dee Estuary

Summary

The Dee Estuary SCA covers the Dee Estuary to the west of the borough. The Dee contains a large number of mudflats, sandflats and vegetated saltmarsh, particularly in the south, with a wider estuarine channel in the north towards the mouth. An important habitat for breeding and overwintering birds, and grey seals, the area has little shipping. There are extensive views across the Dee to the Welsh coast and North Wales hills. Views to Wirral are limited by the sandstone wooded ridgelines.

The northern boundary is drawn from the edge of the West Kirby Marine Lake to the south of the Hilbre Islands, and the southern and western boundaries follow the borough boundary. The eastern landward boundary is formed 1b: Dee Estuarine Edge.



Thurstaston beach looking over the Dee Estuary to Wales

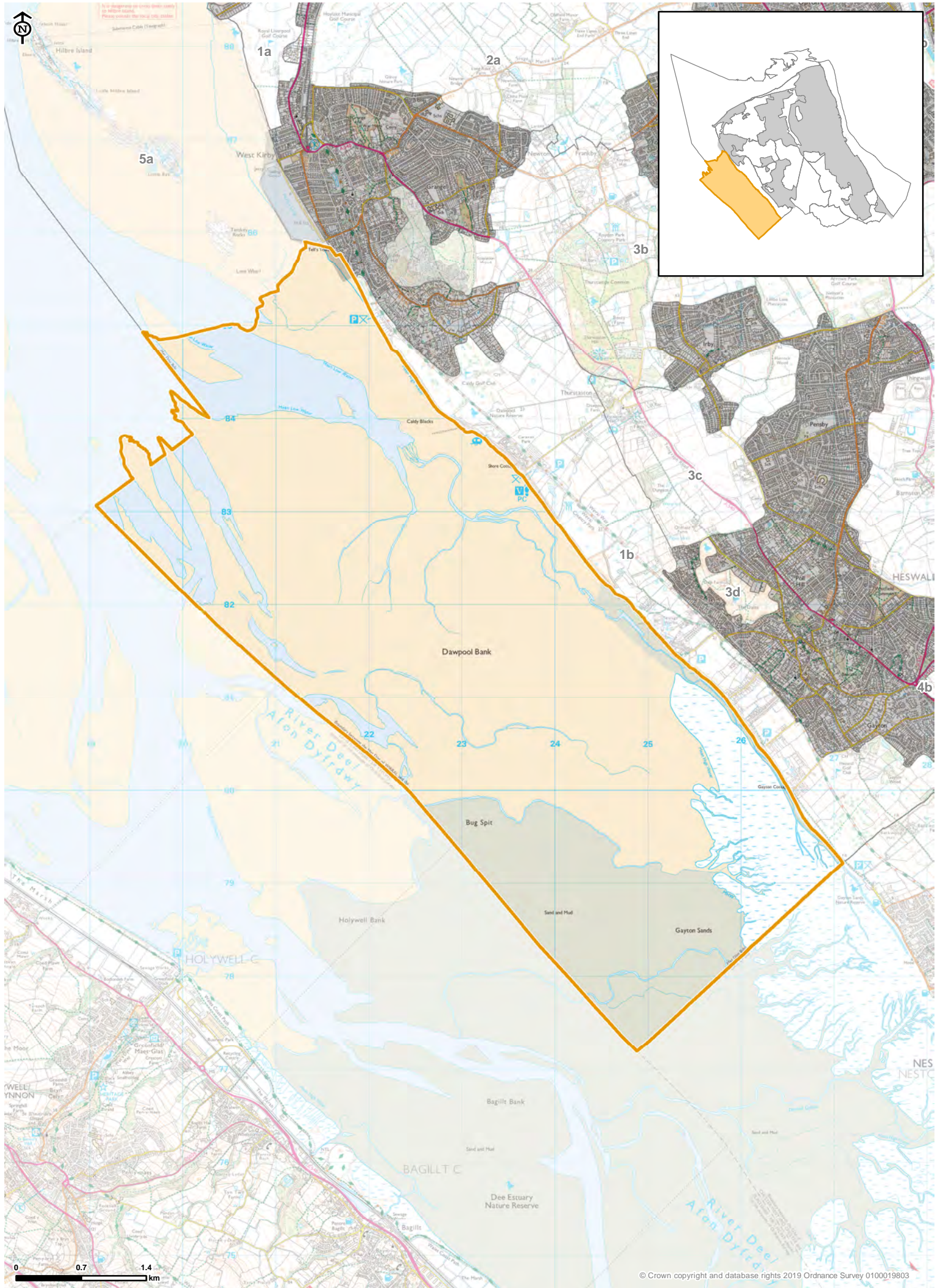


Coast at Riverbank Road looking north



Dee Estuary looking towards West Kirby from Ffynnongroyw

6a: Dee Estuary



Natural Landscape

- Low-lying estuary edges underlain by sandstone with sections of eroding clay cliffs near Thurstaston which form a vertical drop to the beach below and are notified as the Dee Cliffs SSSI. Extensive deposits of sand, silt and clay left by the River Dee give rise to the distinctive characteristics of the Dee Estuary.
- A high tidal range and shallow, very gently shelving sea floor, with comparatively little water occupying so large a basin. Winding channels form intricate patterns in the saltmarsh to the south, with a wider estuarine channel to the north opening out in coastal waters at the mouth of the estuary.
