
Kronospan Low Carbon CHP Facility

Appendix 7C



Landscape Character Baseline

Prepared for: Kronospan

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Appendix of the Environmental Statement ('ES') sets out the landscape character baseline against which the effects of the Proposed Development have been assessed. It summarises the following, in so far as they relate to the Study Area for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA')

- i) National Landscape Character Areas ('NLCA').
- ii) Wrexham County Borough Council ('WCBC') Landscape Character Areas ('LCA').
- iii) Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape ('National Landscape') Landscape Character Types ('LCT').
- iv) Shropshire Council Landscape Types ('LT').

1.1.2 The locations of each NLCA, LCA, LCT and LT within the Study Area are illustrated on **Figure 7-1a** of the ES.

2.0 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Data Source

- 2.1.1 NLCAs provide background and context to more detailed landscape character assessments produced at county and district levels. Their broad geographic reach means that the key characteristics identified as typical of a particular NCA may not necessarily apply to a specific location within that NCA.
- 2.1.2 There are three NLCAs located within the LVIA Study Area, namely NLCA13: Deeside and Wrexham, and NLCA16: Berwyn. Descriptions of each NLCA are available via the Natural Resources Wales ('NRW') website¹.
- 2.1.3 The Table below summarises the key characteristics and relevant descriptive text for each NLCA.

Table 1 – National Landscape Character Areas

NCA	Key Characteristics	Relevant extracts from descriptive text
NLCA13: Deeside and Wrexham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lowland, foothills and levels - sloping down to the lower Dee and Dee Estuary. Carboniferous Coal Measures interspersed with outcrops of Millstone Grit, Holywell shales and Cefn-y-Fedw sandstones. Glacial till, fluvio-glacial and river terrace drift overlay in parts of the valley floor, giving rise to localised gentle land form variation. ○ A single large river, the Dee, traverses the area. The Dee opens out into a broad estuary with tidal sand and mud flats. A number of minor rivers dissect the landscape, for example, the Alyn and Eitha, and associated streams. ○ A broad flat flood plain adjacent to the Dee Estuary – with wide open views to Wirral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visual and Sensory profile... Under the right weather conditions, the towering steam clouds vented from the wood processing plant at Chirk can be seen for miles across this and other, English landscapes to the east...A more traditional developed landscape is associated with the smaller towns, such as Mold, Caergwrle, uabon and Chirk. The Pontcysyllte aqueduct and

¹ Natural Resources Wales, 2023. *Natural Landscape Character Areas (NLCA)*. Available at <https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/maps/nlca/?lang=en> [Accessed 29 October 2024]

