

High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Environmental Statement

Volume 5: Appendix HE-003-0MA02

Historic environment

MA02: Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam

Historic landscape character areas

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Department
for Transport

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited has been tasked by the Department for Transport (DfT) with managing the delivery of a new national high speed rail network. It is a non-departmental public body wholly owned by the DfT.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report is an appendix to the historic environment assessment. It presents a description of the historic landscape character areas (HLCA) that have been defined in the Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam area (MA02).
- 1.1.2 This appendix should be read in conjunction with:
- Volume 2, Community area reports;
 - Volume 3, Route-wide effects;
 - Volume 4, Off-route effects; and
 - Volume 5, Appendix (Summary gazetteer, impact assessment table and archaeological character areas, HE-002-0MA02).
- 1.1.3 Historic environment baseline data are set out in the following Background Information and Data (BID) reports:
- Historic environment baseline report (BID HE-001-0MA02¹), which includes the historic environment detailed gazetteer in Appendix A;
 - Historic environment field survey report (BID HE-004-0MA02²); and
 - Historic environment remote sensing report (BID HE-005-0MA02³).
- 1.1.4 Figures are included in this report that show the locations and extent of the identified HLCA.

¹ High Speed Two Ltd (2021), High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester), *Background Information and Data, Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam, Historic environment baseline report*, BID HE-001-0MA02. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-2b-crewe-manchester-environmental-statement>.

² High Speed Two Ltd (2021), High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester), *Background Information and Data, Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam, Historic environment field survey report*, BID HE-004-0MA02. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-2b-crewe-manchester-environmental-statement>.

³ High Speed Two Ltd (2021), High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester), *Background Information and Data, Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam, Historic environment remote sensing report*. BID HE-005-0MA02. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-2b-crewe-manchester-environmental-statement>.

2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The approach used for this assessment was a character-based method. Historic landscape character (HLC) mapping derived from National HLC data (NHLC) was used, in conjunction with data from the local and regional HLC projects, to determine broad HLCA. HLCA are areas of coherent or distinctive historic landscape characteristics.
- 2.1.2 HLCA are described below, in terms of their attributed value and assessment of impact, to determine the significance of effect of the Proposed Scheme on the HLCA in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Scope and Methodology Report (SMR), see Volume 5 Appendix CT-001-00001.

2.2 Defining historic landscape character areas

- 2.2.1 HLCA were defined where the historic landscape displays demonstrable patterns of homogeneity and/or distinctiveness. There may be some areas defined as HLCA that, owing to the nature of recent land use, have limited or no heritage value.
- 2.2.2 Within the 2km study area, the boundaries of HLCA were determined by considering the nature and patterning of HLC types (e.g. extensive areas of parliamentary enclosure) and by information from other sources (see below). In some cases, a HLCA may extend beyond a community area boundary due to continuity of historic landscape character. Where this is the case, they will be described in the Historic landscape character area report for the community area in which the majority of the HLCA lies.
- 2.2.3 Some HLCA were influenced by factors such as topography and geology as these physical factors influence agriculture, industry and settlement. In these instances, a HLCA may align closely with the Landscape Character Areas (LCA) prepared by the landscape and visual assessment team.
- 2.2.4 HLCA can contribute to the historical dimension of corresponding LCA. There has been collaboration with the landscape and visual assessment team to ensure a common understanding of how historic processes have shaped the landscape and are expressed within it.

Defining historic landscape character areas

- 2.2.5 Defining the HLCA described below was primarily based on:
- HLC and NHLC mapping;
 - historic mapping, including tithe maps, estate maps and first edition Ordnance Survey;
 - Historic Environment Record (HER) data;

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- aerial photography;
- project specific data drawn from historic air photographs, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data and site visits; and
- a review of existing LCA boundaries/typologies.

2.2.6 From the sources above, the boundaries and characteristics of the HLCA were determined and are described below, based on an analysis of overall historic development trends and the following factors:

- patterning (homogeneity or variance) of HLC types in terms of type, relationships⁴ and date;
- variation in apparent survival level⁵ of historic landscape features; and
- professional judgement.

2.3 Assigning value

2.3.1 The value of HLCA is described in line with the SMR. Key attributes that contribute to heritage value are defined as follows:

- historic interest – illustrative value (illustrating past events, places or people), communal value (commemorative or symbolic), and associative value (association with a notable person, event or movement);
- archaeological interest – evidential or research value;
- architectural and artistic interest – contemporary appreciation of the asset’s aesthetics;
- historical and cultural associations (links to historic interest) – relates to the value of a place’s association with important historical events and themes, eras, patterns of use and development or individual people. It incorporates the history of aesthetics, artistic and literary, architecture, archaeology, science and society, so it overlaps (or underlies) the other categories of heritage value; and
- research potential (links to archaeological interest) - value relates to the technical achievements associated with a place, or to its educational potential. It also encompasses places important to furthering the understanding of the natural and altered environment, and the embodiment of heritage research.

2.3.2 Each of the attributes contributed to defining the overall value of a HLCA.

⁴ That is the presence of types that are inherently related to one another such as assart fields and ancient woodland.

⁵ This is an aspect which can be initially evaluated from comparing recorded HLC type with aerial photography. Examples can include whether vegetation, particularly hedges, look to be denuded (survive poorly) or relatively intact (survive well), or ridge and furrow is extant and visible as earthworks (survive well) or are ploughed out (survive poorly).

2.4 Magnitude of impact

- 2.4.1 The magnitude of impact includes consideration of the elements of the Proposed Scheme that extend into a HLCA, and how these physically alter identified key elements of the HLCA which make a positive contribution to its heritage value. A judgement of the capacity of the HLCA to accommodate change as a result of the Proposed Scheme has also been considered. For example, a HLCA characterised by linear industrial features, such as major roads and canals, is likely to have a greater capacity to absorb additional linear development without experiencing a significant change to its heritage value. The assessment also considered the duration and reversibility of the impact; for example, where a temporary effect would occur during the construction phase, but land would be reinstated afterwards such as in the case of temporary construction compounds.

2.5 Significance of effect

- 2.5.1 The assessment of the significance of effect was undertaken using the method set out in the SMR.

3 List of acronyms

3.1.1 The following acronyms have been used in this report:

Table 1: List of acronyms

| Acronym | Meaning |
|-----------|---|
| BID | Background Information and Data |
| HER | Historic Environment Record |
| HLC/ HLCA | Historic Landscape Character/ Historic Landscape Character Area |
| LCA | Landscape Character Area |
| LiDAR | Light Detection and Ranging Data |
| NHLC | National Historic Landscape Character |
| NHLE | National Heritage List for England |
| SMR | Scope and Methodology Report |
| WCML | West Coast Main Line |

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MA02: Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam

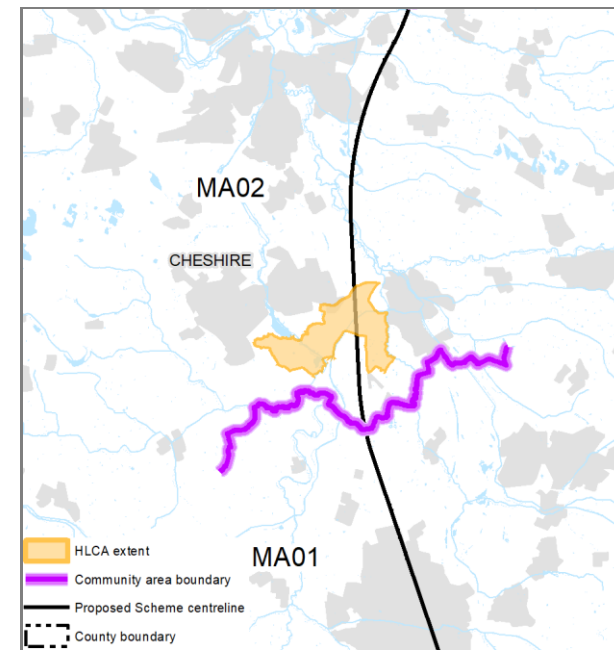
Historic landscape character areas

4 Historic landscape character area sheets

MA02_HLCA01: Stanthorne

Key Characteristics

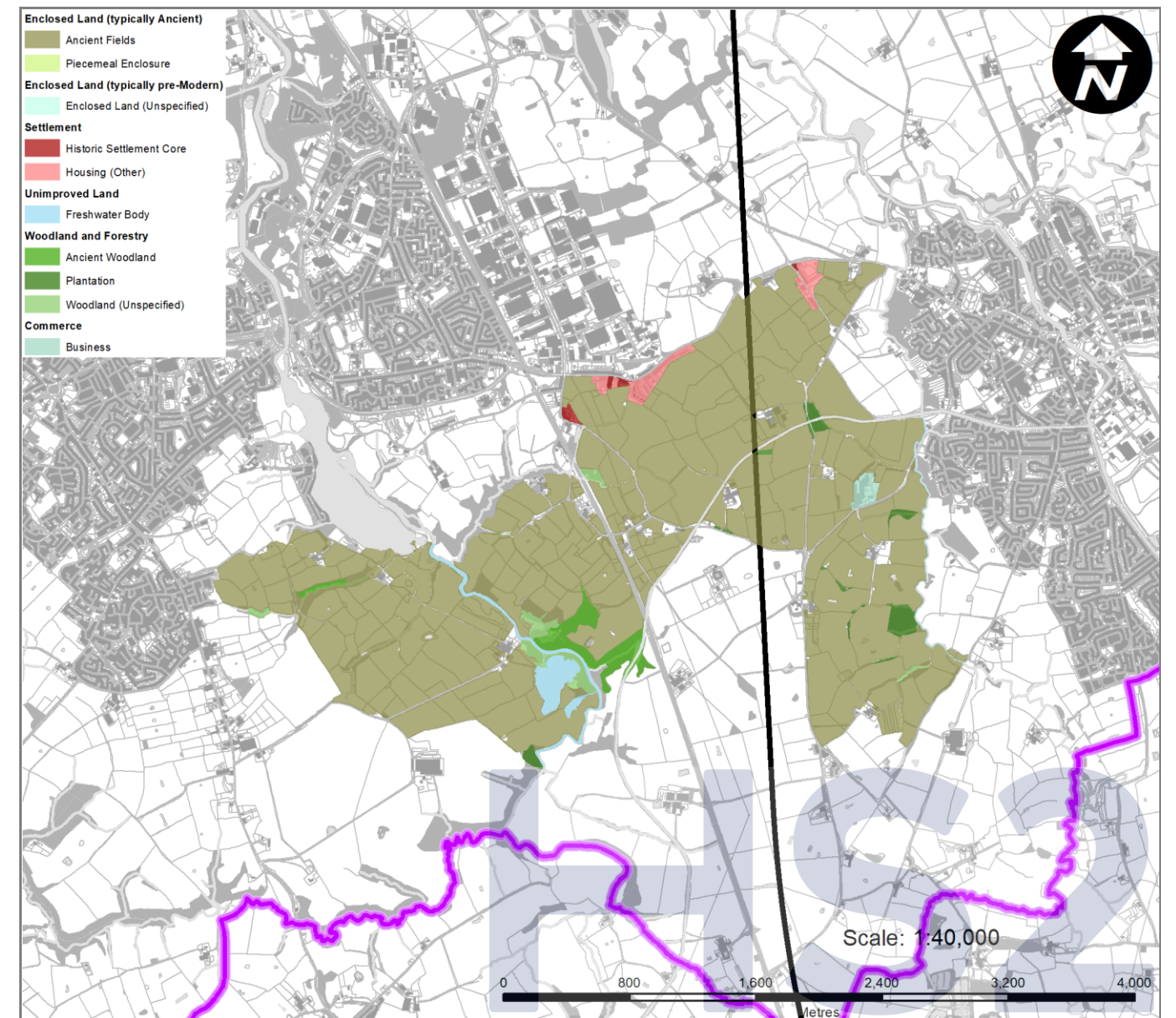
- Located on higher land between the River Weaver and River Wheelock.
- Irregularly shaped fields with mature hedgerows interspersed with isolated trees, small to medium in size, dating to the medieval period.
- Settlement is typified by small hamlets and isolated farmsteads and cottages.
- Pockets of medieval or earlier woodland and post-medieval plantations.
- The River Weaver located on the eastern side of the HLCA which flows north to south.
- Historic linear transport features including the Shropshire Union Canal Middlewich Branch and Grand Junction Railway (now known as the West Coast Main Line, WCML).



HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

The HLCA consists of farmland between Winsford and Middlewich. It is a continuation of the Wimboldsley Plain between the shallow river valleys of the Weaver and Wheelock. The area is characterised by medieval field patterns around small hamlets and isolated farmsteads. The settlements include Stanthorne which dates to the medieval period and Clive Green. Stanthorne Hall (included in MA02_HLCA02) is the location of a potential medieval moated site which may have formed the origins of settlement in the area. Clive Green is an example of the small hamlets that developed between manorial lands. The 'green' element of the place name suggests that it was cleared land between surrounding woodland. The presence of medieval trackways and former roads between Clive Green and Lea Green support the early origin of these settlements. The field patterns consist of irregularly shaped, small and medium sized fields, typically of 2.5ha. The field pattern developed as early as the 9th and 10th centuries but continued after the Norman conquest. Field boundaries feature mature hedgerows, often containing isolated trees that have grown up over several centuries. There has been some loss of hedgerows, but the majority survive. The fields in this location are predominantly pastoral. Trackways between the fields may be medieval in origin and link farms and settlements to the fields. Woodland is characteristic of this landscape and would have been an important resource for timber and firewood. The River Weaver valley has medieval or earlier woodland defined as Ancient Woodland such as Wimboldsley Wood that follow the line of small streams. The construction of the Shropshire Union Canal, Middlewich Branch in the 1820s and the Grand Junction Railway (now known as the WCML) built in the 1830s separated the eastern sides of the area from the western. The major linear transport features also resulted in the changing historic field boundaries and trackways within the medieval fields. In the 19th and 20th century Winsford and Middlewich expanded. Initially this was through the industrial development of salt works. This resulted in subsidence which created flashes, open areas of water, such as Top and Bottom Flash on the southern side of the River Weaver (as shown towards the south-western corner of the HLCA sheet). Later 20th century expansion of housing saw Clive, Wharton and Middlewich expand, reducing the area of ancient field patterns.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Moderate

Magnitude of impact

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Construction temporary | Low adverse |
| Construction permanent | Low adverse |
| Operation permanent | Low adverse |

Effect

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Construction permanent | Minor adverse |
| Operation | Minor adverse |

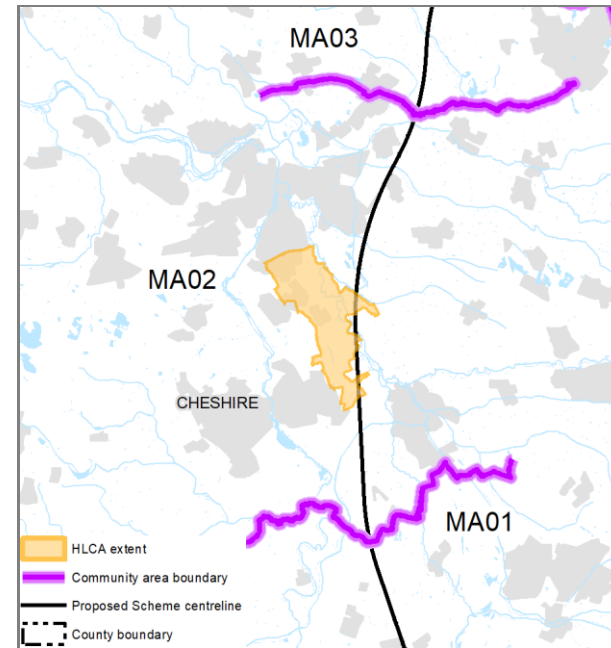
Commentary

The HLCA has interest arising from the capacity of the landscape to illustrate, and provide evidence for, historic agricultural practices and settlement patterns that date to as early as the medieval period. The Proposed Scheme will introduce a physical and visual barrier within the HLCA. Historic field boundaries will be removed. This will alter the legibility of the medieval field patterns between Clive Green Lane and the A533 Bostock Road. The physical effects are, however, localised and the overall character will remain intact and appreciable.