- Internationally important estuary habitats with expansive inter-tidal mudflats, sandflats and saltmarsh which supports thousands of wetland birds, reflected in the overlapping SAC, SPA, Marine Protection Area and Ramsar designations. Particularly important habitat for populations of shelducks, teals, godwit, tern and waders.
- Dee Estuary SSSI is notified for benthic fauna, saltmarsh and transitional habitats. There is a visible succession of pioneer vegetation colonising intertidal mudflats through lower, middle and upper saltmarsh and on to brackish and freshwater transitions with reed beds to the top of the shore.
- The estuary supports a population of grey seals and is an important breeding and nursery ground for coastal fish species and sand eels and route for migratory fish species such as lamprey.
- The area is covered by the Dee Estuary Nature Improvement Area, which prioritises management of the designated sites, to ensure their resilience to natural and climate change.

Cultural Landscape

- Improvements in water quality in the Dee since the mid-1900s now support commercial fishing activity, including cockle fishing and seasonal catches of bass, flounder and shrimp.
- The funnel shape of the Dee Estuary encourages sedimentation, largely from longshore drift, which over time has caused historic ports in the upper reaches of the estuary to silt up.
- The estuary provided a historic trading route to Chester. Canalisation of the Dee in 1737 to stem natural siltation diverted the river's course to the Welsh side of the estuary, increasing siltation of the Wirral side of the