NCA	Key Characteristics	Relevant extracts from descriptive text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Narrow, incised, wooded tributary valleys – many running down from the west. ○ Mixed pasture and some arable - and farm woodland cover. ○ Archaeology - variety of historic sites indicate the former strategic importance of the coastal route and the turbulent history of the Marchlands, including Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke. Late Medieval parklands and ecclesiastical / funerary sites. ○ Urban settlements - a strongly settled character is apparent in the central and southern parts of the area, with the relatively large, almost linked settlements of Holywell-Connah's Quay-Mold-Wrexham-Ruabon. ○ An industrial character - evident in the line of coalesced settlements at Connah's Quay and Holywell, associated both with the Chester to Holyhead railway line, mining and large scale power generation and industrial plants. Include landmark scale structures such as Broughton aircraft factory, Shotton Steel works and Connah's Quay power station. Industry tends to dwarf historic settlement and features e.g. Flint and its castle. ○ Small settlements – outside urban areas, compact villages associated with landed estates and isolated farmsteads, or coalesced ribbon developments and encroachment upon commons, which are the legacy of the former coal and lead mining industries. ○ Culturally many connections to Chester and Merseyside. 	<p>to a lesser extent the Chirk aqueduct offer sublime gateways to the Vale of Llangollen and the hills of Wales from the flatter lands of England and the borders to the east</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cultural Landscape Influences. A border area that has historically been under the influence of both England and Wales. Offa's Dyke is a visible symbol of the struggle for control of this area from the 7th to the 9th centuries, and much of the northern part appears in the Domesday Book...the inscription of the Llangollen Canal and the Chirk and Pont Cysyllte aqueducts as a World Heritage Site reflect contemporary 21st century cultural understanding and the international importance of these iconic monuments
NLCA16: Berwyn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spine of extensive, open, unenclosed, rolling uplands ○ A series of deeply incised 'V' or 'U' shaped river valleys - to the south-east side. ○ Waterfalls including Pistyll Rhaeadr (the highest in Wales) to the north west of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, relating to geology. ○ Moorland - of the central and western 'massif' is recognised and protected as being of significant ecological interest for moorland breeding bird species. ○ Marginal farming – fieldscapes extending up the hillsides with a distinct land-cover change to unenclosed moorland characterise some areas e.g. west of Glyn Ceiriog. ○ Remote and unsettled, inland character – contiguous with the uplands, but gentler with more enclosure up hillsides to the eastern fringe, e.g. around Pontfadog. ○ Some mining and quarrying heritage - e.g. slate in Glyn Ceiriog area. ○ Llyn Vyrnwy – a large reservoir in a 'U' shaped valley, and much C20th afforestation, plus the adjacent Dyfnant Forest result in significant change to former character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visual and Sensory profile... The lower slopes, more particularly in the eastern and southern peripheries, give way to open fields and improved pasture. These upland margins are distinct in themselves as they include relatively large, straight-edged fields with fences, unmanaged remnant hedges, and a number of coniferous shelter belts. All this contrasts with the lower valley bottoms of the area that are more typically lush with deciduous trees, and have a patchwork of smaller fields and hedges... to have such a visually varied and engrossing landscape so close to the border

NCA	Key Characteristics	Relevant extracts from descriptive text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Large scale upland coniferous forest – in some areas and interspersed with the moorland and on hillsides above Llyn Vyrnwy. ○ Lower lying pasture, field boundary hedgerows, hedgerow trees and deciduous woodland – in river valleys such as the Tanat. ○ Settlement in valleys - only a few, compact, linear valley villages such as Llangynog. ○ Archaeology - prehistoric ritual and funerary monuments such as the cairns and round barrows in the most elevated areas, and evidence of occupation on moorlands and in the Tanat valley. ○ Tranquil – the overwhelming majority of the area is quiet, rural and has a very low level of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ with the extensive lowlands of Cheshire and Shropshire to the east is notable ○ Historic Landscape influences... Chirk Castle and its associated designed parkland, located at the eastern edge of the area, is a significant feature in the landscape... ○ Cultural Landscape influences... Chirk Castle is in origin one of Edward I's great ring of fortifications, guarding the entrance to the mountain passes into Wales. It was later the home of the Myddelton (Myddleton) family, and is now managed by the National Trust.



3.0 WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

3.1.1 The *Wrexham LANDMAP Supplementary Planning Guidance*² uses NRW LANDMAP data to subdivide the WCBC area into a series of four broad landscape types and twenty-seven geographically distinct LCAs. The Proposed Development would be within the Rural/Urban Villages landscape type and within LCA 7a: Chirk. The land in the western part of the Study Area is within the Uplands landscape type and within LCA 5a: Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte. A full list of LCAs within the Study Area is set out below:

- i) 4: Ceiriog Valley.
- ii) 5a: Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte.
- iii) 7a: Chirk.
- iv) 9d: Froncysyllte to Newbridge.
- v) 12a: Dee/Ceiriog Wooded Valley.
- vi) 13a: Welsh Maelor.

3.1.2 The Table below sets out details of each WCBC LCA within the Study Area. In relation to those LCAs which are relatively distant from the Proposed Development (i.e. all except LCA55 and LCA4a), only the summary description and key characteristics is set out. For LCA 5a and LCA 7a, landscape sensitivity and management guidelines are also included in the Table.