MA02_HLCA02: Bostock, Whatcroft and Davenham

Key Characteristics

- Formal parkland with medieval or earlier woodland and post-medieval plantation.
- Irregularly shaped fields bounded by mature hedgerows and isolated trees, small to medium in size, dating to the medieval period.
- Villages including Davenham and Bostock Green.
- Hamlets comprised of farmsteads and cottages.
- The River Dane flowing south to north.



HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

The HLCA consists of an area of land within the River Dane valley. It lies between Winsford, Middlewich and Northwich. It includes the villages of Davenham and Bostock Green, and the halls, estates and formal parkland of Stanthorne, Bostock, Davenham and Whatcroft.

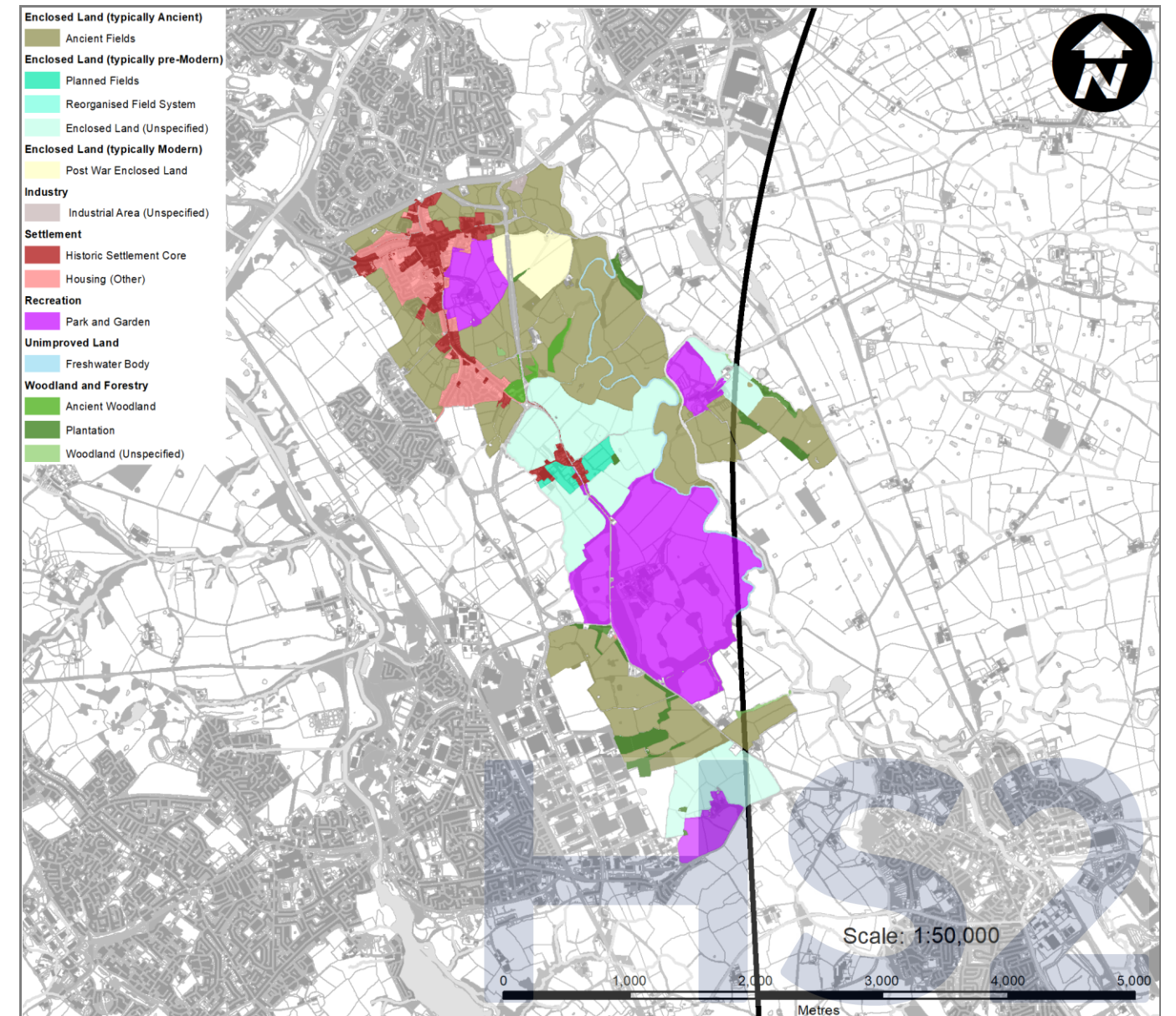
The current settlement pattern developed in the medieval period with moated sites as their focus, including those at Bostock and Whatcroft. There were settlements at Davenham, Moulton and Shipbrook, all recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 under the ancient parish of Shipbrook. There was a further possible medieval village at Whatcroft.

The existing landscape of agricultural fields developed around these settlements in the medieval period. The field pattern consists of irregularly shaped, small and medium sized fields, typically of 2.5ha. The field pattern developed as early as the 9th and 10th centuries but continued after the Norman conquest. The evidence of this medieval field pattern is best preserved around the moated site of Bostock, Whatcroft Hall and Davenham.

Field boundaries within the HLCA feature mature hedgerows, often containing isolated trees that have grown up over several centuries. Trackways between the fields may be medieval in origin and link farms and settlements to the fields. Woodland is characteristic of this landscape and would have been an important resource for timber and firewood. This includes areas of medieval or earlier woodland defined as Ancient Woodland on small stream valleys at Bull's Wood and Oak Clump.

In the post-medieval period country houses developed at Stanthorne, Bostock, Whatcroft and Davenham. All had earlier halls which were replaced by country houses in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Ornamental landscapes were laid out around the country houses including parkland, woodland and water features. Whatcroft and Stanthorne developed out of their existing farmland. However, the largest and best preserved around Bostock Hall was newly established. This was a designed landscape created by Samuel Wyatt possibly in association with William Emes as part of the newly built hall in 1775.

Bostock Hall is surrounded by 19th century estate buildings, including farm buildings, lodges, cottages and farmsteads. The nearby settlement of Bostock Green is a good example of a planned estate village. There are also areas of post-medieval planned enclosure around Bostock Green which include linear fields, with the grain of the boundaries running south-west to north-east around the village.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Moderate

Magnitude of impact

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Construction temporary | Low adverse |
| Construction permanent | Low adverse |
| Operation permanent | Minimal adverse |

Effect

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Construction permanent | Minor adverse |
| Operation | Minor adverse |

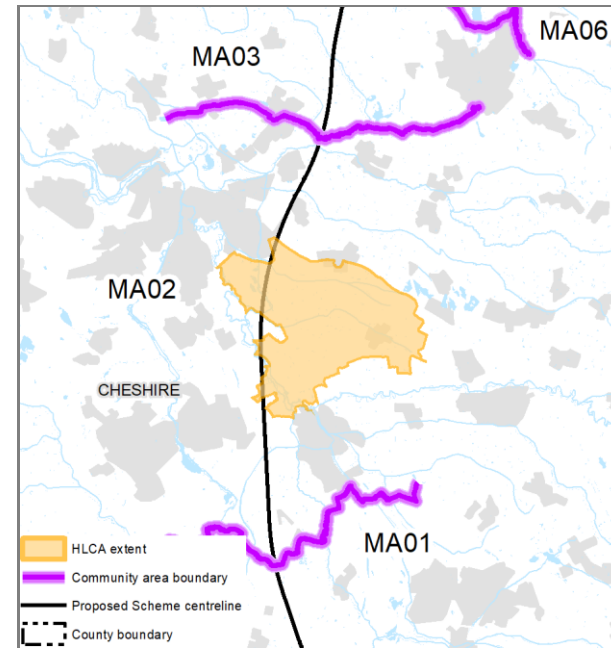
Commentary

The interest of the HLCA arises from the capacity of the landscape to provide evidence for medieval agricultural practices, settlement patterns and the development of post-medieval parklands. The Proposed Scheme will run along the eastern edge of the HLCA south-east of Whatcroft Hall and will remove medieval field boundaries. The legibility of the HLCA will be altered by removing field boundaries that define agricultural land to the south-east of Whatcroft Hall. Where the Proposed Scheme crosses the Dane Valley it will intersect the HLCA on a viaduct. Despite the viaduct being visible from within the HLCA, this will not affect the ability to understand the HLCA as a record of medieval agricultural practices.