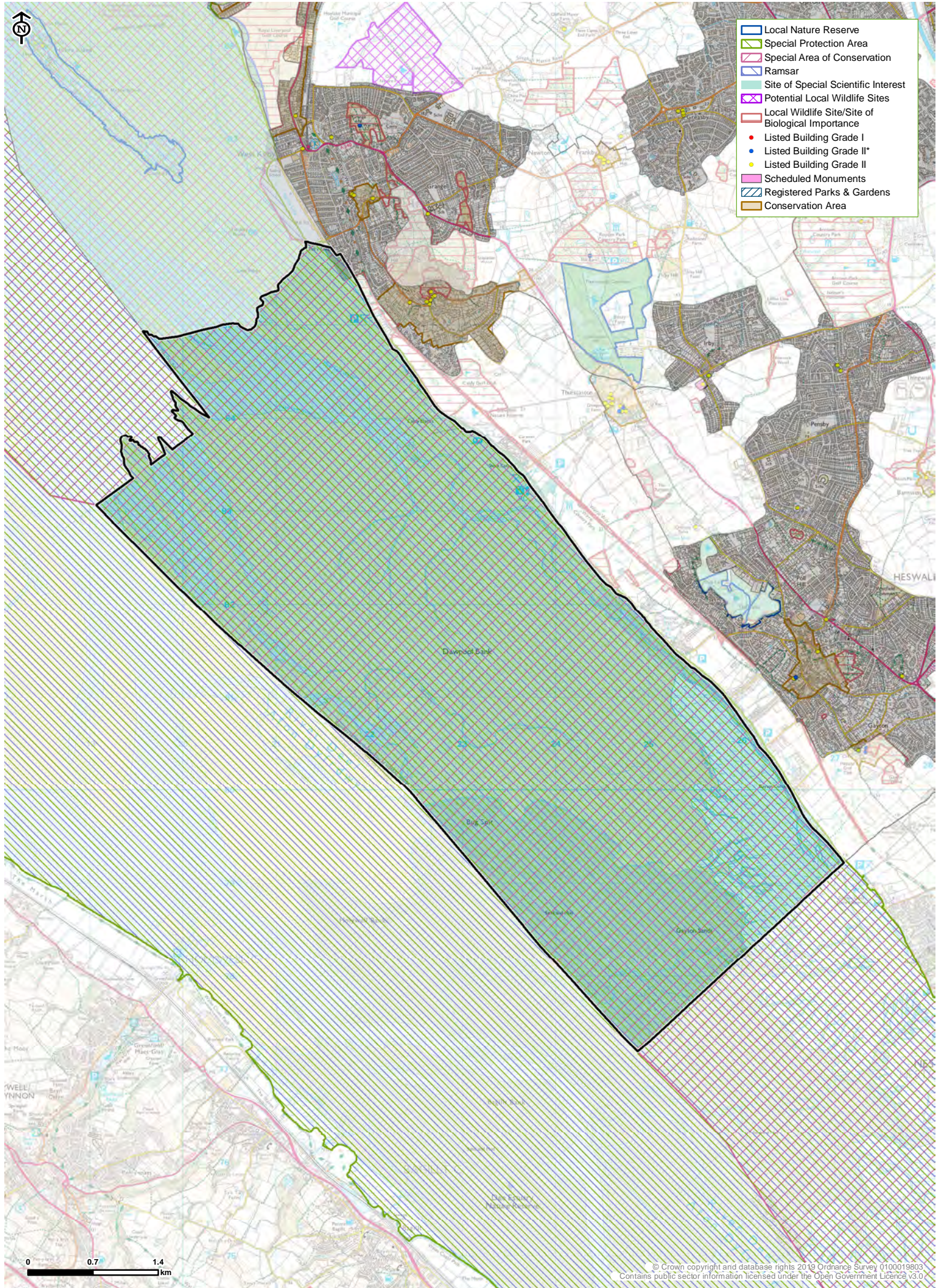
estuary. Saltmarsh is creeping northwards, and Heswall had a sandy beach in living memory.

- Valued for formal and informal recreation, providing access to the coast via Wirral Country Park and the Wirral Way coastal path and opportunities for bird watching. Recreational sailing is available from Dee Sailing Club and slipways at Heswall, and RYA racing and sailing areas throughout the Dee Estuary.

Perceptual Landscape

- Expansive and open estuary which provides a sense of containment from the adjacent land, both on Wirral and the Welsh side.
- Extensive views over the estuary, mudflats, saltmarsh to the Welsh coastline and Clwydian Range contribute to the perception of a large-scale exposed landscape.
- Longer views to the Hilbre Islands to the north and out to sea with its offshore windfarms provide a visual focus at the mouth of the estuary.
- Views back to Wirral are limited by the wooded ridgeline at Caldy and Thurstaston.
- A naturalistic dynamic landscape with high levels of tranquillity characterised by the call of wading birds.
- At night industry on the Welsh side can be clearly seen from night lighting. There is a good experience of dark skies away from shoreline settlement.

6a: Dee Estuary



6b: Mersey Estuary

Summary

The Mersey Estuary SCA comprises the Mersey Estuary and Eastham Channel. Urban development lines much of the estuary, and Eastham Ferry contains the only area of natural sandstone cliffs. There are strong currents and tidal scour near the mouth of the estuary, which contrasts with the mudflats and sandflats in the south of the area. Still in use for industry and shipping, the area is also popular for recreation and provides views of Wirral and Liverpool.

The northern, eastern and southern boundaries are formed by the borough boundary, and the western boundary by the Wirral shoreline.