² Wrexham County Borough Council, adopted 2007. *Wrexham LANDMAP Supplementary Planning Guidance*



Table 2 – Wrexham County Borough Council Landscape Character Areas

LCA	Summary Description	Key Characteristics
LCA4: Ceiriog Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scenic rural valley enclosed by upland ridges. ○ Sense of tranquillity and remoteness from urban areas. ○ Mosaic of pasture, woods and traditional small farms. ○ Small irregular fields with hedgerows and hedgerow trees. ○ Villages along valley bottom, with widespread use of stone for buildings. ○ Old quarries linked by tramway. ○ Area of value for informal recreation and low-key tourism. ○ Important area of Welsh culture. 	<p><u>Visual Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upland pastoral valley with small scale mosaic of fields with hedgerows (some sparse or overgrown) and woods. ○ Steep open slopes give an upland feel even at lower elevations. ○ Constantly changing views due to zig zag shape of valley. ○ Scattered stone-built farms reached by steep winding lanes. ○ High quality of the landscape, the result of the sense of peace and tranquillity as well as the scenery. <p><u>Geological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The valley extends deep into the Berwyn Mountain range, with the fast flowing River Ceiriog cutting across the underlying geology of the Berwyn Dome. ○ Quarries and spoil tips are evident around Glyn Ceiriog. ○ Soils vary but are usually well drained loams, though some areas are affected by seasonal waterlogging. <p><u>Ecological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Ceiriog is a nationally important wildlife corridor and aquatic habitat. ○ Farmland is mainly improved grassland of low biodiversity interest but the high density of hedges and hedgerow trees is valuable for wildlife. ○ Valley is rich in woodland habitats - broadleaved, conifer or mixed. Semi natural broadleaved woodland is usually associated with steep slopes and deeper tributary valleys. ○ Fragments of other habitats including acid grassland, dry lowland heath, lowland pasture, rush pasture, and acid flush wetland are found. <p><u>Historical Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Older evolved/irregular small field patterns of the lower valley survive, giving way to more recently enclosed larger regular fields on upper or steeper slopes. ○ Border area - Offa's dyke crosses valley to the east. ○ Prehistoric hillforts at Tyn y cestyll near Glyn Ceiriog, and Cerrig Gwynion hillfort near Llanarmon DC. ○ History of wool-processing - 18th century fulling mill at Pandy, and quarrying, with Glyn Valley tramway serving local quarries. <p><u>Cultural Character</u></p>

LCA	Summary Description	Key Characteristics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sheep farming is the dominant land use, with some pheasant rearing, but there is increasing diversification to include rural crafts, woodland management, low key tourism and recreational facilities and activities including fishing and walking. ○ The Ceiriog Valley is recognised as a distinct cultural area within Wales. Welsh is widely spoken.
LCA5a: Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hill slopes facing settlement and industrial developed lowlands. ○ Castle and estate parkland, woodlands and farmland. ○ Gateway to Ceiriog Valley and Vale of Llangollen. ○ Traversed by Offa's Dyke. ○ Focus for tourism. 	<p><u>Visual Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dominated by the designed landscape of the Chirk estate with castle, parkland, associated farmland and encircling belts of mixed woodland. ○ Smaller scale woodland and pasture mosaic is found on the steeper slopes above Froncysyllte. ○ Lower edges of area are generally affected by views of industry in Chirk and Cefn Mawr. ○ Good views from higher areas. <p><u>Geological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ East-facing slopes from about 150 m to 350 m above sea level, with higher areas underlain by older sedimentary rocks of Silurian age, part of the Berwyn Dome and lower slopes by sedimentary rocks of Carboniferous age, overlain by glacial deposits. ○ Chirk Castle is built on an outcrop of Carboniferous sandstone and limestone. Limestone also outcrops above Froncysyllte where it has been quarried. ○ Soils of the Chirk estate are generally loamy and well-drained, with more acid or seasonally wet soils at higher elevations. <p><u>Ecological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chirk wood-pasture and parkland and veteran trees are a national biodiversity priority habitat supporting a range of saproxylic (dead wood) invertebrates. ○ The area contains valuable broadleaved woodland and mixed woodland, as well as conifer plantations. There are individual veteran trees within the Chirk woodlands of particularly high value and small semi-natural ancient woodlands are found near Froncysyllte. ○ Some small vulnerable grassland habitats on moorland margins. <p><u>Historical and Cultural Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The present landscape has evolved through its strategic location on the upland/lowland and English/Welsh border. ○ Chirk Castle is a major focal point for tourism, of national importance, as is Offa's Dyke footpath which passes through the grounds. ○ Offa's Dyke is a medieval military feature on a former political boundary which crosses Wrexham north-south.