MA02_HLCA03: Stublach Plain

Key Characteristics

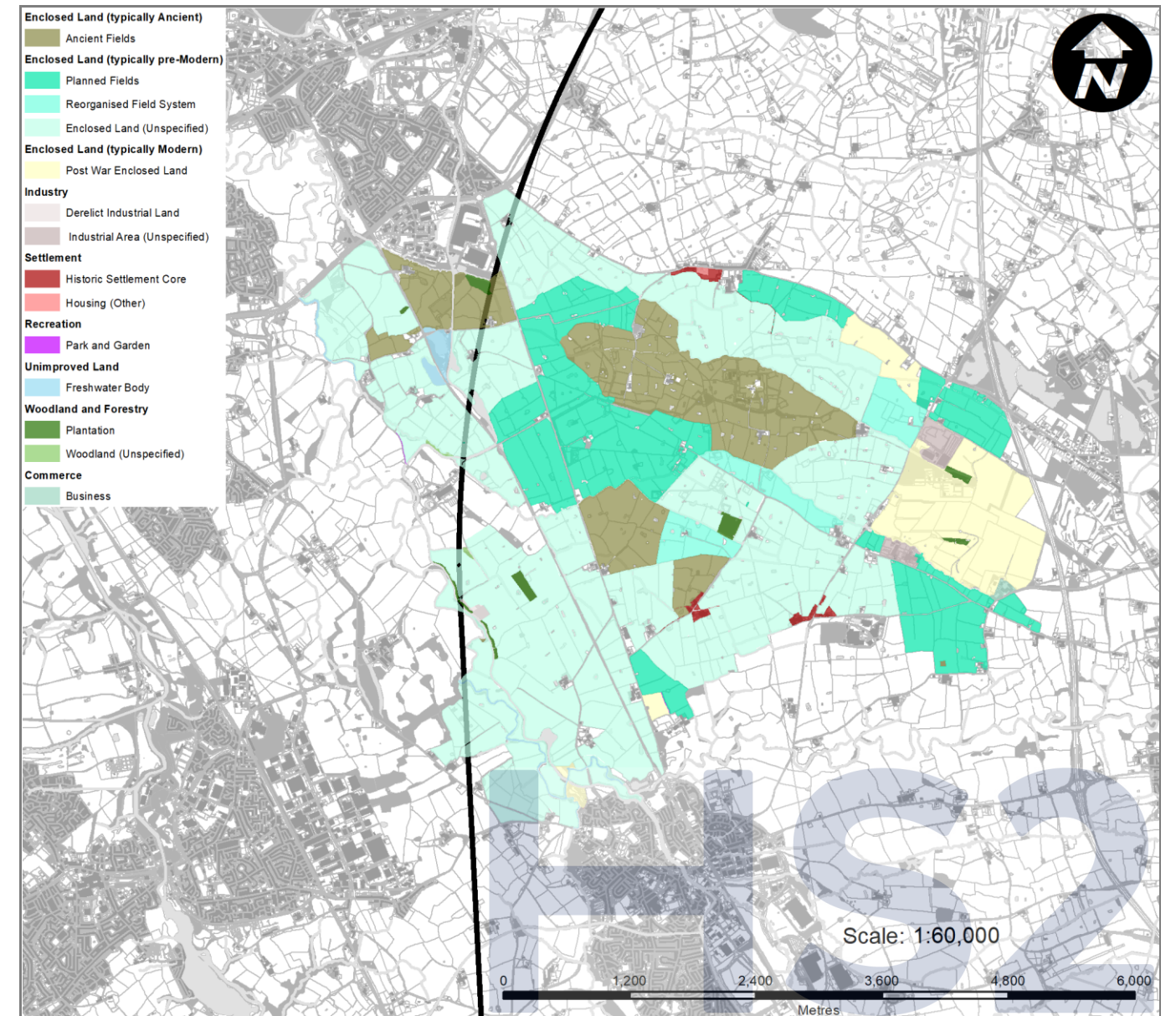
- Located on higher land between the River Weaver and River Wheelock.
- Pockets of irregularly shaped medieval fields surrounded by more regularly shaped post-medieval field patterns.
- Settlement is typified by dispersed isolated farmsteads.
- Linear transport features including the Middlewich to Northwich Branch Railway Line, the Trent and Mersey Canal and the A530 King Street.
- Stublach gas storage facilities.



HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

The HLCA consists of the Stublach Plain, a flat area east of the River Dane. The landscape includes pockets of medieval irregular shaped fields, typically 2.5ha in size. In this area they have mature hedgerows, often containing isolated trees that have grown up over several centuries. Enclosure was likely to have been extensive by 1300 and the distribution of medieval field patterns is focused on areas of glacial till on the western side of the HLCA. Medieval town fields, individual peasant holdings visible as strips fields, are rare. One of the few examples was west of Yatehouse Green. It was replaced by planned agricultural fields in the 19th century. Much of the HLCA remained as heathland until the post-medieval period. This included land to the south-west of Rudheath and north-east of Middlewich. Most of the fields within the HLCA date to the improvement of this heathland to agricultural land. These are larger more regular fields between 2.5 to 6ha in size. Hedgerows are still common and isolated trees are visible within them. Post-medieval plantations are common within the HLCA area. The area does not appear to have been densely settled in the medieval period. The scheduled moated sites of Drakelow Hall and Kinderton Hall represent the location of isolated halls, surrounded by moats. Kinderton was the seat of the lord of an associated manor. Roads through the HLCA include the former Roman route of the A530 King Street, on the western side of the HLCA, and the medieval route of the B5062 Penny's Lane through the centre. Beyond these the roads within the HLCA are former agricultural tracks. The density of routes is low and reflects its former status as heathland. The Trent and Mersey Canal follows the contours of the eastern side of the River Dane Valley before continuing north to Rudheath. Flashes, large pools of water formed by subsidence, have formed adjacent to the canal around Bilinge's Green. A modern purpose-built marina has also been constructed. The Winsford and Over Branch of the West Cheshire Railway is located on the western side of the HLCA. The line was built in 1874 and runs north-west from Middlewich. Together these linear transport corridors form an important part of the character of the plain, particularly defining its western side. They intersect farmland and provide transport links between Middlewich and Northwich. At the eastern side of the HLCA is an area which served as RAF Cranage during the Second World War. The land is now used for agriculture and industry. The historic function of the land as an airfield can be read in its regular field pattern and remnants of perimeter tracks which form the outline of the airfield fossilised in field boundaries. However, there remains little other evidence of such an extensive landscape feature. Small industrial units of the Stublach gas storage facility are scattered throughout the HLCA.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Low

Magnitude of impact

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Construction temporary | Low adverse |
| Construction permanent | Minimal adverse |
| Operation permanent | Minimal adverse |

Effect

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Construction permanent | Negligible adverse |
| Operation | Negligible adverse |

