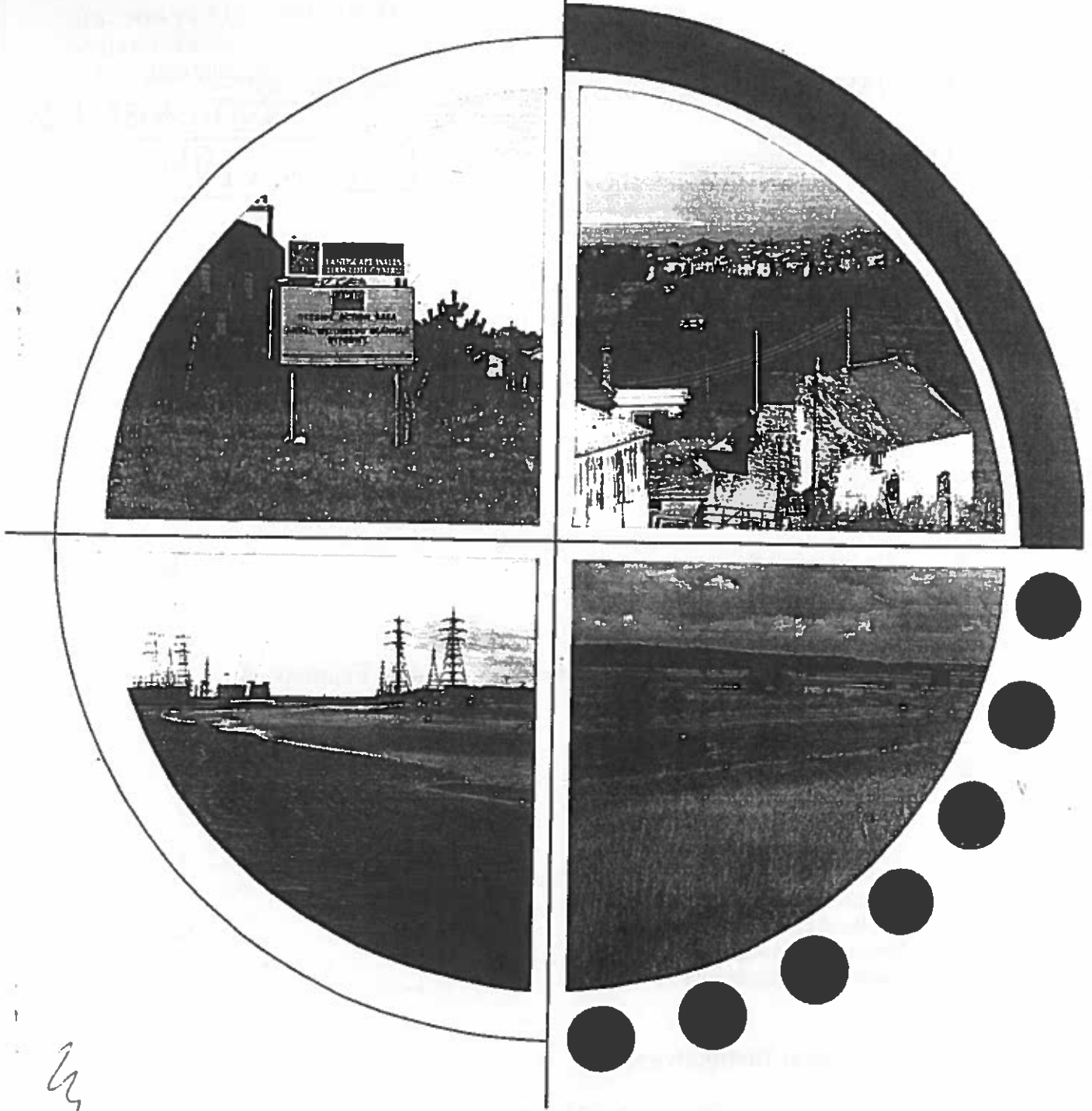


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Volume 1



**LANDSCAPES WORKING FOR WALES**  
**A Landscape Strategy for Flintshire**

Volume 1 : The Landscape Strategy  
Policies and Proposals

April 1996

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**FLINTSHIRE LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**  
**VOLUME 1**

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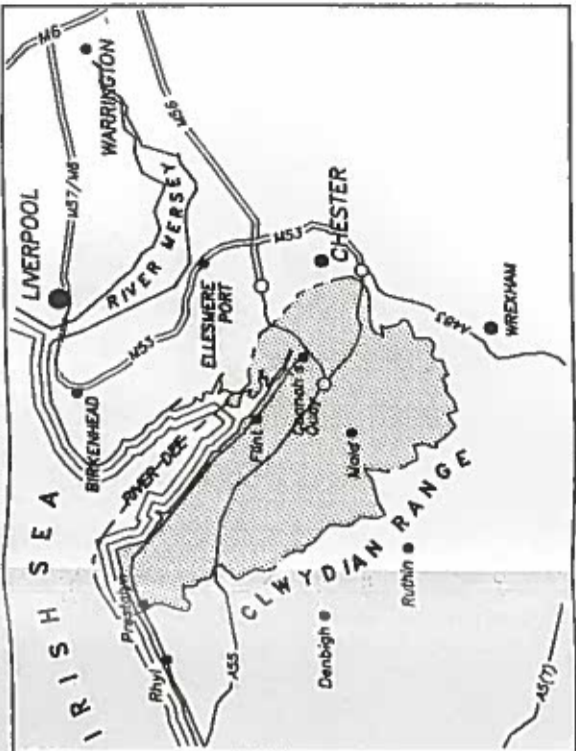
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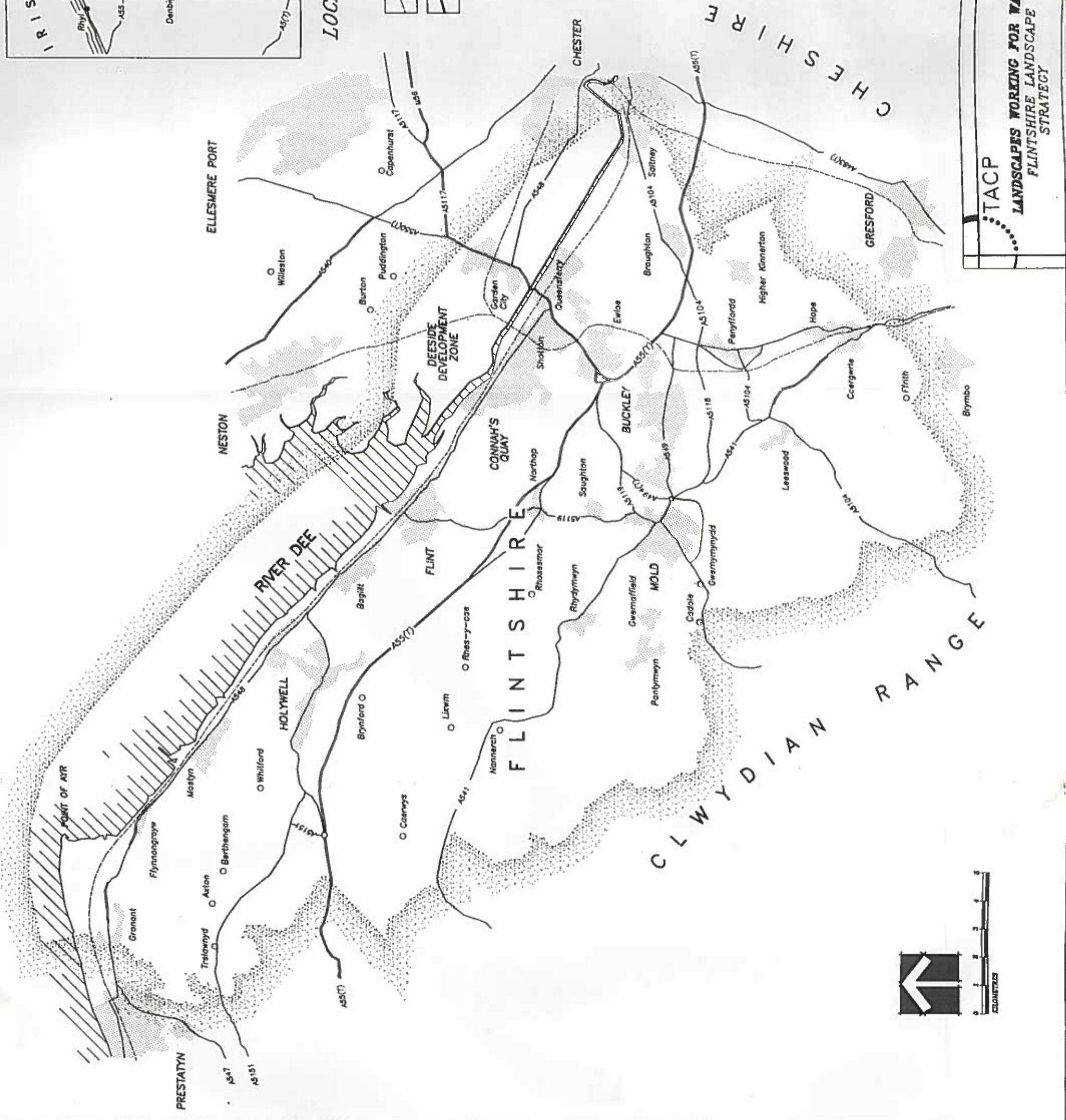
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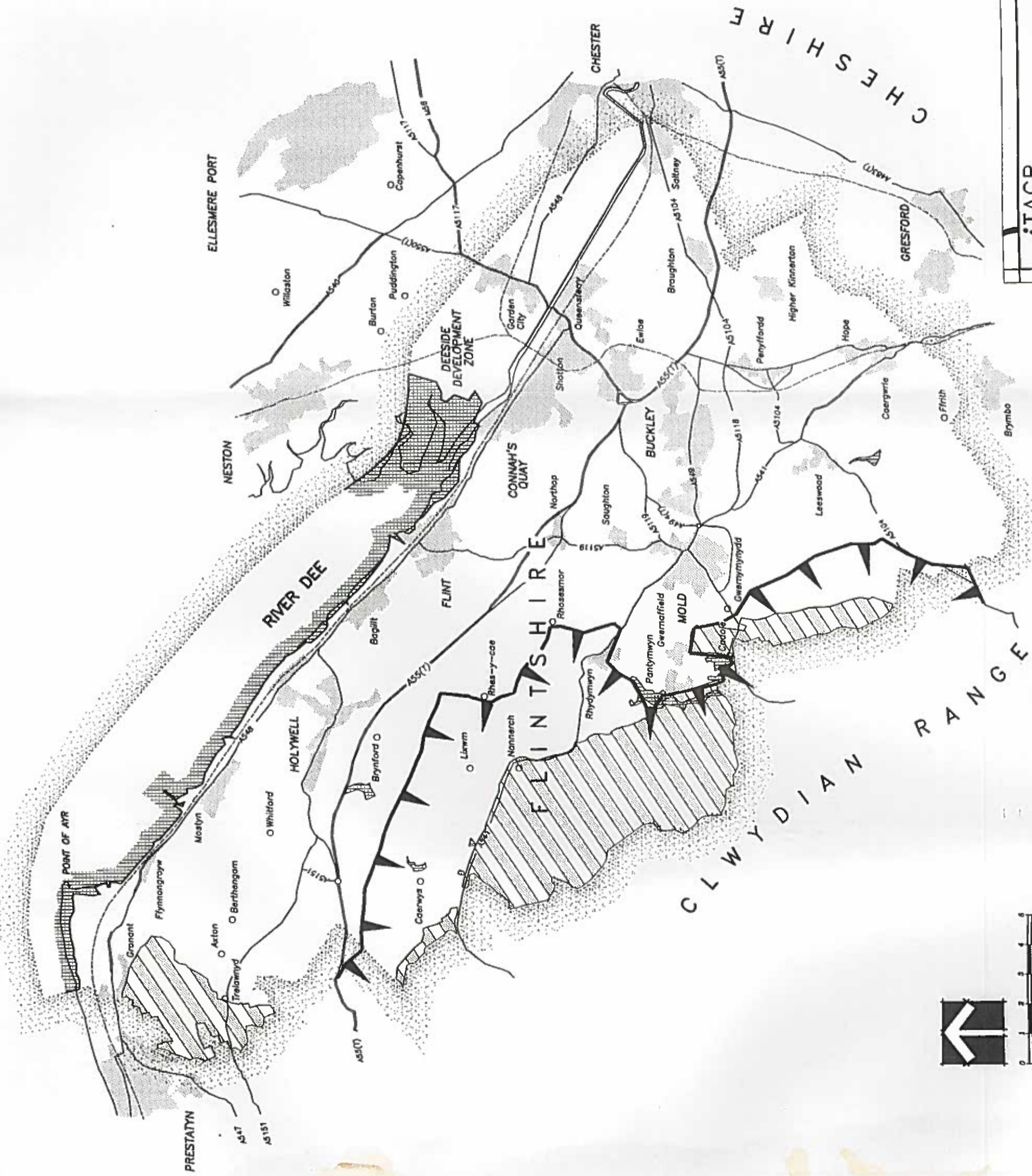
Environmentally Sensitive Areas (E.S.A.)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.)