LCA	Summary Description	Key Characteristics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chirk Castle is a 13th century castle adapted as a gentry dwelling, and now partly under National Trust management, as are the gardens. It has many historical and cultural associations Much of the surrounding farmland was once owned by the Chirk estate, and some is still in estate ownership.
	<p>Landscape Sensitivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of its prominent and strategic location, the area is sensitive to change. It is also strongly affected by development in adjacent landscape character areas, particularly Chirk to which it is historically and visually linked. 	<p>Management Guidelines</p> <p><u>Conserve historic landscape</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain present management of parkland, woodland and farmland. Protect the setting of Offa's Dyke. <p><u>Reduce impact of nearby industry</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out strategic planting to filter views. <p><u>Preserve geological features</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the integrity of existing landforms. Maintain the integrity and continuity of geological exposures, and assess new ones. Promote awareness of the geological heritage of the area. <p><u>Conserve and perpetuate habitats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain old and veteran trees and plant new generations of veteran trees. Replace coniferous trees with native species. Avoid chemical use in parkland and wood pasture. <p><u>Preserve archaeology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect archaeological sites, maintain historic field pattern. Maintain Offa's Dyke monument through adoption of management plan drawn up by Offa's Dyke Officer at Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. Maintain existing field systems and carry out further surveys. <p><u>Strengthen links between Chirk castle estate and local areas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue present management regime of Chirk Castle between Chirk estate and estate Further enhance area for walkers and visitors and improve access from Chirk village and other areas through better walking routes, and low key public transport initiatives. Consider selective tree clearance to improve views of castle from Ceiriog Valley and vice versa. <p><u>Support sustainable land uses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote sustainable land management through agri-environment schemes. Encourage sustainable tourism and cultural initiatives.

LCA	Summary Description	Key Characteristics
LCA7a: Chirk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial Structures within a wider rural setting visually dominating much of the area and beyond Canal (a major tourist attraction) road and rail corridors pass through the area. Chirk is within a shallow valley with open views to hills. Contains nationally important viaduct and aqueduct historical landscape features Village lies between the historic estates of Chirk Castle and Brynkinallt. 	<p><u>Visual Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area enclosed by hills to west and ridge to east but with generally open views. Chirk village and valley are in places influenced by industrial land use, structures, steam plume and occasionally by background noise and odours. Countryside with large regular fields in mainly pastoral use, with hedgerows and sparse hedgerow trees. Visually diverse with mixture of historic and modern land uses. Communications corridor, with road, rail and canal running north-south along edge of uplands. To the east of Chirk a ridge cuts Chirk off the rest of lowland Wrexham. <p><u>Geological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minor ridge to the east of Chirk is formed from Coal Measures. Restored coal tips can be found at Chirk Green and Halton. Much of the area is covered by glacial till (clays) from which the clayey loam soils of the area are derived. <p><u>Ecological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmland and golf course are mainly improved grassland of low biodiversity value. The Shropshire Union Canal is an aquatic habitat of high value. Small but valuable areas of broadleaved and coniferous woodland are found in the area. <p><u>Historical and Cultural Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shropshire Union Canal corridor, in cutting, has its own tranquil character. It includes a visually and historically outstanding aqueduct over the River Ceiriog, close to the Chester-Shrewsbury railway viaduct, and is a visitor attraction, with a small marina next to Chirk Golf course. Chirk (English form of Welsh 'Ceiriog') is a medieval non-planned settlement with an earth motte and early church. It developed on the old A5 at the Welsh-English border. Whitehurst is an important, but neglected, 17th century walled garden which was once part of the Chirk estate. The former Brynkinallt Colliery is now restored to community woodland and open space, and new business uses are developing on restored colliery land at Halton.
	<p>Landscape Sensitivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High sensitivity because of the close proximity of tourist attractions and scenic areas. Whilst already urbanised, Chirk is vulnerable to further development which could 	<p>Management Guidelines</p> <p><u>Conserve undeveloped rural hillside character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resist siting of masts and other built development on skylines and open slopes. Ensure new development is integrated into existing village. <p><u>Mitigate impact of industry</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase urban and rural tree planting generally.