Eastham Ferry looking east towards Liverpool

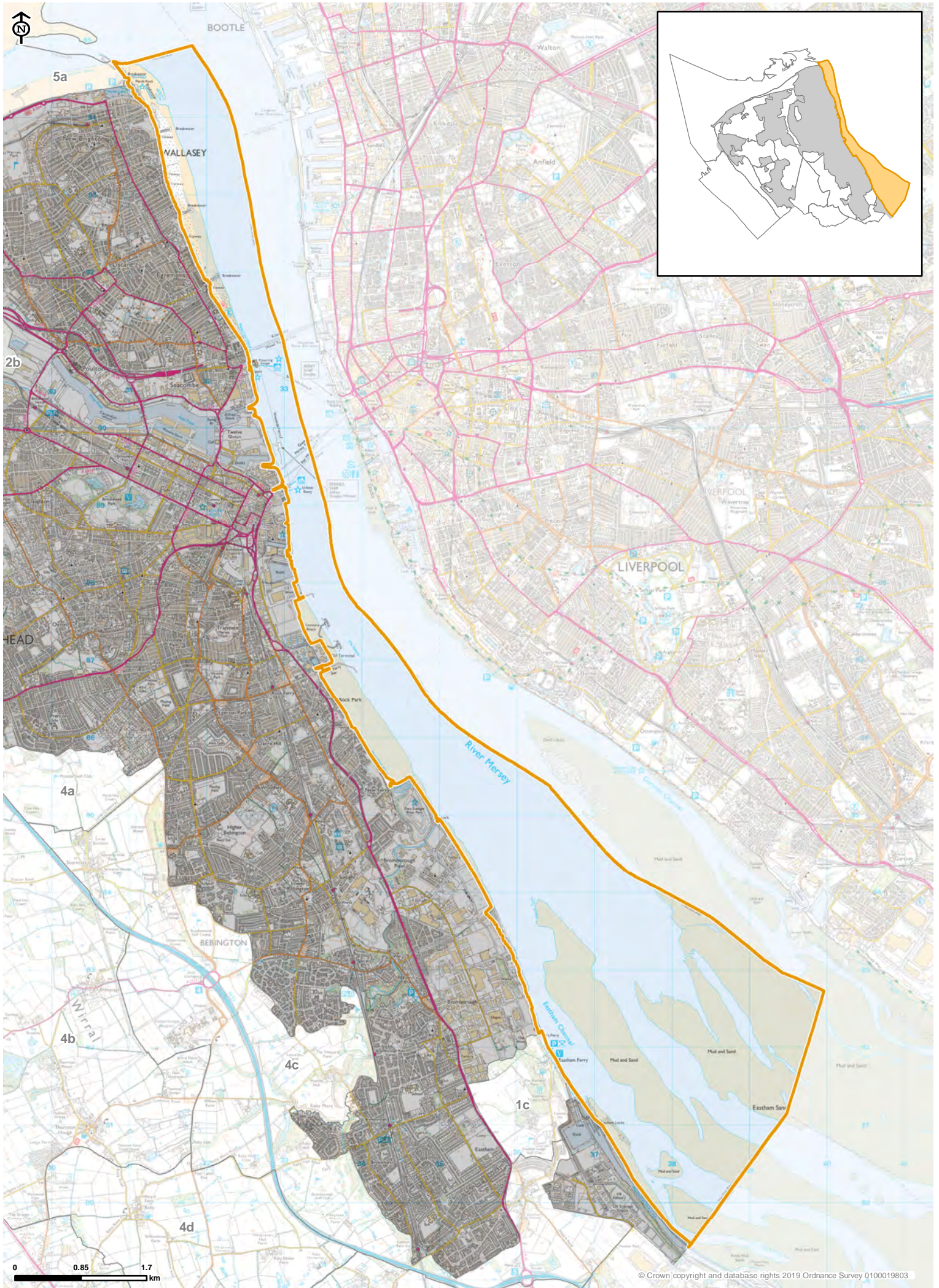


Rock Ferry Looking North East



Eastham Ferry Looking South

6b: Mersey Estuary



Natural Landscape

- Low-lying coastline underlain by Triassic shales and sandstones, overlain in places by tidal flat deposits. The inner Mersey Estuary to the south is composed of extensive intertidal mudflats.
- Urban development with industrial harbour facilities at Birkenhead, Bromborough and Eastham characterises much of the Wirral bank of the Mersey, which is constrained by seawalls except for short stretches of red sandstone cliffs and a small area of unprotected eroding coastline at Shorefields.
- Sandstone bedrock near its mouth constrains the width of the Mersey, channelling water to create strong currents which cause localised tidal scour.
- Internationally important intertidal mudflats, sand flats and saltmarsh, which supports populations of wildfowl, waders and migratory birds, reflected in Ramsar and SPA designations. The channel is notified nationally as the Mersey Estuary SSSI, New Ferry SSSI and Mersey Narrows SSSI.
- Particularly important for populations of black-tailed godwit, dunlin, pintail and teal.