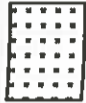


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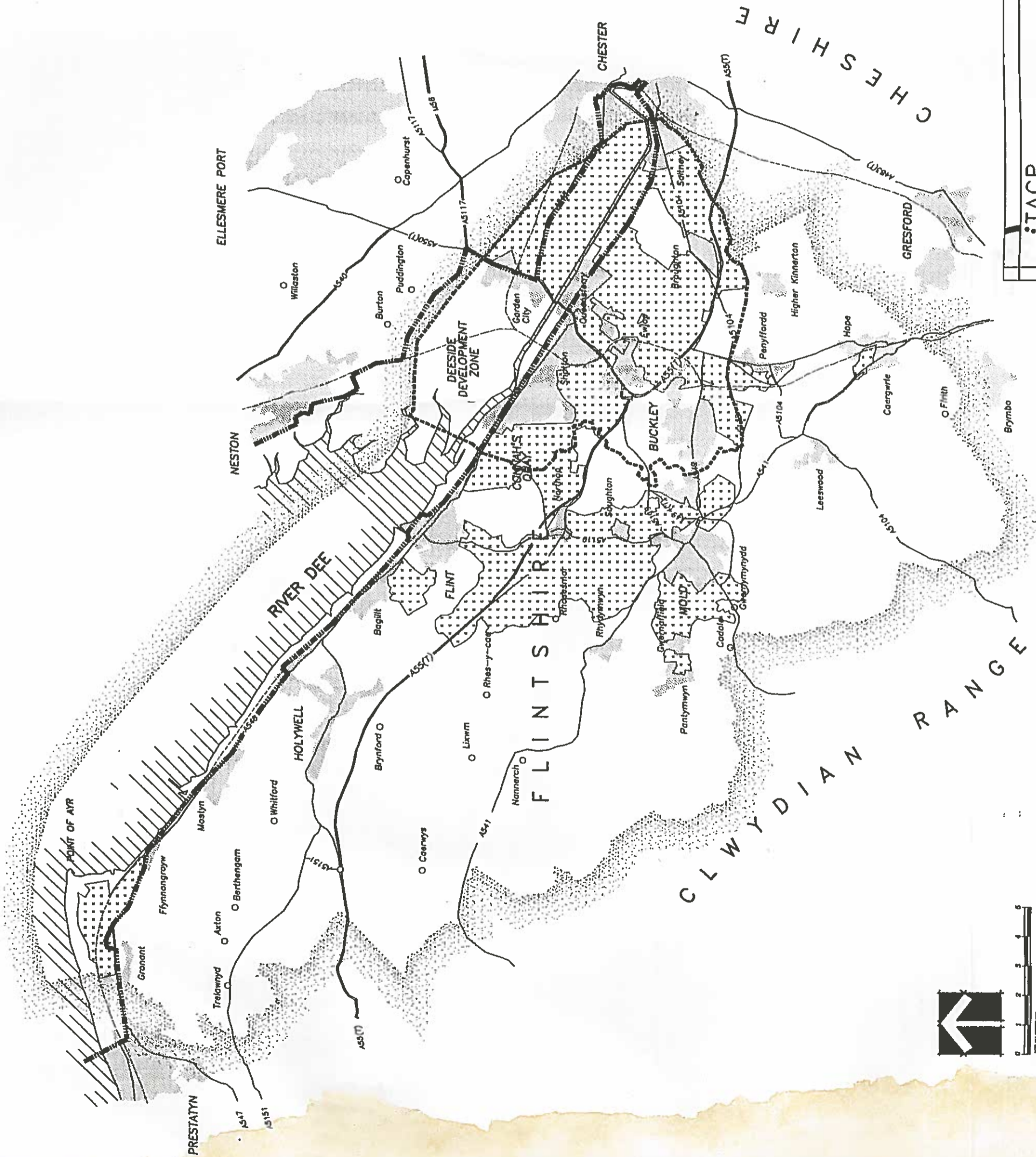
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-  Green Barriers
-  Dee Estuary Strategy Zone (D.E.S.Z.)
-  Deeside and Buckley Strategy Boundary

Drawing Title: Environmental Constraints 2

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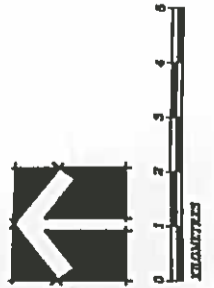
**KEY**

- 1 MOEL LLYS-Y-COED
- 2 CILCAIN HILL SLOPES
- 3 DEE FLOODPLAIN
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- 6 DEE COASTAL SLOPES
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## Character Area 1: MOEL LLYS-Y-COED



### Overall character and qualities

Undulating high ridge with a wild and open heather moorland landscape with considerable nature conservation value and archaeological interest, with localised agricultural reclamation and afforestation.

### Characteristic features

- Open and windswept character
- Long high ridge broken by a series of summits and often with long spurs
- Heather and bracken dominant and, together with bilberry and gorse, create a mosaic of colour and texture
- Semi-improved geometric fields bounded by untrimmed hazel and beech hedges and stone walls
- Pasture occasionally enclosed by remnant thorn hedges on lower margins
- Prehistoric monuments area feature of the ridgeline
- Ridge interrupted by occasional conifer plantations

## Character Area 2: CILCAIN HILL SLOPES



### Overall character and qualities

Often steeply rolling agricultural hillslopes of impoverished pasture below adjoining open moorland. Rich mosaic of trimmed and untrimmed hedges and small semi-natural woodlands with a dispersed settlement pattern of small villages and farmsteads and a distinctly rural ambience.

### Characteristic features

- Steeply rolling ground broken by minor watercourses and pockets of semi-natural vegetation
- Agriculturally improved and semi-improved pasture
- Small to medium-sized mostly irregular fields defined by tall often degraded hedgerows with scattered trees of oak, sycamore and ash
- More recent geometric enclosures at upper margins
- Relatively few woodlands, largely confined to small valleys
- Scattered farms links by a few narrow, often sunken lanes
- Local dominance of untrimmed beech/hazel hedges or trimmed holly hedges



## Character Area 3: DEE FLOODPLAIN



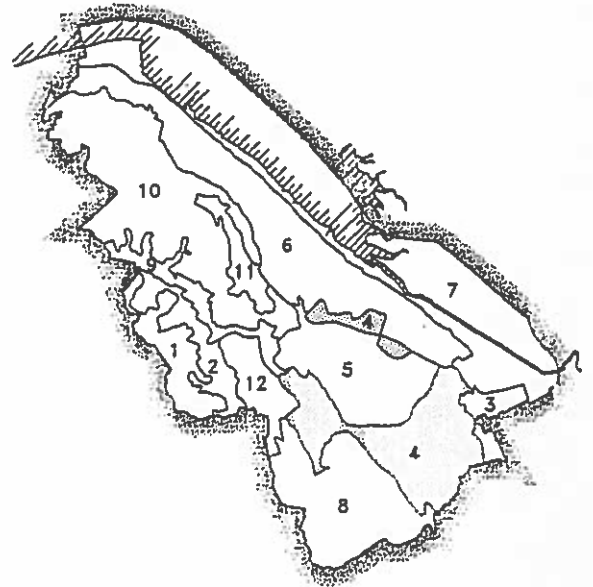
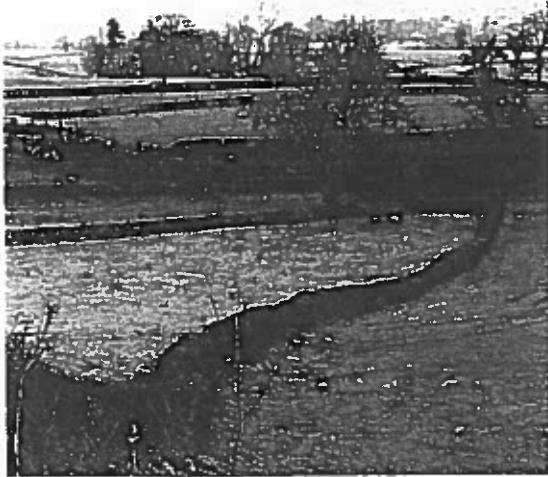
### Overall character and qualities

A low-lying almost flat intensively farmed hedged landscape with a limited tree cover on the terraces of the river Dee, and lacking a strong landscape framework.

### Characteristic features

- Uniformly low-lying flat landscape on river terraces
- Agriculturally improved farmland, with predominantly pasture and some arable
- Medium to large scale regular and semi-regular field pattern bounded by thorn hedges and fences supporting sparse collection of mature hedgerow trees and hawthorn scrub.
- Limited cover of small broadleaved copses with little visual impact
- Field ponds common
- Dispersed pattern of villages, hamlets and farms mostly of red brick

## Character Area 4: EASTERN LOWLAND PLAIN



### Overall character and qualities

A gently undulating pastoral lowland landscape under localised development and infrastructure pressure. Mostly on heavy clay and characterised by an abundance of hedgerow trees particularly oak, and ash, and an historic settlement pattern with a locally dominant estate influence.

### Characteristic features

- Uniform low-lying undulating landscape broken by minor watercourses
- An irregular and semi-regular medium sized field pattern, with trimmed hawthorn hedgerows containing numerous hedgerow trees, principally oak
- Generally intensively farmed land, mainly grassland but with some arable
- Remnant ridge and furrow well preserved
- Pockets of unimproved grassland and wetland mainly in valleys
- Field ponds abundant
- Many small predominantly broadleaved woodlands, often located in valleys
- A localised estate character of mixed woods conifer stands and open parkland, such as Soughton and Gwysaney near to Mold.
- An historic settlement pattern of estate halls, small villages, many farms and wayside cottages, all linked by an extensive network of roads, minor lanes, tracks and paths.
- Large urban and industrial areas such as Mold. Associated infrastructure gives rise to locally degraded agricultural fabric.
- Vernacular red brick buildings common.

## Character Area 5: BUCKLEY LOWLAND HILLS



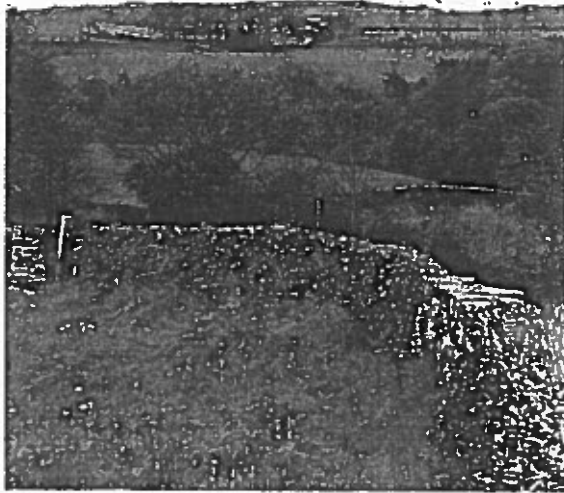
### Overall character and qualities

Elevated, undulating hills of rich rolling pasture land divided by shallow, often dry valleys with a patchwork of mixed woodland and a largely irregular field pattern supporting an overall abundance of mature hedgerow trees.