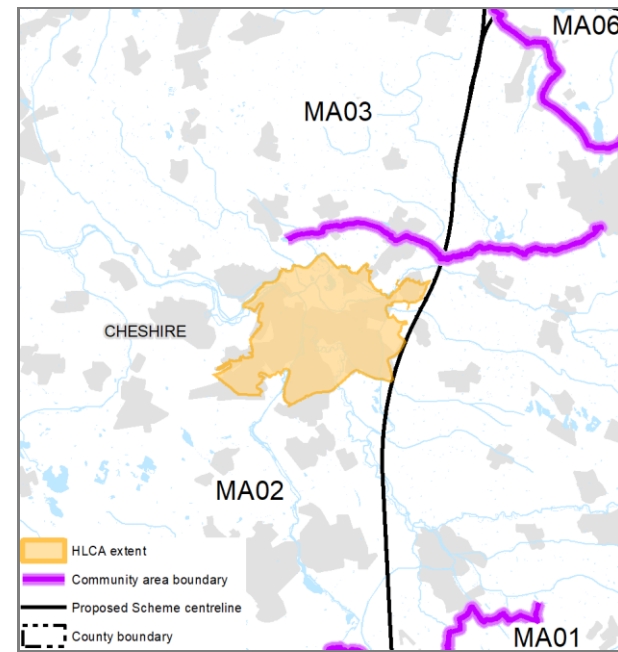
Commentary

The interest of the HLCA arises from its capacity to illustrate heathland clearance and historic settlement patterns. The HLCA also illustrates the limited impact of a Second World War airfield on the rural Cheshire landscape. The Proposed Scheme will follow the line of existing transport routes, the A533 King Street and A556 Shurlach Road through the western portion of the HLCA. A granular borrow pit will be located within the eastern part of the HLCA and be restored to farmland following construction. The Proposed Scheme will alter parts of the HLCA, including the removal of field boundaries, causing a minimal adverse impact to the overall character and legibility of the HLCA.

MA02_HLCA04: Northwich Urban and Industrial

Key Characteristics

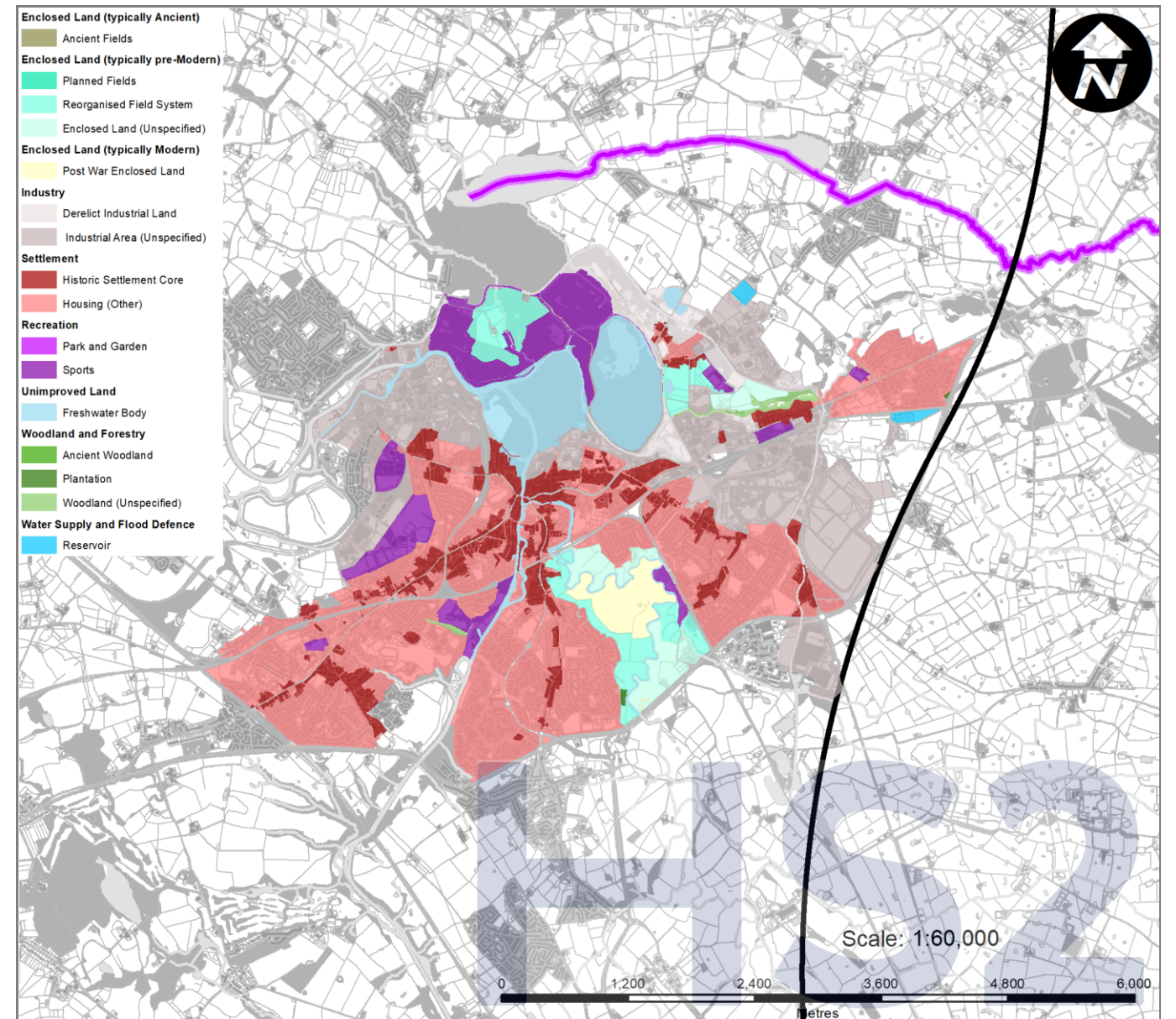
- Located on higher land between the River Weaver and River Wheelock.
- Historic medieval and post-medieval town centre.
- 19th century terraces and 20th century suburbs.
- Industrial and post-industrial landscapes associated with the salt and chemical industries.
- Light industrial and retail estates on former areas of industrial land including the Gadbrook Distribution Centre.
- Woodland formed on reclaimed land subject to salt subsidence along the River Weaver.



HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

The HLCA consists of the urban areas of Northwich, Rudheath and Lostock Gralam. Northwich has its origins in the Roman and medieval period, but this was focussed on the confluence of the River Dane and Weaver at the centre of the town. The area around the suburbs was predominantly heath and agricultural land until the post-medieval period. Between the 17th to 20th centuries the area around the northern outskirts of Northwich along the River Weaver and the Trent and Mersey Canal developed for salt manufacturing. The salt industry declined in the 20th century and ceased production by the 1990s. The chemical industry developed out of the salt industry in the 19th century. Important chemical works were established around the eastern and southern edges of Northwich including the former Trinitroglycerin Factory at Gadbrook and the surviving chemical works at Lostock Gralam. The Lostock Gralam works includes large waste lime beds associated with the industrial processes located east of Rudheath. Light industrial and retail estates developed in the later 20th century on former areas of industrial land including the Gadbrook Distribution Centre. An area of woodland and flashes is located to the north of Northwich on land reclaimed from salt subsidence. The expansion in industry, particularly from the 18th century, led to the growth of Northwich. Estates of 19th century red brick terraced suburbs developed in Rudheath and Lostock Gralam. In the 20th century Northwich developed as part of the commuter belt for the cities of Manchester and Liverpool. Suburban housing estates have been built at Kingsmead and Rudheath. Infrastructure includes the Cheshire Midland Railway, which opened in 1860 between Altrincham and Northwich, and the Winsford and Over Branch of the West Cheshire Railway built from 1874. These were both part of the Cheshire Lines Committee Railways. The A556 Shurlach Road around Northwich was developed from the 1930s to 1950s with the section around Rudheath and Lostock Gralam completed in the 1970s.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Low

Magnitude of impact

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Construction temporary | No change |
| Construction permanent | No change |
| Operation permanent | No change |

Effect

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Construction permanent | Neutral |
| Operation | Neutral |

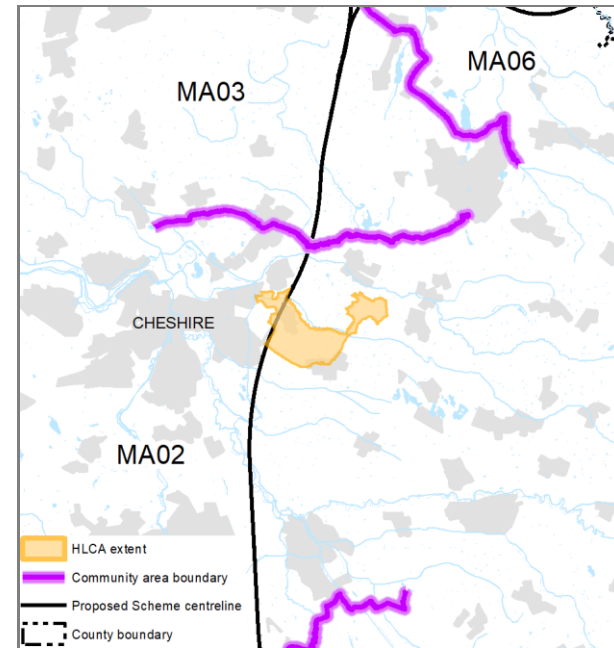
Commentary

The interest of the HLCA arises from the landscape's ability to illustrate the development of Northwich and the development of the salt and chemical industry. The value of the asset will not be impacted by the Proposed Scheme. The alignment will run south-east of the HLCA, following the line of the A556 Shurlach Road, in an area defined by large waste lime beds with high embankments. The Proposed Scheme will be in keeping with the industrial character of the HLCA in this location allowing the overall perception of the HLCA to be understood.