- The area is covered by the Mersey Estuary Nature Improvement Area, which prioritises management of the designated sites, to ensure their resilience to natural and climate change.

Cultural Landscape

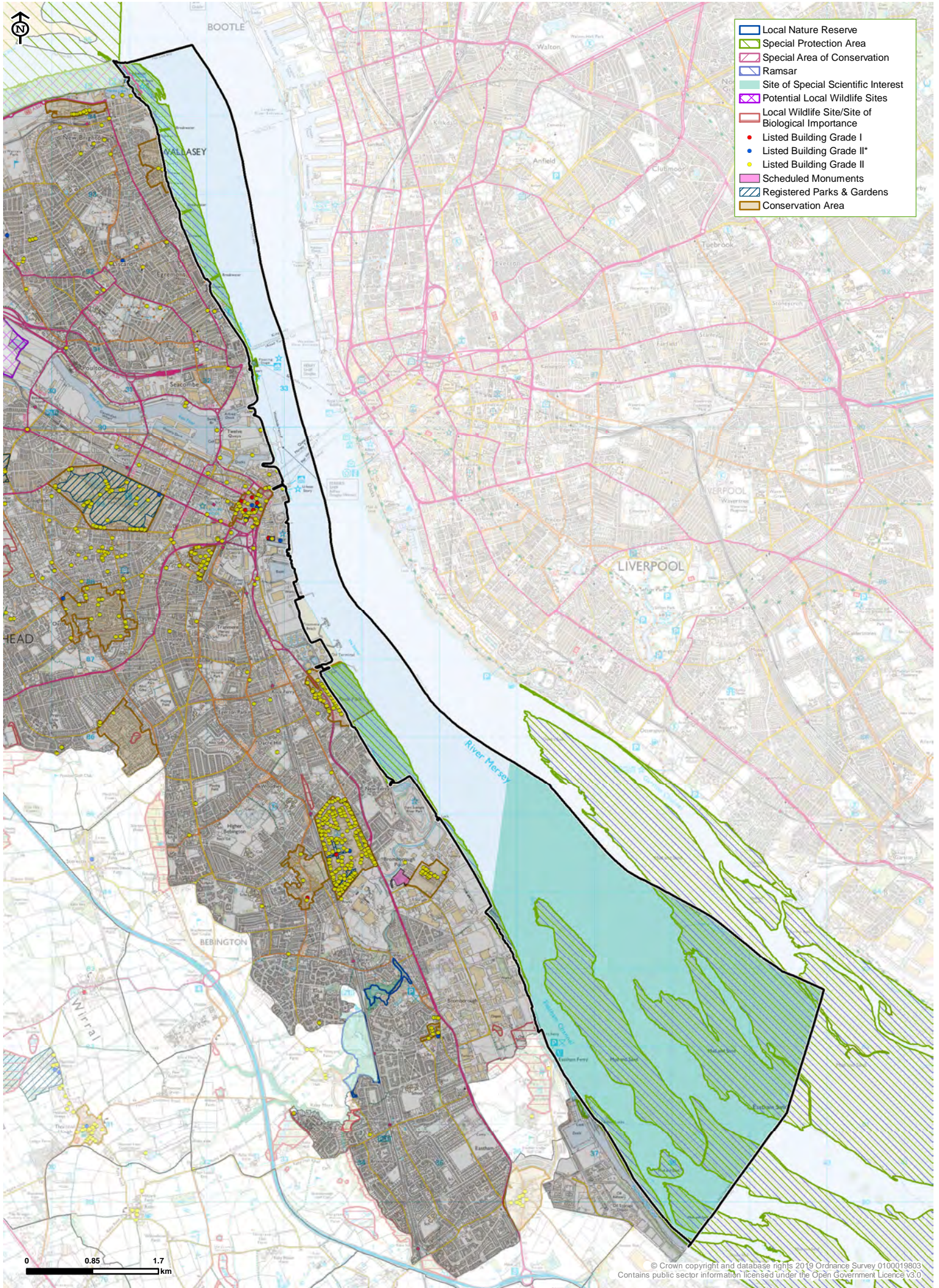
- Fishing activity declined in the mid-1900s due to pollution from industrial activity in surrounding cities. Significant improvements in water quality since the 1970s resulted in recovery of fish populations. The Mersey now support small scale inshore commercial fishing of cod, bass and flat fish. The estuary is an important nursery ground for coastal fish species.
- An area of historic docks including Birkenhead Docks, built from the 1820s, enclosed the Wallasey Pool tidal inlet, which separated Wallasey and Birkenhead. Shipbuilding began at Birkenhead in 1829 and continues with construction of the polar research ship RRS Sir David Attenborough. Bromborough Dock provided sea access to the Lever Brothers' spa factory at Port Sunlight and was once the largest private dock in the world.
- The Tranmere oil refinery was opened in 1960 and handles 9 million tonnes of crude oil per year.