LCA	Summary Description	Key Characteristics
	affect the historical and rural landscape character of the surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reduce visual impact of business development in prominent rural setting at Halton through low rise building and colours which blend with countryside. <p><u>Conserve and restore historic designed landscape</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Preserve walls, landform and features of Whitehurst 17th historic designed century gardens and Brynkinallt estate. o Encourage restoration and beneficial uses for Whitehurst Gardens and Brynkinallt walled gardens. <p><u>Preserve geological features and assess new exposures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensure new development or management practices do not features and assess damage natural features or geological exposures. o Assess any exposures for scientific or educational interest and protect if of value. <p><u>Enhance and extend existing habitats for wildlife</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Follow recommendations of Wrexham Biodiversity Action Plan. o Manage canal banks for water vole, protect bats in wildlife buildings, walls and old trees o Promote agri-environment schemes, restore hay meadow management. o Retain, enhance and extend woodlands. o Protect existing wildlife corridors, including aquatic corridors and hedgerows, and develop new ones - refer also to the Green Network Strategy. <p><u>Preserve archaeological development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Evaluate archaeology in advance of development within the archaeological medieval core area of Chirk, protect motte from loss of features. o Continue existing British Waterways management strategy for canal, conserve A5 (Telford's road). o Carry out further assessment of fieldscapes and develop a management strategy. <p><u>Encourage local/sustainable tourist and business initiatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Maintain historic appearance of rural areas and promote sustainable tourist awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the historic and business dimension of landscape character. o The area is particularly sensitive to residential conversions of farm buildings, which lose the original character of the building. o Refer to Green Network Strategy due March 2007 and implement new links.
LCA9d: Froncysyllte to Newbridge	o Key section of Dee Valley with historic canal, rail, road and Offa's Dyke crossings.	<p><u>Visual Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Enclosed lowland valley with level floodplain. o Farmed and wooded character, flanked by closely built 'urban villages' of Cefn Mawr, Trevor and Froncysyllte.

