

## 2. Regional Landscape Character Areas

The following table lists the regional landscape character areas that have been identified in the North West Regional Landscape Character Framework, together with short description of the defining character of each area.

Landscape Character Area name	Description
<b>Border Moors and Forests</b> <b>(equivalent to NCA)</b>	This area is a rolling upland plateau, with extensive conifer woodland and sweeping open moorland/fringe farmland, and is sparsely settled. It is located in the north of the Region on the English-Scottish border. The area's remote and often bleak/wild qualities and long distant views across the Solway Basin are defining elements although tranquillity is affected by military training areas.
<b>Bowland Fells</b> <b>(equivalent to NCA)</b>	This area forms an isolated block of upland, which rises above adjacent lowland valley landscapes in north Lancashire and the border of the Yorkshire Dales. Its compact form, steep sculptural slopes, extensive heather moorland, stone walls and picturesque villages encapsulate the upland and yet hospitable character which defines this area. The uplands are incised by narrow wooded valleys, notably the Hodder Valley.
<b>Cheshire Sandstone Ridge</b> <b>(equivalent to NCA)</b>	This area comprises a broken yet visually prominent wooded sandstone ridge that is flanked by glacial sands and gravels and rises out of the Cheshire Plain. Orientated north-south its steepest slopes and poorest soils are cloaked in broadleaved and coniferous woodland while elsewhere there is mixed farmland. Features that punctuate the skyline, in particular historic buildings such as Peckforton Castle, stand out as landmark structures and contribute strongly to local identity.
<b>Lakeland High Fells</b> <b>(Part of Cumbria High Fells NCA)</b>	This area forms the core of the Lake District National Park. It comprises spectacular, rugged mountain scenery, open fells, craggy peaks, steep scarps and deep glaciated valleys which radiate out from the centre and which contain lakes, woodlands and villages. The majestic scale of the landscape and juxtaposition of wild fell and settled valley is a key component which makes this area distinctive.
<b>Dark Peak High Moors</b> <b>(Part of the Dark Peak NCA)</b>	This area comprises a vast elevated gritstone plateau of moorland and adjacent in-bye land supporting blanket bog/peat and rough pastures which are sparsely populated. The area consists of the highest moorland landscapes in the Peak District National Park and lies between the urban areas

	of Manchester and South Yorkshire. Dispersed farmsteads have a distinct vernacular style and are built of local gritstone.
<b>Dark Peak Western Fringe (part of the Dark Peak and Manchester Pennine Fringe NCA)</b>	This area is a transitional landscape between the Dark Peak and the more extensive urban areas of the Manchester Pennine Fringe. It comprises the settled sloping and lower lying landscapes of the Goyt, Etherow and Tame valleys. The distinctive pattern of stone wall enclosures and dispersed farmsteads and villages built of local gritstone are defining elements of this landscape.
<b>Dee Estuary and Coast (no equivalent NCA)</b>	This area includes intertidal landscapes and saltmarsh along the estuary of the River Dee between the Wirral peninsula and north Wales.
<b>Southern and Eastern Cheshire Plain (part of Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain)</b>	The East Cheshire Plain is a settled low-lying, slightly undulating traditionally pastoral landscape that extends from the centre of Cheshire, to the north and west of Crewe. Vegetation contains views to create an intimate, verdant landscape with a high density of ponds from former marl pits and cultural landscapes associated with salt extraction and the chemical industry.
<b>Eden Valley (equivalent to Eden Valley NCA)</b>	The Eden Valley is a broad, well wooded valley associated with the River Eden between the North Pennines, Skiddaw massif and northern slopes of the Orton Fells. Within this mixed agricultural landscape, nucleated villages built of the local richly coloured red sandstone add to the local sense of place. The valley is divided by a sandstone ridge with landscapes influenced by the geology, particularly in the Eden Gorge.
<b>Fylde Coast (Part of Lancashire and Amounderness Plain)</b>	This is a coastal landscape that extends from Fleetwood in the north to the mouth of the Ribble Estuary. It includes significant areas of urban landscapes along the coastal strip including Blackpool and Fleetwood between which there are areas of farmed coastal plain, sand dunes and intertidal landscapes. The historic popularity of this area for seaside recreation and subsequent urban pressure has created a locally distinctive character.
<b>Fylde Plain (Part of Lancashire and Amounderness Plain NCA)</b>	The Fylde Plain is a settled, lowland, large scale agricultural plain that lies between the uplands of the Forest of Bowland and the coast. Its rich patchwork of mixed farmland, limited tree cover and associated drainage channels, mosses and meres give this area its sense of place.
<b>Howgill Fells</b>	This area is a distinctive triangular block of elevated steep