### Characteristic features

- A series of rolling hills dissected by small valleys of mixed farmland and woodland often dry or containing minor streams
- Mixed and thorn hedgerows and hedgebanks locally dominated by holly dividing medium to large-sized irregular and semi-regular field pattern
- Mature hedgerow trees, particularly oak, are common together with small broadleaved copses
- Rich mosaic of deciduous and coniferous managed woodland creates seclusion and shelter in places
- Both gritstone and redbrick building styles in evidence.
- Extensive network of minor and major roads throughout area.
- Numerous farms, smallholdings and wayside cottages
- Industrial and urban areas around Buckley with degraded urban fringe

## Character Area 6: DEE COASTAL SLOPES



### Overall character and qualities

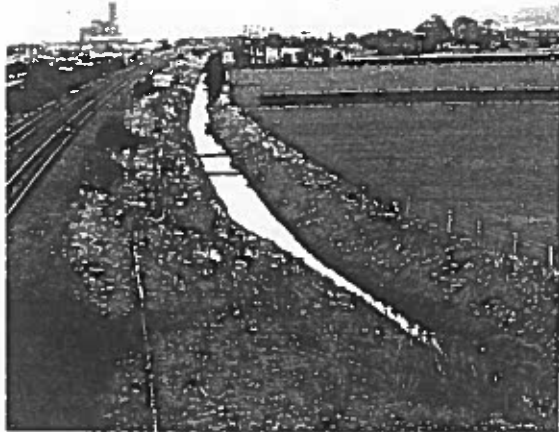
Distinct and locally densely settled pastoral slopes of undulating farmland and incised wooded valleys rising from the Coastal and Estuarine Flats to the high ground of the Trelawnyd Plateau.

### Characteristic features

- Uniform or gently undulating slopes with steady fall to coast
- Abundant predominantly broadleaved woodland, especially in narrow valleys
- Small incised valleys occupied by fast-flowing streams e.g. Garth, Greenfield, Gwinchiard and Wepre
- Medium-sized irregular and semi-regular fields defined by well maintained mixed hedgerows, with hedgerow trees common
- Settlement generally limited to scattered farms and wayside cottages and small/medium sized settlements
- Some encroachment for coastal industrial and resort towns onto slopes, especially around Deeside
- Settlement density increases towards the south-east of the area with associated infrastructural influences on rural qualities which are fragmented and somewhat degraded in places

## Character Area 7:

## COASTAL AND ESTUARINE FLATS



### Overall character and qualities

A flat, almost treeless landscape adjacent to the coast and estuary, supporting remnants of visually degraded agricultural holdings and locally dominant industrial/commercial development and supporting infrastructure.

### Characteristic features

- Improved flat geometric fields, all reclaimed from former marshland and with a locally visually degraded character
- Pasture and arable farming
- Degraded hedgerows, often replaced with fences; hedgerow trees sparse.
- Associated ditches and watercourses
- Occasional small unmanaged broadleaved woods
- Sand dunes and saltmarsh on seaward side particularly towards Point of Ayr
- String of extensive caravan sites between Gronant and Talacre
- Semi-continuous urban and industrial development along estuary which has a localised impact upon the landscape character

## Character Area 8:

## GRITSTONE HILLS



### Overall character and qualities

A varied landscape of rolling hills and high ground with a diverse agricultural fabric of small fields and woods, interspersed with pockets of semi-natural vegetation, rocky outcrops and coniferous plantations.

### Characteristic features

- A largely intimate and traditional landscape of distinct hills dissected by deep valleys, partially overlain with boulder clay
- Millstone grit evident in many older buildings and locally dominant drystone walls and stone hedgebanks
- Elsewhere varied forms of hedgerows and hedgerow trees define an abundance of small to medium-size irregular fields
- A variety of forms of hedgerows - trimmed and scrub-like - with a range of locally dominant hedgerow species including Beech, Oak and Holly
- A diversity of semi-natural vegetation including woods, scrub, bracken and wetland
- Numerous lanes locally characteristically straight and wide, link small villages and frequent farms and cottages
- Pockets of sheltered land, rich in large hedgerow trees

## Character Area 9: WHEELER VALLEY



### Overall character and qualities

Dramatic deep narrow sinuous valley and associated steep-sided spurs with slopes well-wooded and often interspersed with bracken, scrub and unintensified farmland.

### Characteristic features

- Exceptionally steep-sided valley contrasting with adjacent landscape
- Fast-flowing river and tributaries in narrow and pastoral valley
- Valley sides often with a mosaic of broadleaved and coniferous woodland interspersed with bracken, rough pasture, gorse and unintensified farmed fields
- Major communication route in valley floor together with small villages, farms and wayside cottages
- Evidence of past and current quarrying activity is locally conspicuous

## Character Area 10: TRELAWNYD PLATEAU



### Overall character and qualities

An extensive, elevated, gently undulating plateau of pastoral farmland with a local agricultural fabric, underlain with limestone which manifests itself in small outcrops, stone walls and traditional buildings

### Characteristic features

- A relatively flat area broken by low hills, gentle undulations and shallow often dry valleys with an overall open and exposed character
- Limestone influence in buildings, dry stone walls, local outcrops and unimproved limestone grassland
- A mix of ancient irregular and more recent geometric field patterns
- Thorn hedgerows with some stone wall boundaries and ash, the dominant hedgerow tree
- Tree cover notably sparse apart from isolated predominantly conifer plantations mainly on the low hills and a thin scattering of hedgerow trees elsewhere
- A settlement pattern of nucleated villages with some scattered farms
- A high concentration of prehistoric and industrial archaeological remains



## Character Area 11: HALKYN COMMON



### Overall character and qualities

A distinctive open limestone common on an elevated plateau covered in semi-natural rough vegetation, with a strong mining and quarrying character and dispersed settlement pattern.

### Characteristic features

- Partly undulating limestone plateau, broken by rock outcrops
- Open character partly broken by scattered thorn scrub with extensive coverage of bracken and gorse
- Open areas of grazed unimproved limestone grassland and limestone heath
- A strong but dispersed settlement pattern of stone-built villages, hamlets and wayside cottages, most enjoying excellent views from their elevated position
- Extensive mining and quarrying activity both active and redundant
- Lies on elevated ground with a locally exposed ambience
- Unenclosed, historic landscape

## Character Area 12: PANTYMWYN FARMLANDS



### Overall character and qualities

An undulating landscape with a strong local limestone character, typically well-wooded and with a small to medium-sized field pattern.

### Characteristic features

- Mostly an irregular landform often with rock outcrops
- An essentially rural character with varied settlement density comprising small villages, scattered farms and wayside cottages, often built of local limestone
- Small to medium-sized semi-regular field pattern with thorn hedges and dry stone walls
- Small areas of unimproved limestone grassland and rough grazing
- Trees and woods plentiful with ash as a dominant species
- Strong estate wooded character in places
- Minor roads, tracks and footpaths often abundant
- Frequent remains of past mining and quarrying activity

4.1

## What is the 'Essence of Flintshire'?

What is Flintshire? What special landscape qualities set it apart from any other part of North Wales. These questions have to be answered before any strategic framework can be devised for enhancing and managing the future of the Flintshire landscape.

The results of the desk appraisal combined with a thorough understanding of the area from time spent in the field has enabled the consultants to take the first step towards formulating a landscape strategy - by defining the 'essence of Flintshire'.

The essence of Flintshire can most easily be described as the first impressions and lasting impact that remain in the mind after a visit to the area. In practice, the essence of Flintshire is a mixture of the physical characteristics (objective response) combined with a very personal, emotional (subjective) response to the landscape. Together these factors create a "sense of place".

The consultants have identified the influences which contribute to the sense of place and these are described below:

### 4.1.1 Gateway to North East Wales

An important element within the landscape of Flintshire is its junction as a gateway zone into North East Wales. This is exemplified by a number of elements:-

- Existing major trunk road routes - A55(T), A494(T), A550 and A548 supported by a network of County and minor roads.
- Existing principal railway route from Chester, along the coast to Bangor and Holyhead, linking into the Irish ferry network.
- Existing Wrexham - Bidston Railway
- Hawarden Airport - capacity for use by small, private business aircraft.
- Proposed improvements to the Main Road network, particularly the A494/A550 corridors.
- Construction of a third road crossing of the River Dee at Connaught Quay linked into the A548 coast road and Deeside Development Zone.
- Continuing development of major employment use on Deeside, including the identification of major inward investment 'opportunity' sites.
- A cultural and economic interface with Cheshire and the North West Region.

#### 4.1.2 Landscape of Settlements

The settlement pattern within the County displays a number of influences:-

- *Vernacular Style* - a number of vernacular styles contribute to the visual character of Flintshire. These range from the red brick buildings in the east of the county, typical of the border area with Cheshire, to the use of local building stone, such as limestone and millstone grit, further westwards. In addition, a distinctive "estate" style of building can be identified, where farm buildings, houses and cottages reflect a particular style and quality of design. In more recent years this has been complemented by the addition of modern housing estates to settlements, which bear little resemblance to local vernacular, having a ubiquitous form and style.
- *Settlement Pattern* - has been historically established by topography and economic uses. The traditional settlement pattern related to the highway network, crossing points on rivers and historic sites on the coast and the traditional market towns e.g. Flint, Mold. This has been complemented by the expansion of towns and villages as the industrial base of Flintshire developed. This ranges from the early industrial developments in the Greenfield Valley at Holywell to the expansion of settlements along the coastal plain and Deeside in the nineteenth century.

More modern influences are associated with the visual and physical impacts of major industrial development in Deeside and areas such as Point of Ayr with the colliery and gas terminal developments.

#### 4.1.3 Geological Landscapes

The underlying geology and resulting landform probably has the greatest natural influence in shaping the Flintshire landscape. Indirectly it has affected settlement patterns, transportation corridors, mineral extraction, agriculture and vernacular building styles through the construction materials available. Four broad character zones can be identified:-

- **Lowland Areas** - in Flintshire, the Dee valley on the extreme eastern edge of the county exerts considerable influence. The flood plain is essentially alluvial, whilst boulder clay deposits form the adjacent Dee terraces and the rolling, gentle hills around Buckley and Mold. Within the Alun valley around Caergwrle are extensive sand and gravel deposits. Along the coastal and estuarine margins the alluvium deposits are mostly marine in origin and are characterised in parts with the presence of sand dune systems.

- **Lowland Hills and Valleys**

In the southern part of the County are the rounded hills, ridges and valleys comprising of millstone grit deposits, which in places have been masked by boulder clay. A number of areas are characterised by deep valleys formed by rejuvenated river systems. These result in steep sided valleys with fast flowing streams, e.g. Wheeler Valley. Between the valleys and adjacent uplands are pastoral hillslopes and moors, often uniformly smooth and sloping, illustrating the effects of glaciation.

- Limestone Country

An important element within the geology of the area, typically found in the historically important mining areas around Halkyn and Holywell. A key area relates to the continuous limestone area from Trelawnyd to Halkyn giving a fairly flat and sloping landscape, with a distinctive pattern of farms and an underlying nature conservation value.

- Marginal Uplands

The whale-back ridge of the Clwydian Hills forms the western boundary edge to Flintshire. Essentially moorland in character, the area has been extensively affected by glaciation.