LCA	Summary Description	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Enclosed valley with scenic views to west. o Rural land uses but close to industry and settlements. o Important river, grassland and woodland habitats. o Focus for tourism and recreation. o Outstanding industrial archaeology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Outstanding views to and from the Pontcysyllte aqueduct, Cefn railway viaduct, and nearby hills. o Notable man-made embankment carrying canal to aqueduct, which helps to form 'gateway' in valley. <p><u>Geological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Major river in natural channel. o Alluvial valley floor with river terraces, narrowing above Pontcysyllte aqueduct. o River cliffs near Trevor and Newbridge cut into glacial drift and underlying sedimentary strata. o Froncysyllte is built on an outcrop of limestone, with disused quarries above the village. o The valley, following faultlines, separates the older Silurian rocks of the Berwyn uplands from the younger Carboniferous rocks of Ruabon. o Mountain and its eastern slopes. <p><u>Ecological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Lowland pasture, upland mixed ash woodland and aquatic habitats of very high value. o Remainder is improved grassland and farmland. <p><u>Historical Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Historic crossing point - Offa's Dyke, Shropshire Union Canal, railway. o 19th/20th century workers housing at Trevor and Froncysyllte connected with expansion of industrial development which spanned the Dee Valley, including limestone quarrying and burning, industrial ceramics, and development of the chemical industry at Cefn Mawr. <p><u>Cultural Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Historic parks and gardens – Trevor Hall and Argoed Hall. o Part within Vale of Llangollen and Eglwyseg Landscape of Special Historic Interest. o Tourism and leisure activities – Trevor Basin, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Ty Mawr country park. o Well known artistic representations of aqueduct, and literary references.
LCA12d: Dee/Ceiriog Wooded Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Steep sided and enclosed sections of the River Dee and River Ceiriog valleys, shared with North Shropshire. o Dominated by broadleaved and coniferous woodlands, with some pasture land. 	<p><u>Visual Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Enclosed valley with mixed woodlands and pasture, incised into the Welsh Maelor estate landscape. o Character contrasts strongly with adjoining areas. o Former clay pit, now intrusive landfill site, at Pen y Bont, is being restored to original contours. o Visually outstanding Chirk aqueduct and rail viaduct are together a significant tourist attraction. <p><u>Geological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o River cliffs of red sandstone where Dee and lower Ceiriog have cut down through overlying glacial till into bedrock are of interest - the stone has been used locally as a building material.

LCA	Summary Description	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spectacular road, rail and canal crossings enhance the scenic qualities and provide views. ○ Strong seasonal contrasts. ○ Much in estate ownership with limited public access. 	<p><u>Ecological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Dee is an outstanding aquatic habitat (designated as SSSI) with associated wet woodland. ○ Extensive woodland habitats of high and moderate value including upland oak woodland, mixed and broadleaf plantation woodlands. ○ Some improved grassland and farmland. <p><u>Historical and Cultural Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partly within Wynnstay, Penylan, and Erbistock Estates, all on Cadw Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. ○ River crossings are important for north-south communications and transport.
LCA13a: Welsh Maelor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Undulating, mainly pastoral lowland farmland. ○ Well-managed hedges with hedgerow trees and small woodlands. ○ Historic designed estates influence a large proportion of this area. ○ Field ponds abundant on areas with clay soils. ○ Historic settlement pattern with remnants of medieval ridge and furrow. ○ Erddig estate important for tourism, recreation, nature conservation and heritage. ○ Wat's Dyke runs north-south through area. ○ Patches of valuable semi-natural habitats, especially in Clywedog valley ○ Affected by urban pressures and economic changes to farming. 	<p><u>Visual Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Good views to the hills and over the Dee Valley from higher ground. ○ Undulating estate farmland with mosaic of farmland and trees (N. and S. areas) and undulating open farmland in the central area. ○ Designed parks and gardens. ○ Generally an abundance of well managed hedgerows and hedgerow trees. ○ Traditional red brick farmsteadings but many barns now converted to residential uses. ○ Tranquillity and landscape quality affected by A483 and pylons to west. <p><u>Geological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deep deposits of glacial drift overlie bedrock of Carboniferous and Triassic age. ○ Glacial till (boulder clay) covers a large part of the character area, with glacial sands and gravels found mainly in the area immediately to the south of Wrexham town, and in the river terrace on which Eyton Grange is situated. ○ The area drains to the Clywedog in the north and to the River Dee in the east and south. <p><u>Ecological Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The River Clywedog valley south of Wrexham town has a diverse range of valuable semi-natural habitats including wet woodlands, lowland meadows and nationally important wetlands (especially for invertebrates) with areas of fen sedge, herb-rich swamp and rush pasture. ○ Farm orchards are now rare, but a valuable old orchard survives at Erddig. ○ Semi-natural upland mixed ash woodlands, other broadleaved woodlands and plantations are characteristic of the northern and southern areas, forming a mosaic of woodland and farmland. Mixed plantations are also found in the south.