- Busy shipping routes from the Irish Sea converge on the Queens Channel/Crosby Channel to access the Mersey, with access links inland to the Manchester Ship Canal, built in 1894.
- Ferry services crossed the Mersey from 1150 and increased with the arrival of steam ferries in 1817. Ferry routes now only run between Seacombe, Wallasey, Liverpool and Woodside, Birkenhead, including a commuter service between Seacombe and Liverpool. Longer distance seasonal ferries run from Birkenhead to Douglas, Isle of Man, and Belfast.
- The Historic Fort Perch Rock and Perch Rock Lighthouse, built in the 1820s to defend and protect the approach to Liverpool are prominent buildings, and show the importance of the Mersey as an entrance to Liverpool and Birkenhead.
- Historic shipwrecks, concentrated off Birkenhead, reflecting the high shipping volumes and numerous sandbanks on the approaches to the docks along the Mersey.
- Rock Park Conservation Area extends into the Mersey from the Rock Ferry Pier, part of a residential area popular with merchants working in Liverpool as a result of the steam ferries.
- Recreational sailing is available including at the Royal Mersey Yacht Club and present throughout the Mersey Estuary, and includes RYA racing and sailing areas.
- Coastal promenades and open spaces along the coastline provide access to the foreshore at low tide. Seawalls at New Ferry, Rock Park, Port Sunlight and Eastham Ferry are also popular for recreation.

Perceptual Landscape

- Expansive views from the Wirral bank of the Mersey across the estuary to Liverpool and vistas up and down the Mersey, including south to the oil refineries at Ellesmere Port.
- Busy industrial areas at Seacombe, Tranmere, Bromborough and Eastham influence the character of the seascape, and provide a link to the historic industrial development of the docks at Birkenhead.