#### 4.1.4 Water

The influence and impact of water is a dominant feature within the landscapes of Flintshire. It has shaped the landform, afforded transportation routes through the landscape and continues to affect landscape change. Key elements include:-

- *Coastal and Estuarine landscapes* - the Dee Estuary is a dominant feature of the landscape of the northern part of Flintshire. It has influenced landform and settlement patterns, land use and agriculture and continues to affect the coastal and estuarine fringes of the county. There is an element of variety brought about by the tidal regime giving a differing visual quality and character to the coastal fringes.
- *Main River Valleys* - the eastern half of the county is visually and physically dominated by the Dee Valley. This provides for a flat, open landscape with low horizons punctuated by buildings and major industrial features. The Alun and Wheeler form distinct landscape units dissecting the gritstone hills and upland margins, before joining the Dee and flowing into the estuary.
- *Coastal Plateau Valleys* - the plateau directly inland of the Dee Estuary is characterised by a number of small steep sided incised valleys running down the plateau slope. These form important visual and nature consideration features often being clothed in broad leaf spinneys and woodlands.

#### 4.1.5 Agricultural Landscapes - are a dominant feature of Flintshire, they vary in terms of pattern of land use - arable and pastoral, and in terms of intensity of use - Deeside and the upland margins, pattern of land ownership, in particular the visual qualities attached to the estate landscapes, such as Hawarden and Mostyn and the effect of topography. A range of influences can be identified:-

- the influence of the piecemeal approach to land enclosure, providing for a less formalised field pattern than those associated with the Parliamentary enclosure movements.
- the remnants of the open field system of farming as exemplified by ridge and furrow, now overlain with more modern field patterns, as in the area to the south and west of Flint.
- the parkland landscapes associated with the larger estates, such as Hawarden and Mostyn.
- the reclaimed marshland areas within the Dee Valley, around Saltney and Sealand associated with the canalisation of the River Dee in the 18th Century.
- the historic farmed landscapes of the Trelawnyd Plateau showing evidence of agricultural use since the Bronze Age. This illustrates a combination of features reflecting traditional Welsh practices and those of invasive cultures.

- the remnants of former “waste” areas, such as Halkyn Common.
- the landscape pattern of the upland margins of irregular fields and the Welsh farming practice of transhumance reflected in the Hendre (Winter) and Hafod (Summer) place names.

**4.1.6 Field Boundaries** - the richness and variety of the agricultural landscapes are reflected in the range and variety of field boundary features found throughout Flintshire. (see Volume 2, Theme 8). These illustrate a range of factors which influence their form and style:

- |            |   |  |
|------------|---|--|
| Geology    | - | gritstone and limestone walls in the Clwydian foothills and Trelawnyd plateau<br>stone based hedge banks   |
| Tenure     | - | estate farmlands, often with distinctive metal boundary fences or walls  |
| Topography | - | the location of the farm in terms of attitude which can influence the boundary features. Ranging from stone walls and fences on the upland fringes to hedgerows on the lower hills and valley floors and fences where extensive arable farming is found in the low lying Dee floodplain. |
| Management | - | the attitude of the farmer towards boundary management is important. Particular importance relates to the difference between traditionally managed and mechanically trimmed hedgerows, the absence of the need for stock proof fencing on the extensive arable farming areas.            |

By its nature, this provides only a cursory review of the factors influencing boundary styles but illustrates the complexity of underlying factors which has a marked impact upon the landscape character of the area.

**4.1.7 Visual Landscapes** - the shape and topography of Flintshire allows for extensive views and vistas across the County and within landscape zones, such as the Dee Estuary. This is an important influence in establishing an identity and sense of place for Flintshire, which takes into account the varied range of landscapes within the County and reinforces its gateway function.

**4.1.8 Landscapes of Industry and Commerce**

A key feature within Flintshire is evidence of economic activity, both in an historical sense, such as the early industrial development in the Greenfield Valley and extractive industries on Halkyn Common and in the contemporary sense, with existing and proposed industrial areas at Deeside, the BHP gas plant and Point of Ayr Colliery at Talacre and continued mineral extraction further inland. All affect the perceived image of Flintshire and all provide scope and opportunities to contribute to the landscape quality and character of the county.

5.1

## A Vision Statement for the Flintshire Landscape

That the strategy supports the development of the Flintshire landscape which balances the economic opportunities and environmental needs for the long term benefit of the area.

This would be a strategy where:-

- There is a recognition of the value of the landscape in its widest sense - not just its aesthetic qualities, but a recognition that it reflects the ecology, culture and heritage of the area and contributes to people's quality of life.
- There is a recognition of the need to ensure that the landscape contributes to the attractiveness of Flintshire for industrial/commercial investment and that the development should be on a sustainable basis.
- The landscape of Flintshire is appreciated to the full. This involves a recognition of the value of the typical and commonplace as well as the rare and special.
- There is an understanding of the need to reconcile the conflicting demands of economic change and conservation.
- The forces of change are integrated to develop a sustainable landscape for the benefit of local communities, visitors and future generations .
- There is the appreciation that everybody - statutory organisations, government agencies, voluntary groups and the local community - has a role and responsibility in understanding the landscape, its potentials, its management and being concerned with fostering the achievement of the vision.

It is hoped that this vision will gain widespread support and become an ideal that all organisations can subscribe to.

5.2

## A Vision of Flintshire in the Future

A vision for the future of Flintshire and in particular its landscape, can be outlined under the following theme headings. These provide the basis for the countywide landscape strategy framework which is addressed in more detail in Section 6.0. The key issues within each policy theme can be summarised as follows:-

- *Flintshire is acknowledged as the Gateway to North Wales*
  - landscape quality reflects Flintshire's gateway position
  - landmarks and gateway features reinforce Flintshire's geographic position
  - landscape features underline the border transition zone location from an English style to a Welsh style

- *Flintshire has an established communications network;*
  - every effort is made to ensure the road network is well designed, integrated into the landscape and efficient
  - transportation link problem areas are rectified to ease circulation and access
- *Settlement identity and diversity is encouraged and enhanced*
  - settlements develop within a strong and sustainable landscape framework
  - measures are taken to promote and protect settlement identity
  - the border transition zone influence and its resultant vernacular variety is recognised and protected
  - every effort should be made to adopt the highest standards of building design for new developments
- *Wildlife habitats are conserved for future generations*
  - Existing habitats are protected and enhanced
  - Positive steps are taken to diversify and re-create new habitats especially in and around settlements and industrial developments
- *Landscape change takes place within the statutory planning framework*
  - The strategy should be used as a vehicle for promoting positive landscape change
  - focus policy and development control decisions to positively assist landscape change
  - ensure that the emerging Unitary Development Plan takes into account landscape protection and local distinctiveness
- *Landscape change is sustainable over time*
  - raise public awareness as to the need for and functions of sustainable development
  - develop the Agenda 21 functions

### 5.3

#### Benefits of Achieving the Vision

The Vision of the future landscape of Flintshire will not be achieved quickly or easily. The strategy seeks to develop the broad visionary goals and themes outlined in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 above into a cohesive framework.

There will be many substantial benefits if agencies at work within the study area combine their efforts to achieve the vision, which will

- Enhance the visual quality of the area
- Increase ecological diversity through the creation of new habitats and the protection and enhancement of existing habitats
- Improve the quality of life for local residents through the enhancement of the local environment and improvement of recreation opportunities.
- Increase business confidence through the enhancement of development sites
- Gain economic advantage by increased inward investment through upgrading image and local identity



- Improve atmospheric and environmental pollution control
- Enhance education resources and environmental awareness
- Enhance opportunities for recreational facilities
- Recognise the need to identify priorities and choice in terms of the balance between economic change and conservation of the environment

## 6.1 Strategic Policy Framework

The landscape strategy is concerned with establishing a framework of priorities for the landscape and policies by which they can be addressed. The policy framework is concerned with creating a landscape strategy that operates at two discrete, but inter-related levels:-

- **County-wide policy guidance** is concerned with addressing a number of themes that relate to the county as a whole (Chapters 7 - 16).
- **Landscape Character guidance** is concerned with addressing themes which relate to distinct geographical areas within Flintshire (Chapter 17).

In both instances the policy guidelines are designed to ensure that the goals contained within the strategy vision are met. By its nature, the strategy is not totally prescriptive, but it is more concerned with providing policy guidance to facilitate the day to day operations of the unitary authority, statutory organisations, voluntary groups and members of the community who have an interest in the landscape of Flintshire.

By its nature, the landscape strategy is both broad and complex. County-wide Policy Guidance (Chapters 7 - 16) is provided within a format which facilitates its use. The information includes:-

- Topics covered within each policy guidance.
- Related topics elsewhere within the strategy.
- Design Guidance cross reference.
- Policy framework relating to each theme.
- Strategic initiatives and priority action sites in relation to each theme where applicable.

The County-wide policy themes are as follows:-

- (i) *Gateway to North Wales*
- (ii) *Transportation Corridors*
- (iii) *Settlement Identity*
- (iv) *Wildlife Habitats*
- (v) *Industry & Commerce*
- (vi) *Tourism, Recreation and Access to the Countryside*
- (vii) *Derelict and Degraded Landscapes*
- (viii) *The Rural Landscape*
- (ix) *Statutory Planning System*
- (x) *Sustainable Development*

Topics Covered

Primary and Secondary Gateways  
Policy Framework

Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

Transportation Corridors

For Design Guidance, see Volume 2 Section 1

7.1

## Gateway to North Wales - A Policy Framework (GW)

The geographical location of Flintshire, in north-east Wales, directly abutting the English border provides an important focus for strategic entrances and transportation corridors into and through North Wales. By their nature, these have an influence upon the image and identity of Flintshire. Within the context of the strategy the following factors are relevant.

- the location of Flintshire in a transition zone between a predominantly English style landscape to a Welsh landscape.
- A hierarchy of Primary and Secondary Gateways.
- Flintshire functions as a gateway both from England and the remainder of Wales

The following policy framework has been developed:-

- Policy GW1 - The sponsoring agencies and organisations should use the landscape strategy to promote the development of a Flintshire identity at primary and secondary gateways.
- Policy GW2 - The unitary authority should ensure through its planning policy framework and development control powers that any developments at gateways and adjacent to strategic transportation corridors raises the overall quality of the landscape of the area and contributes to a sense of arrival within Flintshire.
- Policy GW3 - New highway and transportation proposals, or improvements to the strategic network should seek to enhance the landscape quality of the area. Landscape treatments should be appropriate in design and impact to convey a 'gateway' ambience.
- Policy GW4 - In developing transportation proposals, recognition should be given to advice provided by the Welsh Office in "Roads in Upland Areas" and "Roads in Lowland Areas", together with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 10 "The Good Roads Guide".

## Strategic Initiatives

The following actions are recommended in addressing the issues relating to gateway sites and corridors. These are not seen as a comprehensive list but provide a framework against which future implementation programmes can be developed.

- *Primary Gateways*
  - Improvements to overall visual quality of gateway points and associated corridors in relation to:-
    - New Dee crossing
    - A494(T)/A550 corridor from the border at Shotwick to Queensferry.
    - A548 from the border at Chester to Queensferry.
    - A55(T) from the border at Bretton to Northop.
    - North Wales Railway from the border at Saltney to Connahs Quay.
    - A548 from county boundary with Denbighshire to Point of Ayr complex.
    - Enhancement schemes for port, dock and quay facilities at Connahs Quay, Flint, Bagillt, Greenfield and Mostyn.
  - Ensure that new highway schemes, in particular the series of proposals for the A550/A494(T) improvement take into account the opportunities for enhanced environmental treatment through:-
    - detailing and design of 'hard' landscape and boundaries
    - enhanced landscaping within the highway
    - creation of a strategic landscape corridor for the road through offsite planting by agreement with land owners.
  - Ensure all sources of grant aid - including Welsh Development Agency, Countryside Council for Wales and Forestry Authority - are taken into consideration in developing structural landscape networks.
- *Secondary Gateways*
  - Recognition of landmark features establishing the entrance to Flintshire along secondary transportation corridors:-
    - Caergwrle Castle
    - A541 - Wheeler Valley
    - A494 - Alun Valley
    - Hawarden Airport, A5104

## Implementation Programme

There have been a number of studies already undertaken and being completed which have identified sites where implementation works can be carried out. These include:-

- “Gateways to Wales” - (GW)
- “Deeside and Buckley Regeneration Strategy” (DBRS)
- “Deeside Environmental Strategy” (DES)
- “Deeside Development Zone - Landscape Strategy (DDZLS)

The following have been identified as *short term* priority

Project		Study Source	
Connahs Quay	-	Railside Planting	DES
Shotton Station and Access	-	Building Improvement Works	DES
Sandycroft	-	Industry and Railside Planting	DES
Saltney	-	Railside Planting	DES
Saltney Gateway Feature	-	Sign	DES
A550 Corridor	-	On Line Planting	GW
Connahs Quay	-	Waterfront	DES
Mostyn Docks	-	Signage/Enhancement	DES
Flint Coastal Area	-	Environmental Enhancement	DES
Talacre	-	Railside Planting	DES
Infrastructure Investment (A548, A494, A550 roads)	-	Landscaping	DBRS/ DDZLS
Third Dee Crossing	-	Strategic Landscaping	DDZLS

## Topics Covered

Focus resource allocation to key network  
Ensure good landscape for highway schemes  
Highway verge management to enhance wildlife qualities

## Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

Gateways to North Wales  
Wildlife Habitats

For Design Guidance, See Volume 2, Section 2

8.1

## Transportation Corridors - A Policy Framework (TC)

The study area contains a number of important transportation corridors which contribute to a sense of arrival at the threshold of Wales and also help to reveal the rich landscape of Flintshire. These provide the scope for the traveller to view the landscape from road or rail and this has an effect upon the perceived image of the area.