MA02_HLCA05: Lostock Plain

Key Characteristics

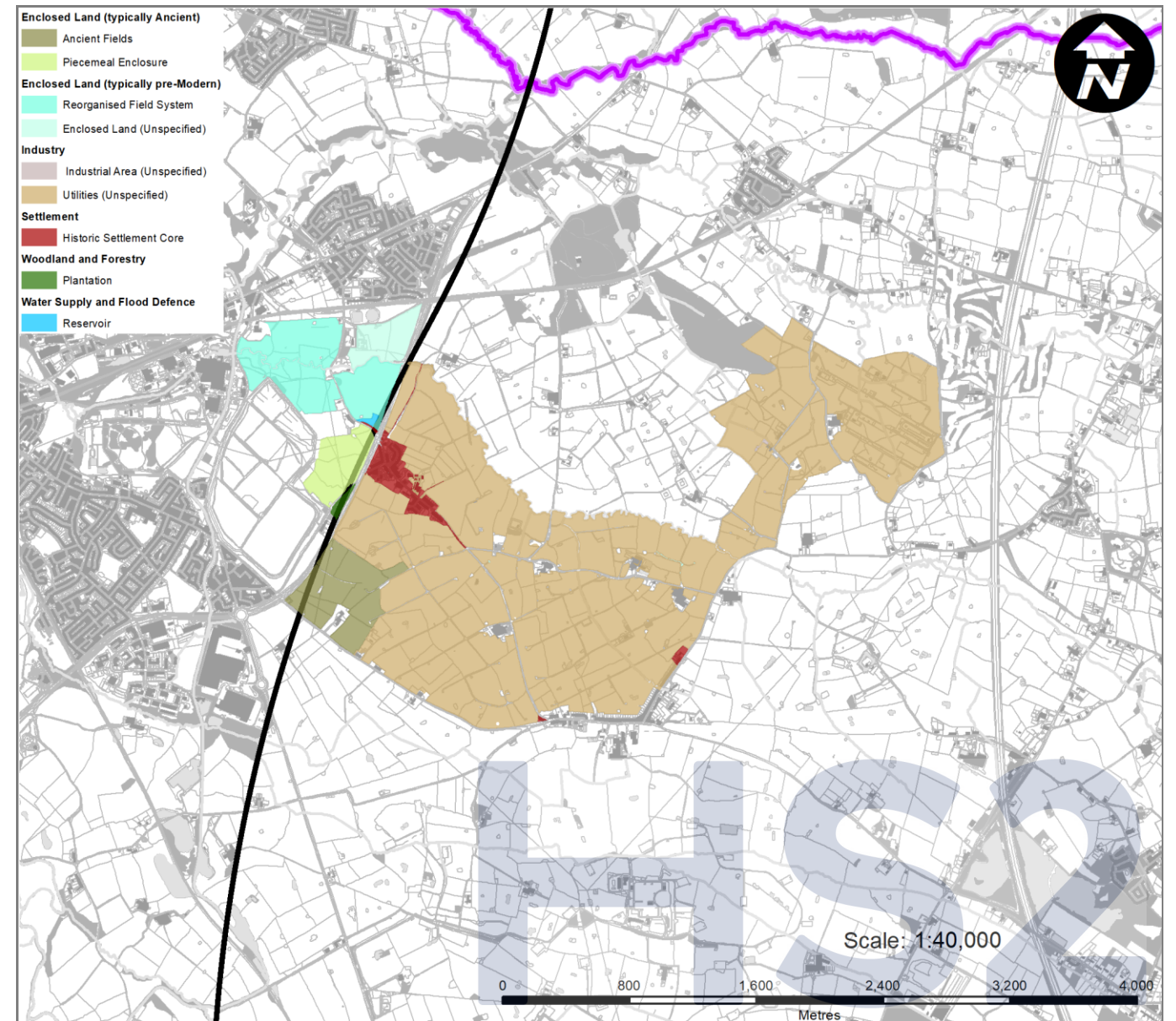
- Plain known as the Lostock Plain.
- Area of medieval town fields around Lostock Green and Lach Dennis.
- Pockets of irregularly shaped medieval fields surrounded by more regularly shaped post-medieval field patterns.
- Isolated farmsteads.
- Linear transport features including the Manchester to Chester Railway Line and the A556 Shurlach Road on the western side of the HLCA.



HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

The HLCA consists of the Lostock Plain a large flat area east of the River Dane. The Crow Brook runs south-east to north-west across the landscape in a shallow valley. The area appears to have been settled from the medieval period. Lach Dennis (see also MA02_HLCA03) was recorded in the Domesday survey. It is likely that the settlement of Lostock Green developed out of land reclaimed from heathland. Medieval fields (displayed as ancient fields) survive around Melvin Holme. Larger areas of medieval town fields, individual peasant holdings visible as strips fields, surround the settlements of Lostock Green and Lach Dennis. These reflect some of the best survival of medieval field systems on the Cheshire Plains. They have been reused in the late 20th century for salt cavity gas storage. Although this represents a change in historic landscape, its impact on the original fields pattern is minor as there is little surface infrastructure. The town fields are defined by small irregular shaped fields, typically 2.5ha in size. In this area they have mature hedgerows, often containing isolated trees that have grown up over several centuries. Enclosure is likely to have been extensive by 1300. The HLCA was subject to enclosure of the heathland throughout the post-medieval period. These are larger more regular fields between 2.5 to 6ha in size. Hedgerows are still common, with isolated trees distributed through them. Isolated post-medieval plantations are the only woodland visible throughout the landscape. Penny's Lane, Birches Lane, Hulse Lane and Common Lane are likely to be medieval or post-medieval tracks that led across the heath. The HLCA is intersected by the Manchester to Chester Railway Line, built in 1861. The A556 Shurlach Road built in the 1970s runs broadly north to south along the western side of the HLCA.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Moderate

Magnitude of impact

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Construction temporary | Low adverse |
| Construction permanent | Minimal adverse |
| Operation permanent | No change |

Effect

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Construction permanent | Minor adverse |
| Operation | Neutral |

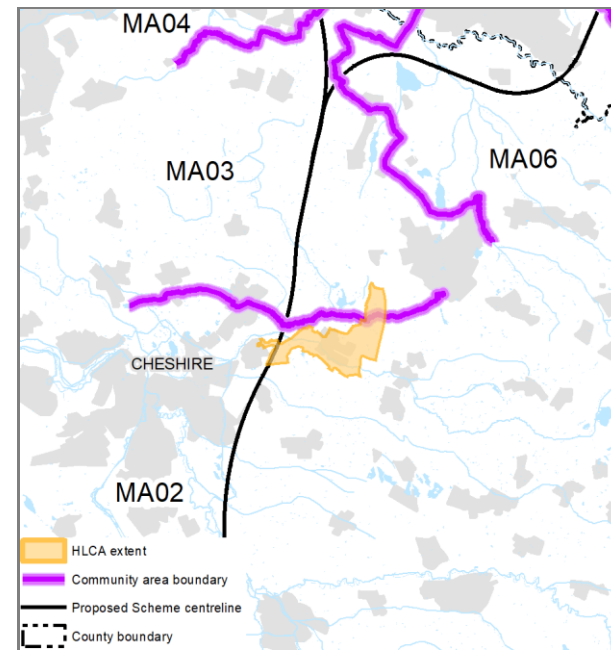
Commentary

The interest of the HLCA arises from the capacity of the landscape to provide evidence for heathland clearance and historic agricultural practices representing some of the best-preserved evidence of town fields and former moss in the area. The Proposed Scheme will be aligned through the western portion of the HLCA, parallel to the route of the A556 Shurlach Road. This area is already characterised by road and railways. Utilities diversions will cross the HLCA, resulting in the temporary loss of field boundaries. However, field boundaries will be reinstated and the legibility of the historic agricultural character of the HLCA will still be understood and legible.