<b>(Equivalent to NCA)</b>	sided rounded hills and incised valleys located south of the Orton Fells and east of the Yorkshire Dales. The open moorland, limited tree cover and sparse settlement give rise to an area of remoteness and emptiness.
<b>Lakeland Limestone Fringe (part of Cumbria High Fells NCA)</b>	This area forms a fringe of undulating pastoral landscape to the north of the Cumbria High Fells. In places the underlying limestone geology gives rise to dry stone walls and local vernacular buildings. Elsewhere hedges define large fields and conifer plantations provide structure. Notable views to the Lakeland Fells contribute to sense of place.
<b>Lancashire Coal Measures (equivalent to NCA)</b>	Past and present industrial activity and past coal mining activities give the landscape and towns in this character area a strong cultural identity. Topographically, it comprises a distinctive pattern of north west/south east orientated ridges. Farmland has a weak vegetation structure and much of the area has been settled and developed.
<b>West Lancashire Plain (Part of Lancashire and Amounderness Plain)</b>	The West Lancashire Plain is a large scale horizontal, sweeping landscape with contrasting soil types – peat, sands, boulder clay. Mosses drained in the 18/19 <sup>th</sup> centuries, now comprise ordered fields divided by drainage channels with few hedgerows and trees. It lies south of the Ribble Estuary between the Lancashire Coal Measures and the Sefton Coast. Its historical drainage and associated recent enclosure and settlement patterns are defining elements. The intensive horticultural land use is a defining characteristic.
<b>Lancashire Valleys and Pendle Hill (equivalent to Lancashire Valley NCA but includes Pendle Hill in its entirety)</b>	This area comprises the broad upland valley of the river Calder and its tributaries defined by higher land of Pendle Hill and ridge separating it from the Ribble Valley, and the South Pennines. This area is densely settled and has a strong industrial heritage associated with cotton weaving and textile industries. This is reflected in the character of the mill towns, industrial buildings and fringing farmland. Pendle Hill's distinctive landform dominates the upper Lancashire Valley as well as the Ribble Valley.
<b>Lune / Ribble Drumlins (part of Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill NCA)</b>	The Lune / Ribble Drumlins are lowland, wooded, pastoral landscapes associated with the rivers Lune, Ribble and Aire. Glacial drift deposits have given rise to a repetitive pattern of distinctive rounded hills or drumlins which are a defining characteristic. Views of the surrounding uplands - Forest of Bowland Hills, Lakeland Low Fells, Yorkshire Dales, S Pennines and Pendle Hill add to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

<p><b>Maer Hills and Heaths</b> (part of Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire Plain NCA)</p>	<p>An area of rolling terrain, to the north east of Market Drayton, associated with a belt of low sandstone hills and sandy glacial deposits which separate the Weaver and Severn Catchments. The landscape is characterised by blocks of woodland and scattered settlement associated with former areas of heathland. The area lies mostly outside the North West region.</p>
<p><b>Manchester Conurbation</b> (equivalent to Manchester Conurbation NCA)</p>	<p>An extensive area of urban development in Greater Manchester comprising discrete areas of townscape character including the regional commercial centre of Manchester and surrounding towns which have been subsumed over time. Countryside extends into the urban area along river valleys and transport corridors comprising a mixture of open spaces, woodland, scrub and relicts of an industrial past. From the urban areas there are memorable views to the Pennines which add to local sense of place.</p>
<p><b>Manchester Mill Towns and Pennine Fringe</b> (part of the Manchester Pennine Fringe NCA)</p>	<p>This area forms a transition between the South Pennines/Dark Peak and Manchester conurbation. It comprises ridges and valleys supporting pastoral land use and containing notable settlements including Rochdale, Bury and Bolton. Often the landscape has an unkempt appearance and is used for recreational purposes. Evidence of past woollen and cotton industries and views across Manchester exert a strong sense of place.</p>
<p><b>Liverpool Conurbation</b> (part of the Mersey Conurbation NCA)</p>	<p>Extensive areas of urban development centred on Liverpool on the northern shore of the Mersey Estuary. These culturally linked settlements derive their sense of place from their long history as ports and trading centres, notable Victorian urban parks, key landmark buildings along their waterfronts and memorable views across the estuary and to the sea.</p>
<p><b>Mersey Estuary</b></p>	<p>The Mersey Estuary comprises the tidal section of the River Mersey where it reaches the North Sea. It includes extensive areas of flat, open, intertidal landscapes and saltmarsh but it is the juxtaposition of these habitats with the vertical elements of industrial development and the shipping industry as well as the distinctive skyline of the Merseyside conurbation which define its sense of place. The chemical industries at Halton, Widnes and Ellesmere Port are locally dominant in the landscape.</p>
<p><b>Mersey Valley</b> (equivalent to Mersey Valley NCA)</p>	<p>This area comprises the broad and distinctive river valley of the River Mersey and its tributaries. It includes open, flat, large scale farmland, some derived from improved/drained mossland, which supports mixed agriculture with little</p>