Furthermore, road building often creates fragmented and isolated land parcels and there is often a resultant pressure for development at major junction locations. Within Flintshire, the majority of major transportation corridors lie within the coastal plain and around Deeside. However, the recently constructed A55(T) has moved the influence of transportation corridors further inland onto the coastal slopes and limestone plateau. The following policy recommendations are proposed:-

- Policy TC1 - Resources available for environmental enhancement works should be focused upon the primary road and rail network.
- Policy TC2 - Visual degradation should be addressed and enhanced by:-
- positive intervention and management of land within public ownership.
  - positive financial and practical support should be provided for private land owners abutting and adjacent to transportation corridors.
- Policy TC3 - Strategic landscape considerations of new highway schemes should be taken into account, including the opportunities for advance planting, offsite planting, land moulding and impact upon green corridors
- Policy TC4 - Further emphasis should be placed upon improved litter picking and tackling of fly tipping along core transport corridors.
- Policy TC5 - Roadside verge maintenance regimes should be developed which are:-
- appropriate to the ecological value of the area
  - reflect local characteristics

Policy TC6 - Greater use of laybys and service areas should be given to provide a more positive impression of the area, with improved signage, interpretation facilities, picnic provision and enhanced landscape treatment.

8.2

## Strategic Initiatives

To create a positive image of the Study Area, investment is critical not only along, but also around the core road and rail networks.

- Identify and focus resource allocation on the core transportation network.
- Ensure that in developing highway improvement schemes, every effort is made to ensure a 'good fit' within the landscape. This will include:-
  - location of the highway within the landscape
  - relationship to adjacent landform
  - relationship to adjacent land uses.
- Corridor management regimes should take into account 'wildlife sites' identified by the North Wales Wildlife Trust, as being of nature conservation value, where they fall within or are adjacent to the transportation corridor.
- Highway verge management should seek to provide a habitat range reflecting different mowing regimes, aspect, relationship to highway drainage and boundary type.

8.3

## Implementation Programme

A number of schemes and proposals can be identified for transportation corridors. These are based upon the findings of a number of completed and ongoing studies:

Gateways to Wales	-	GW
Deeside & Buckley Regeneration Strategy	-	DBRS
Deeside Environmental Strategy	-	DES

of which the following have been identified of *short term* priority:-

Project	Study Source
Services Areas facilities - Halkyn, Ewloe - enhancement of landscape	GW/Flintshire Landscape Strategy
Connahs Quay - verge planting	DES
Bagillt, Bettisfield - railside planting	DES
Flint - railside planting	
A548 Chester - Queensferry - enhanced landscape treatment	DES Flintshire Landscape Strategy
B5129 Chester - Queensferry - enhanced landscape treatment	Flintshire Landscape Strategy
A550/Third Dee Crossing - landscape treatment	Flintshire Landscape Strategy DDZLS
Mickle Trafford busway/cycleway/footpath terminus - landscape treatment	DDZLS
New Railway Station - Dee Marsh Junction - building/environmental enhancement works	DDZLS

N.B. At the time of production of the landscape strategy report details from the Deeside Integrated Transport Strategy were awaited. Consideration should be given to the findings of this study before a final list of implementation proposals is agreed.



## Topics Covered

Design Guidance for developers  
Prevention of settlement coalescence  
Pole of 'Green Barriers' in preserving settlement identity

## Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

Statutory Planning System  
Transportation Corridors

For Design Guidance, See Volume 2, Section 3



## Settlement Identity - A Policy Framework (SI)

The settlement pattern of Flintshire reflects the changing social and economic history of the area, from a traditional agricultural base, to one where large scale primary industries predominated, particularly along the coastal plain and around the Dee Estuary. This trend has continued in more recent times with the developments related to areas such as the Deeside Development Zone.

This has created a settlement pattern which is characterised by a concentration of urban development along the coastal plain and Deeside in the latter area this has resulted in the creation of a polycentric urban area. Inland and further west, a more traditional pattern of local towns and villages is found. Overlying this is a transitional characteristic reflected in building styles, materials, layout, ranging from a more English style in the east, to a Welsh style further west, which reflects the border location of Flintshire.

However, in recent decades, settlements have begun to lose some of this sense of local identity, both from a communal sense due to the decline in traditional employment, improved infrastructure and viability of labour force and in terms of their local distinctiveness as developments bring a uniformity of style and materials to the area. This has been compounded in the Deeside area by the threat of physical coalescence of settlements as development pressures have mounted. The following policy framework is recommended:-

- Policy SI1: The unitary authority should seek to retain the individual identity and character of settlements through the application of development control policies that fully recognise the special characteristics of each settlement.
- Policy SI2: Support is given to the "Green Barrier" policy developed by the County and District Councils to prevent settlement coalescence.
- Policy SI3: Enhancement strategies should be developed for settlements that promote economic and community confidence through environmental improvements.

These should be part of a balanced programme of community based initiatives which include crime prevention, economic development, housing and vocational training. It is critical that the support and backing of the local community is both sought and achieved.

Policy S14: Enhancement programmes should ensure that local characteristics and 'sense of place' are recognised and integrated as a central tenet to any implementation works.

Policy S15: Urban greenspace, such as Buckley Common, should be protected and where feasible, enhanced.

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## Strategic Initiatives

- Consideration should be given to the production of design guidance to assist developers in understanding and using local distinctiveness in developments and facilitating the development control process.
- Further consideration is required as to the role of "Green Barriers" in terms of providing scope for landscape management and enhancement opportunities, in addition to the land use planning functions.
- Around Deeside and along the coastal fringe, the settlements are characterised by areas of urban green space. These provide a distinctive feature within these settlements that should be maintained and enhanced.
- The Key Areas identified within the Deeside Environmental Strategy provide a useful framework for the development of more detail enhancement schemes. The work completed to date at Greenfield and Flint illustrate the benefits to be accrued from this approach. Further consideration should be given to the extension of this approach, as resources permit, to settlements away from the coast, such as Mold, Caergwrle, Northop.
- The programme of works developed for the Deeside and Buckley Regeneration Strategy form a useful framework on which further enhancement programmes, related to settlement identity can be developed, particularly in Buckley.

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## Implementation Programme

From previous studies already undertaken there are a number and variety of schemes identified for enhancement works which promote and facilitate maintenance of settlement identity. Particular reference should be given to schemes identified within:

- (i) Deeside Environmental Strategy
- (ii) Deeside and Buckley Regeneration Strategy

where they can be incorporated into a more focused and strategic framework.

In addition further consideration should be given to the development of enhancement projects for a range of identified settlements, throughout the county as noted in section 9.2 above.

## Topics Covered

Development of a Biodiversity Action Plan  
Monitoring and evaluation of change  
Scope for habitat creation  
Involvement of local community  
Derelict and Degraded Land  
Tourism, Recreation and Access to the Countryside

## Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

None

For Design Guidance, See Volume 2, Section 4

## Wildlife Habitats - A Policy Framework (WH)

The contrasting landscapes of Flintshire, its social and economic history and current land uses, provide a variety and range of habitats. The Clwydian Hills rise to over 545m (1800 ft) at Moel Fannau, whilst within 10-15 kms, the coastal plain and adjacent Dee Estuary is reached. To the east, the fertile farmlands of the Dee Valley present a different range of habitats and features. This variety of habitats and their importance is recognised in the designation of 9 areas as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are designated areas of national importance within which special protection is afforded to ecological and geographical features. In addition, the Dee Estuary SSSI, which abuts the coastal edge of Flintshire, is designated under the Ramsar Convention as a wetland area of international importance and as a Special Protection Area under the EU Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds. These designations reflect the international importance of the area for passage and over wintering of wild fowl and waders. Locally this value has been further emphasised by the publication of the Dee Estuary Strategy in January 1996. This brought together a range of public, private, commercial and voluntary bodies, on both sides of the border to focus management operations within the estuary.

However, the value of wildlife habitats within Flintshire does not relate solely to sites of international and national significance. There are a range of sites of local value, reflecting the character and distinctiveness of the area. A range of sites, 257 in total have been identified in surveys undertaken by the North Wales Wildlife Trust as follows:-

- Alyn and Deeside 1985/86 and 1995
- Delyn 1991

The importance of these sites is recognised by their protection through Structure and Local Plan Policies. The following policy framework is recommended:-

- Policy WH1: The production of the Dee Estuary Strategy is welcomed as a positive way forward to co-ordinate and facilitate resource management in a key wildlife site and links into the wider Flintshire landscape and should continue to be actively promoted as such.
- Policy WH2: Further consideration should be given to considering habitat creation to enhance the range and variety of wildlife sites within the county which reflect the character of the area.
- Policy WH3: In the longer term, it is recommended that a more co-ordinated strategic approach to habitat protection and management in Flintshire is developed. This could feed into future capital programmes/SDS bids/challenge - funding regimes.
- Policy WH4: The continued protection of national and locally designated sites within the statutory planning process is welcomed.
- Policy WH5: Development briefs for new development schemes should ensure ecological issues are fully addressed.
- Policy WH6: The involvement of the local community in the development and implementation of wildlife habitat schemes is key to the wider acceptance of the landscape strategy.



## Strategic Initiatives

- The County Council should play a primary role in producing a Biodiversity Action Plan for Flintshire under the terms of the 1992 Rio Agreement. This would ensure key habitats and species are fully recognised and would provide the opportunity to ensure that 'ordinary' as well as the 'special' features are identified.
- A monitoring and evaluation programme should be established to ensure that ongoing changes are fully recognised and addressed. It is recommended that a system based around the Limits of Acceptable Change approach is developed to provide for a positive approach to management, rather than a reactive, negative approach.
- Habitat creation initiatives should be considered at, for example
  - Halkyn Mountain Common
  - Clwydian Range AONB
 as part of the overall management plan objectives. These could be developed as pilot projects for application to the wider Flintshire landscape.
- A focused approach to management and enhancement should be adopted within the wider countryside utilising grant aid schemes available through WOAD, for the ESA and CCW and Forestry Authority for the remainder of the county.
- Community involvement should be encouraged in developing wildlife habitat management and enhancement programmes, particularly in and around settlements. A key role within this area of work lies with the Flintshire Countryside Service which is able to draw upon a reservoir of experience and skill in preparing management plans and in working closely with community groups in developing relevant schemes.

## Topics Covered

Raising of image and perception of industrial areas  
Enhancement of existing, older industrial areas

## Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

Transportation Corridors  
Sustainable Development

For Design Guidance, See Volume 2, Section 5



## Industry and Commerce A Policy Framework (IC)

The efforts of the County and District Councils in recent years have been to strengthen and diversify the economic base of the area to provide good quality employment to the local work force. Its economic fortunes are closely linked to those of West Cheshire and Wrexham. The area experienced a dramatic economic change during the 1980's as traditional industries contracted or closed down. In response to this, there has been substantial investment by the public sector to create facilities for new industrial developments. The fruits of this exercise are visible for all to see.