6b: Mersey Estuary



Appendix A: Glossary of Terms



Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
Agricultural Land Classification	The classification of agricultural land in England in Wales.
Analysis	The process of breaking the landscape down, usually in descriptive terms, into its component parts in order to understand how it is made up.
Ancient trees and veteran trees	<p>Individual trees or groups of trees with wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, park and other areas. They are often found outside ancient woodlands. irreplaceable habitats with some or all of the following characteristics:</p> <p><i>Ancient trees</i></p> <p>An ancient tree is exceptionally valuable. Attributes can include its great age, size, condition, biodiversity value (as a result of significant wood decay and the habitat created from the ageing process), cultural and heritage value.</p> <p><i>Veteran trees</i></p> <p>A veteran tree may or may not be very old, but it has decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its biodiversity, cultural and heritage value.</p>
Ancient woodland	Woodland which the evidence shows has had had 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.
Afforestation	The legal process of placing land under the jurisdiction of the Forest Law ostensibly for the purposes of hunting begun in the 11 th century.
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation.
Approach	The step-wise process by which a landscape assessment is undertaken.
Arable	Land used for growing crops.
Assart	The informal enclosure of private farmland by encroachment into woodland or heath.
Assessment	An umbrella term used to encompass all the many different ways of looking at, describing, analysing and evaluating landscape.
BAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK BAP. The original lists of UK BAP priority habitats were created between 1995 and 1999 and were subsequently updated in 2007. See for further information.
Biodiversity	The measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems.
Brownfield site	A development site which is re-using previously developed land.
Built form	The characteristic nature of built development.
Carr woodland	Marsh or fen woodland in waterlogged terrain. Characteristic trees include alders and willows.

Term	Definition
Characteristic	An element that contributes to local distinctiveness (e.g. narrow winding lanes, vernacular building style).
Classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types, each with a distinct, consistent and recognisable character.
Combe	A small dry valley, without a permanent watercourse.
Condition	A judgement on the intactness and condition of the elements of the landscape.
Coppicing	The traditional method of woodland management in which trees are cut down to near the ground to encourage the production of long, straight shoots, which can subsequently be harvested.
Description	Verbal description of what a landscape looks like. This is usually carried out in a systematic manner, but it may also include personal reactions to the landscape.
Disafforestation	Removal of areas from a Royal Forest and associated Forest Law, not to be confused with the loss of any woodland (or deforestation).
Drift	The name for all material of glacial origin found anywhere on land or at sea, including sediment and large rocks.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
Element	A component part of the landscape (e.g. hedges, roads, woods).
Enclosure	The placing in private hands of land to which there were previously common rights; the merging of commonly held strip fields to form a block surrounded by hedges.
Equine development	A term used to describe areas on the fringes of settlements which are dominated by horse paddocks, stable buildings and associated paraphernalia.
Eutrophic	The state of a water body when it has an excess of nutrients usually derived from agricultural fertilisers or intensive stock keeping facilities. The process by which a water body becomes overloaded with nutrients is known as eutrophication and leads to a dense plant population and algal blooms, the decomposition of which kills animal life by depriving it of oxygen.
Feature	A prominent, eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop, church spire).
Floodplain	The area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks, or if high tides and stormy seas cause flooding in coastal areas.
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
Grassland	Land used for grazing. Grassland can be improved (by management practices) semi-improved (modified by management practices and have a range of species less diverse than unimproved grasslands), or unimproved (not treated with fertiliser, herbicide or intensively grazed and consequently species diversity is high).
Greenfield site	A development site, usually on the fringes of a settlement, which has not previously been used for built development.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
Hydrology	The science dealing with the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the earth and its atmosphere.
Intact	Not changed or diminished.

Term	Definition
Land cover	Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landmark	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location.
Landscape	The term refers primarily to the visual appearance of the land, including its shape, form and colours. However, the landscape is not a purely visual phenomenon; its character relies on a whole range of other dimensions, including geology, topography, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture and cultural associations.
Landscape character	A distinct pattern or combination of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape.
Landscape character area (LCA)	A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, which forms part of a landscape character type.
Landscape character type (LCT)	A generic term for landscape with a consistent, homogeneous character. Landscape character types may occur in different parts of the county, but wherever they occur, they will share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation or human influences.
Landscape condition	Based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It reflects the state of repair or intactness of individual features or elements (relating to that feature's primary condition or ultimate <i>desire</i>).
Landscape strategy	Principles to manage and direct landscape change for a particular landscape type or character area including identification of any particular management needs for specific elements.
Landscape value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. Yet a landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally.
Listed Building	A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest.
Local Plan	A development plan prepared by local planning authorities.
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
Marl	Sedimentary rock or soil consisting of clay and carbonate of lime, formerly used as fertiliser.
Marl pit	A small pit resulting from the extraction of marl, which has often subsequently been filled with water to form a small field pond.
Natural character	Character as a result of natural or semi-natural features such as woodland, grassland, hedgerows etc.
NCA	National Character Areas - defined within the <i>National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013)</i> - NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNR	National Nature Reserve
Nucleated settlement	A settlement that is clustered around a centre, in comparison to a linear or dispersed settlement.
Open-field system	An area of arable land with common rights after harvest or while fallow. The fields date from the medieval period and are usually without internal divisions (hedges, walls or fences).
OS	Ordnance Survey