LCA	Summary Description	Key Characteristics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although most grassland is improved, remnants of high value neutral grassland survive in the central and northern areas. The Welsh Maelor has valuable remnants of estate parkland or wood pasture with mature and veteran trees - a Biodiversity Priority Habitat. Field ponds are frequent, and valuable for wildlife. <p><u>Historical Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medieval military feature - Wat's Dyke earthen bank and ditch cuts across farmland. Widespread evidence of medieval open fields - ridge and furrow remnants of the Wrexham Lowlands. Important designed parklands on Cadw Register at Erddig, Wynnstay and Brynkinalt, as well as Penylan, Erbistock and Rosehill. Non-planned settlement with medieval origins at Gyfelia and Crabtree Green. 19th/20th century ribbon development at Marchwiell. Disused Ellesmere railway. Remnants of former ordnance depot at Parkey area south of Wrexham Industrial Estate. <p><u>Cultural Character</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still predominantly agricultural, with dispersed farms. Farmsteads and villages affected by commuter pressure, with residential conversions and new housing. Sense of place - Erddig and Wynnstay in particular. Wynnstay Estate once culturally dominated the southern part of the Welsh Maelor but the buildings of the core area are being converted to residential accommodation, enabling restoration of the Grade 1 Capability Brown pleasure gardens. High level of recreational use in Erddig and Clywedog Valley, and extensive network of small lanes and rights of way in all parts except Wynnstay.



4.0 CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

4.1.1 The *National Landscape SPG*³ identifies a series of landscape types within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape designation. Those within the Study Area are set out below:

- i) Hillslopes.
- ii) Rolling lowland.
- iii) River valleys.

4.1.2 The Table below summarises the key characteristics and management considerations for each National Landscape LCT within the Study Area.

Table 3 – Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape Landscape Character Types

LCT	Key Characteristics	
Hillslopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hill Slopes include steep rising landform, escarpments below the uplands and lower hills of the AONB. ○ Land cover and settlement characteristics are strongly rural and where development is minor or absent perceptions of tranquillity, remoteness and wildness can be particularly strong. ○ These areas all form prominent scenic backdrops to adjacent settled lower areas of the north-east Wales coastal plain, Vale of Clwyd, Deeside, Vale of Llangollen and Welsh Maelor and as such provide a strong sense of place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Slope angle has greatly influenced ease of access to this area and much of the pattern of development hasn't altered or evolved much (with the exception of forestry), which in part gives the landscape a strong rural and traditional character. ○ The area's visibility and contribution to scenic quality and sense of place to the more populated adjacent areas, makes the area sensitive to change from development. Available views, development scale, character and integration is therefore important to consider.

³ Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, and Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB, 2018. *Supplementary Planning Guidance Note Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*.

LCT	Key Characteristics	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Geomorphology and landform has brought about some notable natural and wild areas. For example - outcropping rock, native woodland, and scrub and grassland mosaics of the limestone escarpments above Prestatyn, Dyserth, Bryn Alyn and the Eglwyseg valley. ○ Irregular field patterns and woodland edges, scattered farms along winding narrow lanes and tracks occupy more gentle hillslopes, shallow cwms and side valleys of the area. Some large areas of forestry lie within this area. ○ Reservoirs are found in some of the shallower eastern facing valleys. ○ Scattered farming and worker cottages associated with historical mining and pro-cessing industries lie this area, with occasional villages at lower elevations. Older settlement is distinctive displaying use of stone, vernacular, rural traditions and integration with the landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development within or encroaching upon the more natural and wild escarpments can have particular contrast and appear at odds with the AONB special qualities.
Rolling Lowland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The rolling lowlands lie to north of the area and include the farmed wooded slopes of Gronant Hillside, the farmed Trelawnyd plateau and wooded valley west of Cefn Du. ○ These are areas of farmland with mosaic of field patterns and woodland along steeper ground and streams, scattered rural settlement, narrow lanes and one small village. Limestone in building and occasional field boundaries is characteristic of the Trelawnyd plateau. ○ The Trelawnyd plateau feels relatively remote in spite of the close proximity to the large villages and towns of the coastal plain. ○ There is a strong visual connection with adjacent areas – Gronant hillside connection with the coastal plain, seascape and Prestatyn Hillside; and Trelawnyd plateau connection with the enclosing limestone escarpment and Gop Hill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tranquillity is locally affected where the A5151 crosses open sections of the Trelawnyd plateau. Noise from the A55 also extends for some distance into this area. Retrofit options to reduce visual movement and noise levels would benefit the area. ○ This area contributes to the tranquillity and freedom of views experienced from the adjacent hill slopes and uplands. Consider key views over this area, scale and prominence of development proposals.
River Valleys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are several valleys within the AONB, each made distinctive by their topographical form, visual relationship with surrounding hillslopes and uplands, openness or enclosure provided by woodland, trees and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topography (enclosing hillslopes, narrow valley sections) and floodplains form natural constraints to development within the valley and place pressure open more open and elevated locations where development could be more intrusive.