However, employers make strategic decisions primarily on the basis of commercial factors such as available finance, suitable premises, labour supply, fiscal/financial incentives and access and distribution links. In the face of continuing competition from other areas, such as West Cheshire, there is a need to ensure that industrial and commercial sites within Flintshire convey a positive, environmentally conscious and forward looking image. In addressing this particular theme, the aim should be to ensure that the highest quality environment is provided within cost constraints that apply - at the margin, low-cost enhancements, such as proper provision for waste disposal, or litter collection, can make a marked difference to the perceived image and quality of the area. The following policy framework is recommended:-

- Policy IC1: The Deeside Development Zone Landscape Strategy is welcomed as providing a landscape framework for a key industrial and commercial area.
- Policy IC2: The preparation of Action Plans/Strategies for identified industrial sites and existing industrial areas is recommended. The Warren Hall Strategy Report is an example of what can be achieved and should be extended to other sites.
- Policy IC3: Expansion of business and commercial premises should take place, wherever possible, on identified sites. Full Development Briefs should be prepared for all sites in gateway areas, transport corridors or sensitive rural locations which include provision for the survey, protection and monitoring of existing landscape/ecological assets.
- Policy IC4: The approach adopted in the Deeside and Buckley Regeneration Strategy provides a valid framework which should be applied to other areas of the County.

## Strategic Initiatives

- Efforts need to be focused to raising the perceived image and quality of industrial and commercial sites throughout the county. There have been a number of area based initiatives, such as:-
  - Deeside Buckley Regeneration Strategy
  - Deeside Development Zone Landscape Strategy
  - Delyn Business Strategy

All have identified the need to improve the environmental image of the area. The approaches developed should be extended to the county as a whole.

- In addressing environmental quality of existing industrial sites, a number of common issues can be identified:-
  - Lack of/poor quality of design at gateway points. This loses an opportunity to create a positive impression in the mind of visitors/future investors.

*This is seen as a priority area for future action.*

- Poor quality and 'ad hoc' signage.
- Poor quality and 'ad hoc' parking provision - this can often lead to a poor visual quality and is not conducive to generating a positive business image.
- Lost opportunities to develop a strategic landscape for industrial sites, including main through routes.
- Poor maintenance of landscape works implemented. Need for consideration in the design process what future maintenance requirements are involved.
- Lack of provision for waste storage - litter creates a dilapidated, run down image.
- Lack of common site identity due to clashing colour themes, variable fencing styles.

This is only a basic list of key issues, individual action plans will focus on those issues particular to each site.

- Key environmental constraints to industrial and commercial development within the Dee Estuary

## Implementation Programme

The Deeside Environmental Strategy produced in 1993 identified a number of relatively small scale implementation works to enhance the environmental quality of industrial and commercial areas. This still provides a valid framework against which implementation works can be developed. Furthermore, the findings and proposals contained within the Deeside Development Zone Landscape Strategy form a key input into the longer term development and enhancement of this major employment area.

# Tourism, Recreation and Access to the Countryside

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## Topics Covered

Access to the countryside  
Recreation Development in the Countryside

## Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

Wildlife Habitats  
Derelict and Degraded Land

For Design Guidance, See Volume 2, Section 6



## Tourism, Recreation and Access to the Countryside - A Policy Framework (TRA)

The image and perception of Flintshire is affected by the predominance of urban and industrial development within Deeside and along the coastal plain, associated with the main gateways and transportation corridors. Yet as illustrated by the landscape strategy, Flintshire exhibits a variable character, much of which is of a high quality, as recognised by the designation of the Clwydian Range as an AONB.

Tourism, recreation and access to the countryside have become an increasingly important element within the area, in both economic and social terms and have increasing impacts upon the Flintshire landscape. This importance has been recognised by the local authorities in the past, in particular by the former Clwyd County Council which developed a 'Countryside Recreation Strategy' to guide actions and resource allocation. The general aims of this strategy have been reflected by both the former Alyn and Deeside and Delyn District Councils within their local plan policy frameworks, together with central government guidance contained in PPG 17 "Sport and Recreation". These identify the importance of recreation and tourism in assisting the local economy and meeting the needs of the local population.

However, access and recreation in the countryside places considerable pressure upon the resource. Any proposals made need to acknowledge:-

- likely increased demand for countryside recreation
- need to ensure proposals reflect the nature, scale and character of an area
- need to develop facilities based upon sustainable land use
- need to monitor and evaluate the physical impact of recreational uses upon the landscape.

The Clwyd Countryside Recreation Strategy provides a useful and important framework for developing a co-ordinated approach in the future. The following policy recommendations reflect this:

- Policy TRA1: Future recreation strategies should be developed using the 'Limits of Acceptable Change' approach as a means to guiding management actions and resource allocations.
- Policy TRA2: The work of the AONB Management Committee and Halkyn Common Management Board and other Joint Consultative Groups should continue to be supported.
- Policy TRA3: The importance of maintaining and enhancing the public rights of way network and developing "recreational paths" is supported.
- Policy TRA4: Recreational proposals should ensure that other resources - landscape, nature conservation, archaeology or development - are not compromised or adversely affected.
- Policy TRA5: Consideration should be given to establishing a 'Flintshire Access Project Officer' whose task is to promote the development, maintenance and responsible use of Public Rights of Way.
- Policy TRA6: The unitary authority should continue to support and develop country parks and heritage parks where recreation pressure can be concentrated, managed and monitored, this relieving pressure from some of the more sensitive landscapes.
- Policy TRA7: The development of community woodlands in the urban fringe, especially in and around Deeside should be actively pursued as an investment in the future landscape and amenity fabric of the County.



## Strategic Initiatives

Within the scope of the study it has not been possible to develop a series of detailed proposals. However, the existing themes are considered to be of priority in the future:-

- Continue to focus the development of informal recreational facilities at 'Priority Sites'
  - examples include:
    - Flint foreshore
    - Waun-y-Llyn
    - Wepre, Connahs Quay
    - Loggerheads
    - Moel Fannau
    - Warren and Dunes at Talacre/Gronant
    - Greenfield Valley
    - Proposed Etna Country Park and associated areas of Mount Pool and Heritage Trail 1
  - together with Etna and Buckley Commons.
- The public rights of way network needs to be maintained and enhanced. Particular priority to be given to



- links from the coastal plain inland across the A55(T) corridor to upland areas .
- along the Dee Estuary (in line with the proposed Millenium Commission funding bid).
- in and around settlements

- The role of disused railways provide for access needs - particularly cyclists and horse riders - should be developed further, a relevant example includes the Sustrans National cycle route.

More formal protection to such routes should be given within the statutory planning framework to ensure opportunities are not lost to other developments.

- Priority consideration should be given to the establishment of community woodland sites around the main settlement areas to ensure the range of sites available to the public and reduce possible impacts upon more sensitive sites in the wider countryside.
- Consideration should be given to ensuring the widest choice for modes of access to the countryside and key locations.

# *Derelict and Degraded Landscapes 13*

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## Topics Covered

Restoration of derelict land  
Improvement of urban fringe locations  
Involvement of local community

## Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

Wildlife Habitats, Statutory Planning System

For Design Guidance, See Volume 2, Section 7

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## Derelict and Degraded Landscapes - A Policy Framework (DD)

Derelict, unused or poorly maintained land can provide a strong negative image of an area. Not only does it cause environmental disbenefits, it does not provide an efficient use of land. Thus the restoration of derelict sites provides scope to enhance the environment and the re-use of such sites reduces the pressure for development on greenfield sites.

In addition degraded sites, often located around the urban fringe and close to transportation corridors present an opportunity for enhancement and thus a positive contribution to the visual quality of the area and the landscape as a whole.

Within Wales, responsibility for funding derelict land reclamation works lies with the WDA. Over the past few years a considerable amount of reclamation work has been undertaken in Buckley, Connahs Quay, Shotton, Flint and Greenfield which have contributed considerably to the economic regeneration proposals in the area. At present a further 39 sites, totalling some 900 acres (370 ha) have been identified within the derelict land programme for Flintshire. The following policy framework is proposed:

- Policy DD1: The efforts with regard to land reclamation to date are recognised and a priority must remain the continuation of the reclamation programme.
- Policy DD2: That development plans recognise the scope that exists for identified derelict sites to contribute to the nature conservation and recreational resource. The scope for this is recognised by the WDA in treating derelict sites. However, the priorities attached to such work by the Agency are, in order, "safety, creation of land for development and amenity and visual considerations."
- Policy DD3: Measures to enhance the local environment and to improve the quality of life in areas, particularly around the urban fringe are to be supported.
- Policy DD4: Every effort should be made to involve and secure the support of the local community in environmental improvement schemes.

## Strategic Initiatives

- The Derelict Land Reclamation programme should form the key framework with regard to prioritising and focusing available funding.
- Efforts should be made to identify, protect and develop derelict sites that could contribute to the nature conservation, recreation and landscape resource. Likely areas include:-
  - Former Lead Mining Sites on the historic landscape of Halkyn Common
  - Drury Road, Buckley
  - Globe Way, Buckley
  - Greenfield Tip
  - Former Bettisfield Colliery
  - Land west of Flint Dock
  - Connah's Quay Waterfront (former power station site)
  - Areas A1 and A2 within the Deeside Development Zone
- Through the efforts of the County Council, involvement of the local community groups should be harnessed, through the establishment of project volunteer and support groups to address urban fringe issues of:-
  - litter picking
  - tackling fly tipping
  - tree tagging in hedgerows
  - monitoring and reporting services

## Topics Covered

Countryside Management  
Use of Green Barriers

## Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

Conservation of Historic Landscapes  
Vernacular Building Style  
Statutory Planning System

For Design Guidance, See Volume 2, Section 8



## The Rural Landscape - A Policy Framework (RL)

Flintshire exhibits a rich and diverse farmed landscape which reflects its geology, topography, social and cultural history and its location in a transition zone between the English and Welsh agricultural landscapes. There is a gradual acceptance of the need for farmers to manage new land for its amenity value - developing a "guardianship" approach to countryside management. This is reflected in the range of grant aid initiatives such as:-

- Tir Cymen
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Forestry Commission Grant Schemes
- WOAD Grant Schemes together with the possible reintroduction of management grants from CCW.

The landscape strategy recognises that agricultural policy is determined from the EU and central government. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of areas of policy which would assist in the maintenance of diversity and quality in the agricultural landscape, as follows:-

Policy RL1: The Landscape Character Areas (Chapter 3) should be adopted to provide the guidance framework against which countryside management initiatives are developed.

Policy RL2: Relevant officers within the unitary authority should be aware of the range of grant aid and support available from other agencies operating within the agricultural landscapes and advise people where to seek detailed advice.

Policy RL3: Agricultural areas under greatest pressure for change should be identified and their characteristic landscape fabric protected and enhanced through a proactive countryside management programme.

## Strategic Initiatives

- The range and variety of field boundary styles should be recognised and locally distinctive types retained and promoted.
- The underlying transitional agricultural pattern from the English influence in the east, to the Welsh in the west should be understood and underpin countryside management actions. This is a particularly distinctive feature of Flintshire and contributes to the landscape character of the area.
- Positive management should be encouraged for agricultural land lying within Green Barriers.
- Historic agricultural landscape patterns, such as those associated with the Trelawnyd plateau and Halkyn Common should be protected and maintained.
- Every effort should be made to retain the vernacular building style within the agricultural landscape. The County Council should consider preparing a design guide illustrating features and building elements reflecting these styles, to assist the development control function.
- Land of a high agricultural value, Grades 1 and 2, should be protected, wherever possible, from development and loss of status.
- Where woodland planting is proposed as part of any countryside management works, reference should be made to the Clwyd Indicative Forestry Strategy which seeks to guide and focus forestry operations.
- Recognition of the role of major landowners in implementing and management and conservation programmes.
- Recognition of the pivotal role of the Flintshire Countryside Service in guiding countryside management and conservation programmes.