Term	Definition
Outcrop	The emergence of a stratum, vein or rock at the surface.
Parliamentary fields / enclosure	Fields formed by a legal process of enclosure (or inclosure), typically during the 18 th and 19 th centuries – by passing laws causing or forcing enclosure to produce fields for use by the owner (in place of common land for communal use).
Pastoral	Land used for keeping or grazing sheep or cattle.
Pollarding	A traditional woodland management practice in which the branches of a tree are cut back every few years to encourage new long, straight shoots for harvesting. Differs from <i>coppicing</i> because the cuts are made at sufficient distance from the ground to prevent them from being eaten by animals.
Ramsar	Wetlands of international importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
Remediation	Process by which a contaminated or damaged site is repaired and brought back into more general use, or for a specific purpose (e.g. wildlife conservation).
Remnant	A part or quantity left after the greater part has been used, removed, or destroyed.
Riparian habitat	Riverbank habitat.
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (EC Directive 92/43/EEC Habitats Directive)
SANGS	Suitable Alternative Green Space
SBI	Site of Biological Importance
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change.
Semi-natural vegetation	Any type of natural vegetation which has been influenced by human activities, either directly or indirectly.
Sense of Place	A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that makes a place memorable.
Sensitive	The response to change or influence.
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.
SPA	Special Protection Area (EC Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Time depth	The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
Topography	Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land surface.
Valued landscape attributes	Positive features and characteristics that are important to landscape character and that, if lost, would result in adverse change to the landscape.
Vernacular	Buildings constructed in the local style, from local materials. Concerned with ordinary rather than monumental buildings.

Appendix B: Historic Landscape Characterisation



Appendix B

Historic Landscape Characterisation

The information on the historic landscape character of Wirral is taken from the Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation¹⁶. For this report the terminology used when considering historic landscape character has been condensed from the full report as follows.

Terminology	Description (taken from Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation)	Date
Medieval deer park	A park that retains much of its former character and has not had a later field system superimposed. Deer parks created in the medieval period.	Up to 1650s
Ornamental parkland	Ornamental parkland created prior to the 20 th century. Includes extensive landscape parks associated with large country houses and small parks and large gardens surrounding 19 th -century villas.	1600 - 1900
Pre-1600 field pattern	Based on field pattern. Small field size. Often contains ridge and furrow and marl pits.	Pre-1600
Medieval Townfields	Preserve open field arable characteristics, with small field size. Often contains ridge and furrow and marl pits.	Pre-1700
Pre-Parliament enclosure	Post-medieval field systems pre-18 th /19 th century enclosure, by private agreement or encroachment of township commons.	1600 -1900
Parliamentary planned enclosure	Parliamentary: Regular, rectangular, small-medium.	1700-1900
19 th century reorganised fields	Fields reorganised in the late 18 th -19 th century, due to changing agricultural practices.	1700-1900
Recreation	Recreational facilities constructed pre-20 th century.	1600 - 1900
Golf courses	All golf courses constructed pre-20 th century.	1600 -1900

¹⁶ The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation, Cheshire County Council and English Heritage (2008)



Appendix C: User Guide

Appendix C

User Guide

This LCA can be used by planners, developers and land managers to take account of what is valued in or characteristic of the landscape when considering new development including new land uses. It should also be used to pursue opportunities to enhance and strengthen landscape character wherever possible. The need for the evidence base provided in the LCA is all the more apparent in the context of continual pressures to accommodate new development, including new land uses, primarily the need for new housing and associated infrastructure.

The flow chart below aims to help the use of the LCA. It is arranged around a number of key stages, setting out a series of questions as prompts to ensure available information is used to shape proposals and assist in planning decisions.