MA02_HLCA06: Peover Eye Valley

Key Characteristics

- Irregularly shaped fields, small to medium in size dating to the medieval period bounded by hedges and woods.
- Small sections of more regularly shaped field south of Plumley dating to 19th planned enclosure and 20th century rationalisation of field boundaries.
- Marl pits, evidence of agricultural improvement.
- Village of Plumley.
- Woodland along watercourses including the Peover Eye and Smoker Brook.
- Settlement typified by dispersed Isolated farmsteads.
- Linear transport features including the Cheshire Midland Railway (now known as the Northwich to Knutsford Railway, part of the Mid-Cheshire Line)



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Description

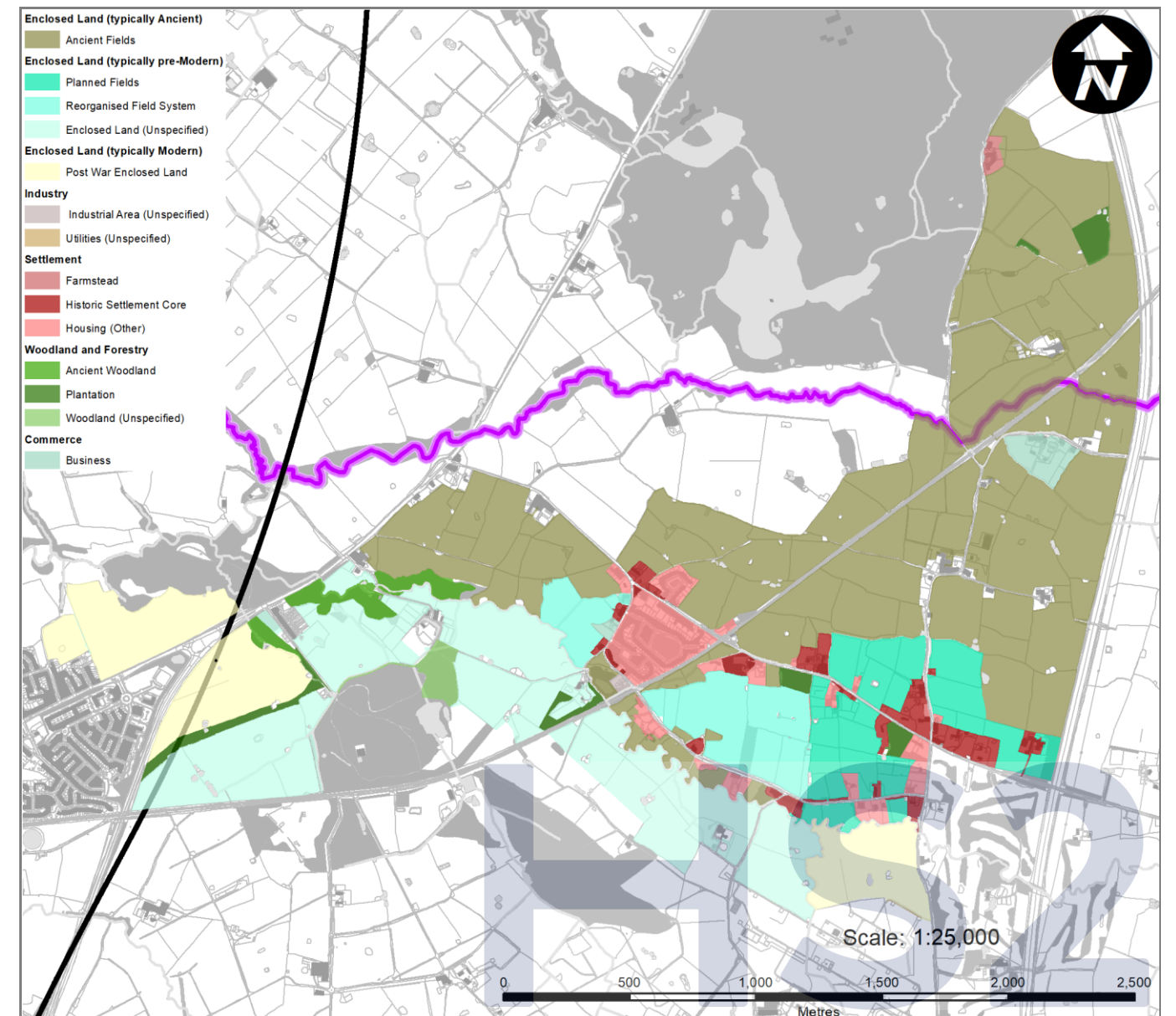
The HLCA consists an area of gently sloping land between the shallow valleys of the Peover Eye and Smoker Brook. These watercourses within the HLCA are bounded by areas of medieval or earlier woodland and post-medieval plantation. This includes Winnington Wood and Winnington Belt. This woodland is a key characteristic of the area and separate the fields north and south of the Peover Eye and Smoker Brook.

Tabley Park is located to the north but the core of the HLCA is formed by the post-medieval settlement of Plumley. Plumley is linear settlement along Plumley Moor Road and Truthall Road consisting of small post-medieval hamlets and farmsteads. Examples of these hamlets include the Grade II listed The Smoker Inn and The Smithy at the western end of Plumley Moor Road. Farmsteads include the Grade II listed Maltkiln Farm and Beech Farm on Truthall Road. A 20th century housing development is located on former agricultural land north of the railway line, between Truthall Lane and Plumley Moor Road.

The landscape within the HLCA is agricultural fields the majority dating to the medieval period. These are characterised by their irregular shape and small to medium size, typically 2.5ha. They are surrounded by mature hedgerows, often containing isolated trees that have grown up over several centuries. South of Plumley there are also some small pockets of larger more regularly shaped fields which are the result of 19th century planned enclosure and 20th century rationalisation of field patterns. Marl pits are a common feature in the landscape, often bounded by trees. The marling of pasture and arable has been a significant method of improving soil fertility in Cheshire since at least the 16th century. Marl was a local resource, generally being dug from the field itself, creating small pits and ponds. They were left open to allow dairy cattle to drink. The place name evidence of Plumley Moor Road supports this being marginal heath or moor that was enclosed during the medieval period.

The moated site of Holford Hall has lost the original medieval fields that would have surrounded it. Instead they have been replaced by an area of post-medieval fields west of Plumley.

The HLCA is crossed by a number of minor roads including Plumley Moor Road, Truthall Lane and Pinfold Lane. These roads have their origins in the medieval or post-medieval period. The Cheshire Midland Railway built in 1861 runs east to west across the HLCA. The construction of the line has resulted in field boundaries altering. The railway cuts across historic trackways which led north and west from Wood's Tenement. The majority of the historic field pattern does however remain legible.