15.1

## A Sustainable Development Framework for Flintshire

The creation of the new unitary local authority system in Wales has provided an opportunity to promote and develop sustainable development initiatives:-

- The establishment of a single tier authority for Flintshire provides the opportunity to develop an integrated, holistic approach to sustainable development. The new authority will be responsible for the whole range of strategic services, including:-
  - Education
  - Social Services
  - Highways and Transportation
- The future requirement to produce a Unitary Development Plan will also facilitate the establishment of a sustainable development framework.

It is apparent that to date, the former local authority organisations sought to address sustainable development through a variety of policy decisions, primarily the Development Plan process. However, in order to fully address the concept it must be examined within the context of the community as a whole and recognise a broader range of topic areas, including:-

- Waste Recycling
- Energy Conservation
- Land Recycling
- Education and Training
- Public Awareness and Understanding

15.2

## The Way Forward - Policy Framework

A number of key principles need to be recognised:-

- Exciting initiatives within relevant local authority programmes should be developed.
- Environmental concerns should be integrated throughout all Council Services.
- The local community must be involved in caring for their own neighbourhoods.
- The need to agree the balance between development pressures and impact on the environment.
- Development of an appropriate policy should involve as many people as possible. It is important to draw upon existing knowledge available and not necessarily concentrate on those individuals or groups who are involved with "green issues".

In developing a policy, three broad stages can be identified:-

### 15.2.1 Development of a Corporate Approach by the Unitary Authority.

This is concerned with getting one's "own house in order" and include the following actions:-

- Establishment of a strong, cross party political will, accompanied by the establishment of a dedicated budget.
- Establishment of appropriate officer working groups and management processes.
- Creation of a post of environmental co-ordinator at a level of seniority to be able to respond to Departmental Chief Officers and Councillors.
- Establish an initial baseline position for the Authority by undertaking an environmental audit.
- The emerging Unitary Development Plan should be subject to a comprehensive environmental appraisal.
- A full understanding of the biodiversity and landscape qualities of the study area - this provides important baseline data.
- Staff training to raise environmental awareness within the authority.
- Local Agenda 21.

### 15.2.2 Involving the Local Community

Once the authority has established a basic sustainable development framework, the involvement of the local community can be progressed. This can take the form ranging from county-wide or locally based initiatives. Whatever is adopted, a common approach to date has been to establish an Environmental Forum bringing together relevant groups and organisations.

This should seek to:-

- Take practical steps to achieving sustainable development rather than intellectual debate.
- Take decisions through consensus building rather than a majority voting system.
- Act as an advisory body to the local authority, to enable information to be passed through to elected members.
- Draw upon as wide a group of membership as possible - sustainable development should not be constrained by arbitrary local authority boundaries.

Within Flintshire, the Clwyd Environmental Forum may provide a suitable vehicle to consider sustainable development issues.

### 15.2.3 Raising Public Awareness

In order for sustainability policy to be successful, it requires acceptance by the community at all levels. Particular emphasis should be given to ensuring the community understands the reasons for such a policy. In doing so, the positive benefits of a sustainable approach should be emphasised. This can take various forms, but is likely to include:-

- media publicity
- promotional literature
- arts, libraries and museum services
- on site interpretation

The information should be packaged in a form that is readily understood by all and directed through the education system.

### 15.2.4 Conclusion

Whatever approach is adopted, five key factors will need to be recognised:-

- The need to secure the backing of all political parties and senior managers
- A change in awareness by Council staff
- A firm commitment to sustainable development initiatives. This may well involve “pump priming” of particular progress and officers and the utilisation of outside funding or assistance.
- The adoption of a sustainable development strategy should be seen as an integral component of the Authority. It is an evolving process which requires the concern and commitment of all.
- The landscape strategy provides a key advocacy document to promote sustainable development throughout the County.



Topics Covered

Role of Local Authority

Related Topics Covered Elsewhere

None

16.1

## Statutory Planning System - A Policy Framework

Although no formal planning control exists over the countryside and only limited control exists over the agricultural operations which play such an important role in shaping the rural landscape, the statutory planning system has an important role to play in the effective implementation of the landscape strategy.

Within Flintshire, there are currently a number of designations, included within the development plan system, which are related to landscape protection, these are:-

- Clwydian Range AONB
- Green Barriers
- Local Landscape Areas

In addition, the general tenet of development control policy is to direct new development to defined settlements and identified employment areas, seeking to protect the open countryside from development pressures. Where development is permitted within the countryside it should be related to schemes which contribute to a healthy rural economy.

Furthermore, as has been examined elsewhere (see Chapter 10 - Wildlife Habitats), there are also specific policies within the development plan system which seek to protect sites designated for nature conservation value. These include:-

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Wildlife Sites
- Local Nature Reserves

all of which contribute to the character and quality of the rural landscape.

In addition there are a number of area based strategies which support the planning system within Flintshire. These include:-

- Dee Estuary Management Plan
- Deeside and Buckley Regeneration Strategy

The local planning authority, also contributes to the implementation of the aims and vision associated with the landscape strategy through the development control process. This includes protecting trees, woodlands and other environmental features, seeking good design and attaching conditions to planning consents concerning landscaping. Also, the existing development plans recognise the scope available to promote environmental enhancement schemes, throughout the area and to this end the landscape strategy provides an important vehicle for guidance and direction.

It is not considered that a policy framework as developed for the other themes is relevant in this instance. However, it is considered that the following issues need to be addressed:-

- The County Council should endorse and adopt the landscape strategy as a means of promoting positive landscape change.
- The strategy should be central to any corporate management policies developed by the County Council.
- The strategy should be used in a positive manner by reference within other planning or strategy documents as appropriate.
- The opportunity should be sought within the preparation of a Unitary Development Plan to ensure that landscape protection and enhancement appropriate designations for wildlife sites and Local Nature Reserves, sustainability and local distinctiveness are properly addressed within a policy framework.

In addition, it is considered that further consideration is given to:-

- The extension of the use of "Green Barriers" throughout the whole study area to provide protection to vulnerable areas of landscape close to and between settlements.
- That Green Barriers are used in a positive manner and landscape enhancement programmes are developed reflecting local character, in addition to their land use planning function.
- The designation of small areas of land as "local landscape areas" whilst reflecting current policy provides little assistance to the management and conservation of the countryside. As noted above, the Green Barrier concept, developed in a broader, more proactive fashion would be more appropriate in complementing the general countryside protection policies found with the development plan system for Flintshire.

# Enhancing Local Distinctiveness 17

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## **17.1** Enhancing Local Distinctiveness - The Way Forward

A key finding of the landscape appraisal has been the confirmation of the variety of landscape character areas within Flintshire. These reflect a whole range of underlying factors, such as geology, topography, land use, economic development and settlement pattern. This variety is an important factor in contributing to the quality of the Flintshire landscape.

It is considered the identified Landscape Character Areas provide a framework against which management actions can be determined, in order to ensure the local variety and qualities are retained and enhanced.

## **17.2** Format

For each identified Landscape Character Area the key aims of the landscape strategy vision are identified, together with the appropriate management initiatives which both reflect the vision and address the proposals within the landscape strategy.

These initiatives are supported by the detailed countryside policy framework discussed for relevant strategy themes in Chapters 7 to 15 and Design Guidance information contained in Volume 2 of the Report.

In addition more detailed design guidance (Volume 2) is given to a number of particular issues in the following Landscape Character Areas.

- LCA 3 - Dee Floodplain
- LCA 4 - Eastern Lowland Plain
- LCA 6 - Dee Coastal Slopes
- LCA 7 - Coastal and Estuarine Flats

These areas form the core of Deeside, identified by the project steering group as a priority area.

## Character Area 1 - MOEL LLYS-Y-COED

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The open, semi-natural character of the landscape is preserved together with its high ecological value; where the visual quality of reclaimed and afforested areas is enhanced and where the low-key recreation potential of the area is developed in a sustainable manner.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities - Management Objectives

1. Maintain the open character of moorland landscape; avoid new conifer planting
2. Conserve and manage semi-natural moorland and rough vegetation by traditional management regimes
3. Improve the design and composition of conifer plantations, and consider leaving areas unplanted at felling state
4. Maintain and restore stone wall boundaries
5. Restore eroded footpaths, and manage visitor pressure
6. Encourage landowners to enter ESA agreements to further the above objectives
7. Promote sustainable recreation development opportunities where these are not contradictory to the ecological interests of the area

## Character Area 2 - CILCAIN HILL SLOPES

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The historic pattern of dispersed farmsteads of vernacular style is maintained, set in a distinctly rural landscape of high visual and ecological variety, attained by protection and promotion of existing hedgerows small woodlands and watercourses.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Conserve and manage existing woodlands, especially ancient and semi-natural sites; encourage replanting and natural regeneration of native broadleaves
2. Promote the small scale planting of native broadleaved woodlands in valleys and on slopes to reflect field size and pattern

3. Maintain and restore key hedgerows and traditional management.
4. Maintain and restore the hedgerow tree cover by new planting and natural regeneration, and planting of field corners.
5. Encourage wide and diverse field margins alongside woodlands, moorland edge and in field corners
6. Improve the design and composition of conifer plantations
7. Encourage landowners to enter into ESA agreements to further the above objectives

### Character Area 3 - DEE FLOODPLAIN

#### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The field pattern is harnessed as a means of creating a stronger landscape framework for settlements and farms through a positive programme of hedgerow tree, copse and small woodland establishment especially within and around settlements and other areas where development is zoned; where natural features (field ponds) and local building styles are promoted as a means of further strengthening local identity.

#### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Enhance the hedgerow tree character, by new planting and natural regeneration, particularly of oak.
2. Restore key hedgerows as landscape features with impact, particularly alongside roads and footpaths.
3. Conserve and manage the few existing small woods.
4. Encourage new small scale mainly broadleaved planting of copses and small woods.
5. Conserve and strengthen the tree character associated with village settlements, and enhance the landscape character of the Broughton area with new planting.
6. Conserve remaining unimproved grassland and encourage traditional management.
7. Conserve and restore field ponds.
8. Encourage wide and diverse field margins.

## Character Area 4 - EASTERN LOWLAND PLAIN

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The rich, historically important variety of the lowland landscape is protected and enhanced, vernacular details encouraged and the estate influence promoted. Landscapes under threat from development and infrastructural improvements are safeguarded from degradation through positive landscape intervention and creation of a strong framework and urban fringe influence kept under control.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Conserve and manage broadleaved woodlands, especially ancient and semi-natural sites.
2. Encourage the restocking of plantation ancient woodland with native species and through natural regeneration.
3. Promote new predominantly broadleaved woodland planting and extend existing woods, particularly in valleys and on steeper slopes, to reflect the existing pattern of irregular fields and small woods.
4. Maintain and restore the hedgerow tree character by new planting and natural regeneration, particularly of oak, and planting of field corners.
5. Maintain and restore intact hedgerow system.
6. Maintain and restore the special character of historic parklands.
7. Conserve and restore field ponds.
8. Conserve remaining mosses, other important wetland features and unimproved pastures, and encourage traditional management.
9. Encourage wide and diverse field margins.
10. Conserve ridge and furrow features.
11. Maintain the distinctive vernacular architecture and historic settlement pattern.
12. Enhance the urban fringe areas, including industrial estates, especially of Mold, by new woodland planting and management of semi-natural features.
13. Identify opportunities to establish Community Woodland within the urban fringe and on degraded land.

14. Identify opportunities to retain and manage semi-natural vegetation in disused sand and gravel quarries as landscape and conservation features and to provide public open space.
15. Ensure new sand and gravel works are restored to reflect local landscape character, create a range of wildlife habitats and provide open space opportunities.