	woodland cover. Major communications routes, prominent industrial infrastructure - chemical industries and the Fiddlers Ferry power station and the towns of Runcorn, Warrington, Halton and Widnes are defining elements.
<b>Morecambe Bay and Coast</b>	Morecambe Bay is a large, horizontal, open and simple landscape comprising an area of intertidal deposits, fringed with saltmarsh, marine levels and estuary valleys. Views change with the tides. The area is enclosed by higher ground and the rising limestone hills which wrap around the bay to the north and contribute to sense of place.
<b>Morecambe Bay Limestones (equivalent to much of Morecambe Bay Limestones NCA)</b>	This area wraps around Morecambe Bay and comprises undulating pastoral farmland with notable limestone hills and cliffs. Defining characteristics of this area include limestone pavements, the contrast between the limestone ridges and low-lying valley floodplains and estuaries, and memorable views across Morecambe Bay.
<b>Morecambe Coast and Lune Estuary (equivalent to Morecambe Coast and Lune NCA)</b>	This area forms the southern and eastern fringe to Morecambe Bay and the Lune River where it opens out as an estuarine landscape at the coast. This is a broad, undulating, lowland pastoral landscape (with drumlins in some areas) with a strong hedgerow pattern. Settlements include Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham (the latter is dominated by nuclear power station as associated infrastructure). Evocative views across the coast and to surrounding fell landscapes contribute strongly to sense of place.
<b>North Cheshire Plain (Part of Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire Plain NCA)</b>	This landscape lies to the south of the Mersey Valley between Macclesfield and Delamere Forest. It comprises gently rolling mixed lowland farmland which rises gradually towards the west. Well defined hedgerow enclosures, woodland copses and large estates are defining characteristics. Suburban development has a strong influence on character and landscapes associated with salt mining are found in the area near Northwich.
<b>North Pennines (equivalent to North Pennines NCA)</b>	This landscape comprises upland moorland ridges divided by broad pastoral dales and a striking escarpment which overlooks the Eden Valley. It contains some of the highest, wildest and most exposed moorland summits in England. Evidence of past mining heritage, reservoirs and sparse woodland cover are defining characteristics.
<b>Orton Fells (equivalent to Orton Fells NCA)</b>	This area is defined by its underlying limestone geology which gives rise to an elevated pastoral farmland which is outward looking and has strong visual links to surrounding fell

	landscapes such as the Pennines, Yorkshire Dales, Howgill Fells and Shap Fells. Its distinctive stone wall enclosures, historic nucleated villages, limestone vernacular, and rich archaeology contribute strongly to its sense of place.
<b>Potteries and Churnet Valley (equivalent to Potteries and Churnet Valley NCA but including Mow Cop in its entirety)</b>	This is a very variable built and pastoral landscape that includes industrialised ridge and valley landscapes of the Potteries, dissected plateaux flanking the Churnet Valley and the dissected slopes leading up to the Peak District. The area lies mostly outside the North West region.
<b>Ribble Estuary and Coast (Part of Lancashire and Amounderness Plain NCA and including the Ribble Estuary)</b>	The Ribble Coast and Estuary is an area of low-lying, open, intertidal landscapes and coastal grazing marsh that extends along the Ribble Estuary from Fulwood to the coast, separating two areas of agricultural plain to the north and south.
<b>Ribble Valley Lowlands (part of Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill NCA)</b>	This is an area of pastoral slopes and valleys associated with the River Ribble and its wide floodplain and often deeply incised wooded tributaries. It comprises undulating lush lowland pastures and is well wooded. Historic limestone built nucleated villages and parkland landscapes add to the area's local distinctiveness.
<b>Sefton Coast (equivalent to Sefton Coast NCA)</b>	The Sefton Coast runs north from the edge of Crosby to the mouth of the Ribble Estuary. It is characterised by intertidal sands and silts, dune systems, coastal heath, and is backed by arable farmland. It includes a series of coastal settlements including Southport.
<b>Shropshire/Cheshire Wooded Farmlands (Part of Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire Plain NCA)</b>	This is a rolling wooded landscape with mosses and meres, notable estates and relic ancient woodlands which extends from Shropshire into the southern fringes of Cheshire. The area has a strong hedgerow network and dispersed settlement pattern giving rise to a tranquil rural quality.
<b>Solway Farmlands (part of the Solway Basin NCA)</b>	The Solway Basin is a lowland plain intensively managed for pasture which fringes the Solway Coast. Medium to large scale hedgerow enclosures which are windswept by coastal winds, combined with a network of managed ditches and streams, define this area's local sense of place.
<b>Solway Firth and Coast (part of the Solway Basin NCA)</b>	The Solway Coast and Firth is an area of remote, open, intertidal landscape comprising saltmarsh, sand dunes and marine levels that are associated with the Solway Firth. The horizontal emphasis of this landscape combined with its open, simple and character, and associated wildlife, are defining