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Asset value Moderate

Magnitude of impact

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Construction temporary | Low adverse |
| Construction permanent | No change |
| Operation permanent | No change |

Effect

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Construction permanent | Neutral |
| Operation | Neutral |

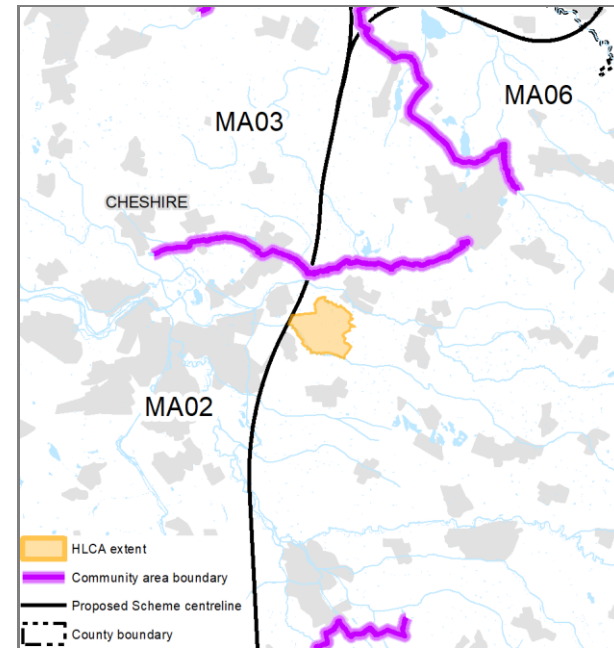
Commentary

The interest of the HLCA arises from the capacity of the landscape to illustrate, and provide evidence for, historic agricultural practices and settlement patterns. The value of the asset will not be permanently impacted by the Proposed Scheme, which will pass the north-west edge of the HLCA. The A559 Chester Way and its junction with the A556 Shurlach Road separates medieval or earlier woodland of Mill Wood in the south-east, and to the north-east. The Proposed Scheme follows a similar route to the existing infrastructure. Utilities diversions cross the east of the HLCA will remove field boundaries. These will be reinstated and the agricultural character of the HLCA will still be understood and legible.

MA02_HLCA07: Holford Moss

Key Characteristics

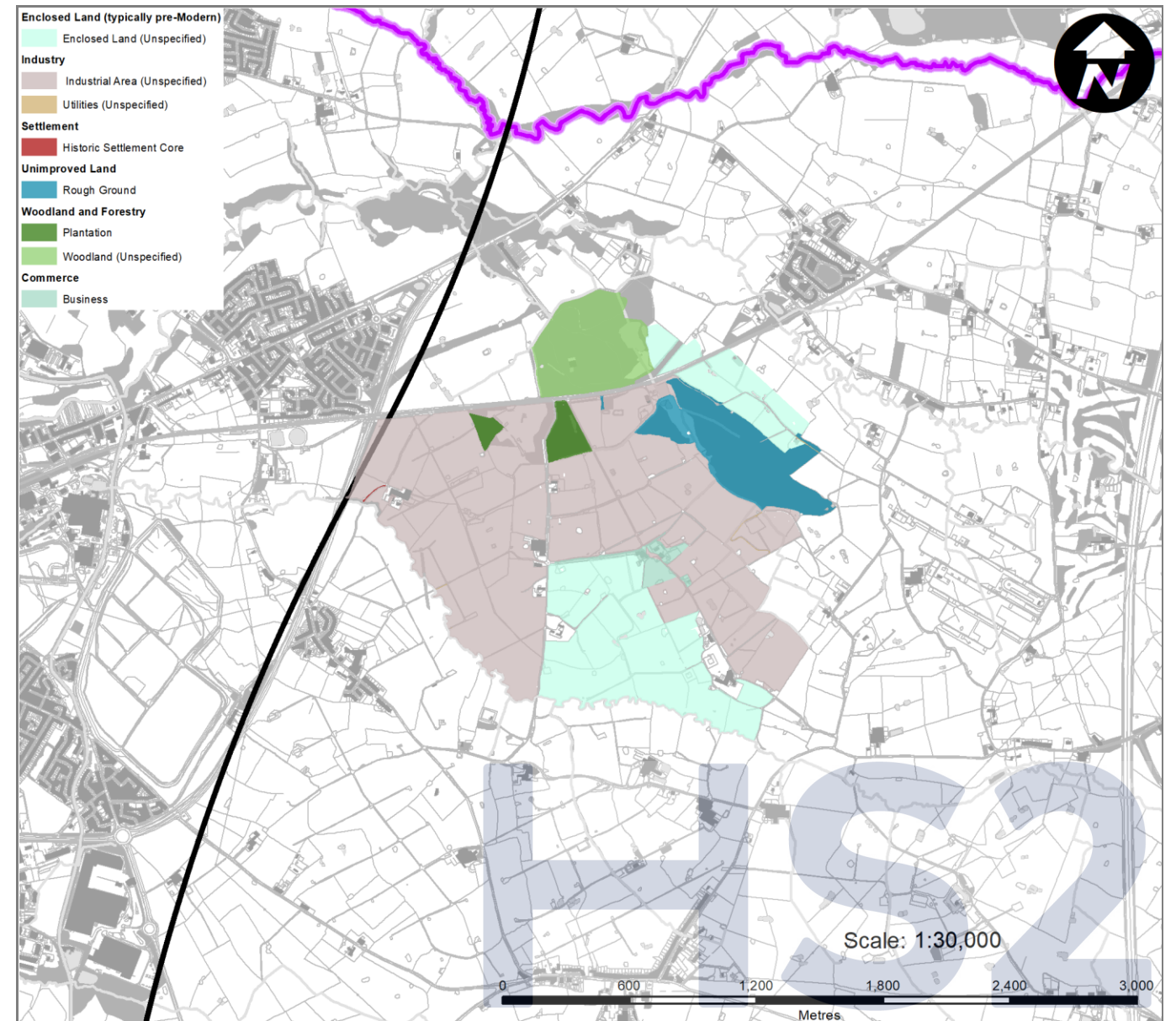
- Continuation of plain north of Lostock Green.
- Survival of Holford Moss and former areas of mossland around.
- Pocket of small enclosed moss fields in the east and more regularly shaped post-medieval field patterns in the west.
- Isolated farmsteads.
- Linear transport features including the Cheshire Midland Railway (now known as the Northwich to Knutsford Railway, part of the Mid-Cheshire Line) and the A556 Shurlach Road on the western side of the HLCA.



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Description

The HLCA consists of the former extent of Holford Moss prior to enclosure. Holford Moss was an area of land north of the Crow Brook. The surviving remains of Holford Moss are located on the north-east edge of the HLCA. The extent of the former moss is revealed by place-name evidence, historic documents and maps including the Plumley Tithe Award of 1844. An area of 17.8ha is named Holford Moss and several intakes have moss names around the outskirts. The extent of the moss has been mapped to indicate its likely former extent. The overall area would have been around 120ha in size. A small fragment of the former mossland survives as 23ha of unimproved rough grazed land. Holford Moss is likely to have been enclosed in the 19th century. The area to the south and north-west includes post medieval field systems indicative of enclosure. The area has subsequently been utilised for industry in the later 20th century for the Holford Moss Brinefield. This represents a change in historic landscape. The resultant alteration to the field pattern is slight, as hedgerows survive in place and there is very little above ground infrastructure. Plumley Lime Beds on the northern edge of the HLCA is a scheduled monument of a former early 20th century soda and munitions works. The industrial remains of the factories survive as built heritage and buried archaeological remains. The area is now a nature reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that survives as an area of woodland. The HLCA is intersected by the Cheshire Midland Railway, built in 1861. The A556 Shurlach Road built in the 1970s runs broadly north to south along the western side of the HLCA.



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| | | | |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Asset value | Moderate | Effect | |
| Magnitude of impact | | Construction temporary | Low adverse |
| | | Construction permanent | Minimal adverse |
| | | Operation permanent | No change |
| | | Construction permanent | Minor adverse |
| | | Operation | Neutral |

Commentary

The interest of the HLCA arises from the capacity of the landscape to provide evidence of Holford Moss and surrounding enclosed mossland. The area on the western side in contrast has been improved for agriculture from former moss and heathland. The Proposed Scheme will be aligned through the west of the HLCA, parallel to the route of the existing A556 Shurlach Road. However, the area is already characterised by road and railways. Utilities diversions will cross the west of the HLCA around Lostock Green, resulting in the temporary loss of field boundaries. These will be reinstated and will not affect the legibility of the HLCA.

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