LCT	Key Characteristics	
	<p>hedgerows and localised presence of settlement, development, roads and activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As lines of least resistance through an area of elevated hills and ridges the valleys they often include villages and main roads, the latter with local effects on tranquillity. ○ In the case of the Vale of Llangollen, there are diverse historical influences within a visually scenic valley context - including farming, quarrying, lines of communication (river, road, rail and canal infrastructure) rural villages and town with urban villages to the east. ○ The engineering solution to the topographical challenges and beauty of the valley have been addressed in the design of the Pontcysyllte and Chirk Aqueducts and Horseshoe falls. This has given rise to the area's recognition for its landscape and heritage value. ○ Scenic qualities and visual interest also derive from a valley's 'lines of visual force' i.e. valley shape, skyline edges, descending ridges, crags/ outcrops and screes and sinuous line of river, to which the pattern of fields, woodland and trees complement the overall scene. An example for the hillslopes area would be how Castell Dinas Bran marks the top of its rounded hill with particular aesthetic effect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic development of a scale to be potentially visible in the landscape should work with 'visual lines of force' and areas with a strong integrating pattern of vegetation (i.e. intact tall hedgerows, lines of hedgerow trees, copses and woodland). ○ New proposals within the Vale of Llangollen need to assimilate and complement land-scape character and heritage values to support both the AONB and World Heritage Site.



5.0 SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPES

5.1.1 The *Shropshire Landscape Typology*⁴ identifies a series of landscape types ('LT') within the county. Those located within the Study Area are:

- i) Riverside Meadows.
- ii) Wooded River Gorge.
- iii) Pasture Hills.
- iv) Principal Settled Farmlands.

5.1.2 The Table below summarises the key characteristics of each LT within the Study Area. No information is included in the *Shropshire Landscape Typology* regarding management guidance or any landscape sensitivities. The descriptive text adds little that is relevant to the LVIA baseline

Table 4 – Shropshire Landscape Types

LCT	Key Characteristics
Riverside Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Flat, floodplain topography. o Pastoral land use. o Linear belts of trees along watercourses. o Hedge and ditch field boundaries. o Unsettled.

⁴ Shropshire County Council, 2006. *The Shropshire Landscape Typology*. Available at <<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/landscape/shropshire-landscape-assessment/>> [Accessed 29 October 2024]

LCT	Key Characteristics
Wooded River Gorge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Steeply sloping valley sides. o Interlocking woodlands of ancient character. o Small scale, intimate landscapes with framed views. o Linear shape to areas with this character.
Pasture Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Prominent, sloping topography. o Hedge fields with mainly ancient origins. o Pastoral landuse. o Dispersed settlement pattern. o Medium to large scale landscape with filtered views.
Principal Settled Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mixed farming land use. o Varied pattern of sub-regular, hedged fields.