	characteristics.
<b>South Cumbria Low Fells (equivalent to South Cumbria Low Fells NCA)</b>	This area is located to the south of the central core of the Lake District and comprises undulating and rugged fells dissected by lakes and pastoral river valleys. On the fells, open heathland and rough grassland combined with mires and substantial areas of woodland (including plantations) gives rise to a mosaic of textures, patterns and colours which are highly distinctive. Parkland landscapes and the patterns of dry stone walls add to the local sense of place.
<b>South West Peak (equivalent to South West Peak NCA)</b>	The South West Peak is an area of expansive upland moorland and associated foothills located in the south-west part of the Pennines. The defining characteristics of this landscape are its complex fringe topography combined with the contrast between small scale enclosure patterns in the fringes and the open expanse of unsettled moorland above. Long uninterrupted views from elevated locations are memorable.
<b>Southern Pennines (equivalent to Southern Pennines NCA)</b>	The Southern Pennines is a complex area of large sweeping uplands dissected by valleys often containing reservoirs, and strongly associated with industrial activity. It lies between the northern edge of the Peak District National Park and the southern boundary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. There are densely built mill towns set in strongly enclosed valleys which contrast with the open moorland from which there are extensive and memorable views. Wind farms are a recent feature in this area.
<b>Tyne Gap and Hadrian's Wall (equivalent to Tyne Gap and Hadrian's Wall NCA)</b>	This narrow but distinctive lowland corridor, centred on the River Tyne, has a strong east- west grain. The volcanic outcrop, Whin Sill, is a defining feature along with extensive and associated Roman remains including Hadrian's Wall. The valley comprises pastoral farmland and nucleated settlements located on major transport corridors.
<b>West Cumbria Coastal Plain (equivalent to West Cumbria Coastal Plain NCA)</b>	This area is located on the western coast of Cumbria and forms a narrow coastal strip which has been strongly influenced by industry and 'energy' development. The coastline is varied and includes the sandstone outcrop at St Bee's Head. Inland, open, lowland farmland dominates, with some areas of raised mire. There are extensive views to the nearby fells which add to local distinctiveness.
<b>Western Cheshire Plain (Part of Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire Plain NCA)</b>	The West Cheshire Plain is a settled, flat, low-lying pastoral landscape with a well defined pattern of hedgerow enclosures. Watercourses and field ponds are common features and views

	to the Mid Cheshire Sandstone Ridge contribute to sense of place.
<b>White Peak (equivalent to White Peak NCA)</b>	The White Peak is an elevated limestone plateau dissected by steeply cut dales and gorges with rock outcrops, scree and cave systems. It is found in north-east Derbyshire and north-west Staffordshire, with much of the area lying within the Peak District National Park.
<b>The Wirral (equivalent to Wirral NCA but including the urban area around Birkenhead)</b>	The Wirral comprises a low-lying medium scale agricultural peninsula formed by the Mersey and Dee estuaries. The area is punctuated by mixed woodland often on low sandstone ridges. The landscape pattern has a formal structure reflecting strong estate and parkland influences. A dispersed pattern of more recent housing and development is scattered through the area.
<b>Yorkshire Dales (equivalent to Yorkshire Dales NCA)</b>	Comprising a large scale upland landscape of high exposed moorland dissected by often deep dales, the Yorkshire Dales form part of the Pennine uplands running up the centre of Northern England. The striking contrast between wild, remote moors and sheltered dales are a defining characteristic. Limited tree cover, historic settlement and distinctive patterns of dry stone walls and isolated field barns add to local sense of place.