## Character Area 5 - BUCKLEY LOWLAND HILLS

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The rural, mixed farmland and managed woodland character of the shallow valleys is promoted through positive woodland management and enhancement; where the rich hedgerow tree mosaic of the rolling farmlands is perpetuated and where the strong mixed framework of this landscape is extended to embrace urban fringe areas to provide visual and recreation benefits to local communities.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Conserve and manage broadleaved woodlands, especially ancient and semi-natural sites.
2. Encourage the restocking of plantation ancient woodland with native species and through natural regeneration.
3. Promote the planting of new predominantly broadleaved woodland, especially as shallow valleys and on hill slopes.
4. Maintain and restore key hedgerows as landscape features, particularly alongside roads and footpaths.
5. Maintain and restore the ancient and special character of the Buckley Commons and promote their conservation and management; consider local nature reserve designation.
6. Identify opportunities to create a strong woodland framework around the urban fringe of Buckley by Community Woodland planting and management of semi-natural features, particularly in and around disused claypits.
7. Take steps to avoid creeping suburbanisation of the rural qualities of the landscape.

## Character Area 6 - DEE COASTAL SLOPES

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The coastal slopes support a rich pattern of traditional pastoral farmland and woodland radiating in character upslope to merge with the characteristics of the high ground areas; where the woodlands are harnessed and extended to create a strong framework for urban fringe areas to increase local opportunities for informal recreation and provide a strong setting for development opportunities

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Conserve and manage broadleaved woodlands, especially ancient semi-natural sites in incised valleys
2. Promote the planting of new predominantly broadleaved woodland, particularly in valleys and within the irregular field pattern.
3. Maintain and restore the hedgerow tree character by new planting and natural regeneration, and planting of field corners.
4. Maintain and restore key hedgerows as landscape features.
5. Conserve and restore field ponds.
6. Identify opportunities to enhance the urban fringe areas by Community Woodland planting and management of semi-natural features.
7. Conserve and manage urban fringe woodlands and associated habitats as an integral part of any development, particularly on the edges of Deeside, Flint and Holywell.

## Character Area 7 - COASTAL AND ESTUARINE FLATS

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The decline in the quality of remaining farmland is reversed by the creation of a new fabric of enhanced agricultural features which serves as a strong framework to better integrate the bands of semi-continuous urban and industrial development; where new community woodlands established in the urban fringe areas support and reinforce that framework and where all remaining semi-natural coastal features are conserved and restored wherever possible.



### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Maintain the largely open character of the coastal strip and restore degraded areas of sand dunes and other coastal features.
2. Maintain and restore key hedgerows as landscape features, particularly alongside roads and footpaths.
3. Enhance the overall landscape character by new hedgerow tree and field corner planting, especially in Deeside area.
4. Conserve and manage existing broadleaved woodlands.
5. Promote the small scale planting of broadleaved trees and small woods in selected areas; undertake minimal planting on fields immediately adjacent to coast.
6. Initiate a scheme to conserve and manage the whole coastal sand dune complex; consider local nature reserve designation.
7. Manage golf courses to retain unimproved grassland flora.
8. Conserve and restore saltmarsh and adjacent wet pasture, and continue traditional grazing; manage in accordance with Dee Estuary Management Plan.
9. Maintain ditches as open water features; manage marginal vegetation and improve overall diversity.
10. Seek opportunities to restore and re-create wetland features immediately adjacent to the coast.
11. Enhance streamsides and ditches by planting individual trees of willow and alder.
12. Initiate a scheme to enhance the urban fringe and degraded areas by the establishment of Community Woodland and management of semi-natural features, especially around Deeside.
13. Initiate a scheme to enhance the overall landscape quality of caravan developments and industrial areas.

## Character Area 8 - GRITSTONE HILLS

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The natural diversity of the farmed landscape is protected and encouraged without detriment to the ecological value of many semi-natural habitats; where an awareness of the unifying geological theme - the bedrock - is promoted through its protection and promotion in buildings and agricultural features and where future development pressures are carefully controlled to retain the overwhelming rural sense of place.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Conserve and enrich through positive management existing woodland, framework, especially ancient and semi-natural sites.
2. Promote a variety of new woodland planting, broadleaved and mixed, in valleys and on valley slopes to reflect field size and pattern.
3. Conserve and manage the diverse fabric of semi-natural features - roadside ditches, ponds, hedgerow variety, local stone features, stone hedgebanks and gateposts.
4. Maintain and restore key hedgerows as landscape features, particularly alongside roads and footpaths and in prominent locations.
5. Maintain and restore stone wall boundaries, especially on and around Hope Mountain.
6. Seek opportunities to enhance and enrich the landscape character of the open and reclaimed hill top north of Bwichegwyn by woodland planting.

## Character Area 9 - WHEELER VALLEY

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

Strong woodland cover is retained and encouraged to enhance the strong topographic qualities of the landscape; where the mosaic of woodlands and fields is kept balanced; where the influence of road/communication corridor is prevented from degrading the secluded, rural qualities of the landscape and where opportunities to develop the latest recreation potential of the valley are developed in a sustainable manner.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Conserve and manage the diverse pattern of woods, scrub and unimproved grassland on valley sides; maintain open rock outcrops and scree.
2. Conserve and manage existing woodlands, especially ancient and semi-natural sites.
3. Work with Forest Enterprise and other landowners to enhance where possible the design and composition of conifer plantations.
4. Maintain and restore key hedgerows as landscape features.
5. Promote the small scale planting of individual and feature groups of broadleaved trees on valley floors and lower slopes.
6. Protect and restore key industrial archaeological remains.

## Character Area 10 - TRELAWNYD PLATEAU

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The traditional agricultural fabric - hedgerows, field pattern and a mosaic of small scale native woodlands - is restored and local vernacular details encouraged; where limited development is integrated into the landscape without detriment to its special rural qualities and without alteration to the character and distribution of settlement.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Conserve and enhance the diversity of remaining areas of semi-natural calcareous grassland by traditional grazing.
2. Enhance the open character of limestone outcrops and crags currently covered in scrub.
3. Conserve and manage broadleaved woodlands.
4. Encourage the restocking of plantation woodland with native species.
5. Improve the design and composition of conifer plantations.
6. Promote the small scale planting of broadleaved woodlands, especially in shallow valleys and on open and exposed areas; ensure these reflect field pattern.
7. Enhance the overall landscape character by new hedgerow tree and field corner planting.

8. Maintain and restore stone wall boundaries.
9. Maintain and restore key hedgerows as landscape features, particularly alongside roads and footpaths.
10. Protect and restore key industrial and other archaeological features.
11. Conserve the limestone flora of disused quarries and spoil.
12. Encourage the sympathetic management of herb-rich roadside verges by the Highways Authority.
13. Maintain the distinct local character and settlement pattern of limestone villages.

## Character Area 11 - HALKYN COMMON

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The open, semi-natural character of the common - so different from surrounding landscapes - is protected from? where the diverse needs of continued mining activity and increased physical impact of recreation are reconciled with the need to protect archeological features and enhance the quality of the landscape in some localised degraded areas.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Maintain the open and semi-natural character of the Common.
2. Conserve and enhance the diversity of semi-natural vegetation, especially limestone grassland and limestone heath, by traditional grazing.
3. Conserve the limestone flora of disused quarries and the metalliferous flora associated with lead mining spoil.
4. Protect and restore industrial archaeological features.
5. Initiate environmental improvements to improve the landscape character of degraded areas and in the vicinity of village settlements.
6. Ensure that land reclamation schemes reflect local landscape character.
7. Ensure that quarry restoration plans seek opportunities to re-create wildlife habitats.
8. Maintain the distinct local character and dispersed settlement pattern of the Common.

## Character Area 12 - PANTYMWYN FARMLANDS

### Vision

This strategy supports a vision of the future where :

The inherent limestone characteristics of the landscape are protected and promoted to strengthen local identity through contrast with other landscapes; where development is carefully planned to retain the predominantly rural, farmed landscape fabric together with the special features - drystone walls, field pattern bounded by thorn and ash hedges and an attractive mosaic of small native woodlands on steeper ground.

### Local Landscape Strategy Priorities

1. Conserve and enhance the diversity of remaining areas of semi-natural calcareous grassland by encouraging tradition grazing regimes where possible.
2. Conserve and manage broadleaved woodland.
3. Encourage the restocking of plantation woodland with native species.
4. Instigate management regimes for limestone outcrops and crags currently covered in scrub to promote a more open character.
5. Maintain and restore stone wall boundaries and seek to introduce such vernacular details into new development wherever possible.
6. Maintain and restore key hedgerows as landscape features, particularly alongside footpaths and roadsides. Promote the special character of local hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
7. Maintain and restore the special character of historic parklands.
8. Promote and restore key industrial archaeological features.
9. Conserve the limestone flora of disused quarries and spoil.
10. Ensure that quarry restoration plans seek opportunities to re-create wildlife habitats.
11. Encourage landowners to enter into ESA agreements to further the above objectives.
12. Encourage the sympathetic management of herb-rich roadside verges by the Highways Authority.
13. Maintain the distinct local character and settlement pattern of limestone villages.

# An Organisational Framework

# Implementing the Vision

## - an Organisational Framework 18

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### 18.1 Existing Situation

It is apparent that there are a number of established initiatives and programmes within Flintshire that relate closely to the aims and objectives of the landscape strategy and its effective implementation. These can be summarised as follows:-

- Clwydian Hills AONB - under the control of a Joint Management Board supported by local councils and relevant groups. This situation will continue with the introduction of unitary authorities, with the lead being taken by Denbighshire.
- Environmentally Sensitive Area - this covers a slightly larger area than the AONB. Funding available through WOAD for management operations which seek to maintain and enhance the landscape characteristics, wildlife and archaeological interest on a farmer's land by the adoption of a farming system based upon traditional local practices.
- Forestry Authority - operate a series of grants designed to promote planting and woodland management in the countryside. In addition, two other schemes need to be highlighted:-
  - (a) Locational Supplement - designed to encourage planting on difficult sites, not necessarily intended for public use.
  - (b) Community Woodlands Supplement - for areas of public use/access and based upon criteria which relate to the location of the site in relation to settlements.
- Welsh Development Agency - plays a key role in investment in the area through regeneration initiatives e.g. Deeside and Buckley Regeneration Strategy, Delyn Business Strategy, together with the administration of the derelict land reclamation programme, environment and promotion of inward investment.
- Countryside Council for Wales - principle focus for wider countryside management work, through support of existing initiatives and grant aid.
- Dee Estuary Strategy - a forum of local authority, interest groups and community groups, supported by a project officer. Partner organisations address resource allocations/operations in line with guiding principles within the framework of an agreed strategy.
- Halkyn Mountain Common - works to an agreed management plan through the aegis of a Joint Consultative Board. Through existing grant schemes, it seeks to identify and promote beneficial actions, act as a forum for exchange of ideas, assist with conflict resolution and preserve the conservation value of the Common.

- Local Authority Services - the existing local authorities have a number of country parks, ranger and rights of way services. In the short term these will provide an important framework for implementation works until the new unitary authority becomes more established.
- Clwyd Environmental Forum - established to bring together environmental interest and voluntary groups within the former County of Clwyd.

18.2

## Appraisal and Review

The existing situation within Flintshire with regard to the implementation of the landscape strategy highlights a number of *strengths* and *weaknesses* that need to be considered in developing a relevant organisational framework. These are as follows:-

### *Strengths*

- There are a number of established initiatives and programmes.
- They are recognised, understood, accepted and have political commitment.
- They have already brought together a diverse range of interest groups, organisations and community groups.

### *Weaknesses*

- The initiatives are diverse in nature and are consequently focused on particular issues or areas.
- They do not cover the whole county.
- Their diversity may lead to contradiction and conflict on priorities.
- They do not operate within a commonly agreed framework.

18.3

## Way Forward

From the foregoing, it can be seen that many resources are already available and much effort is already being made. It is felt that to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy the following actions are required:-

- All agencies and organisations need to agree to the general approach and recommendations of the strategy. In doing so, they will need to take into account both the policy and detailed design guidance in their actions and resource allocation.
- There is a need for '*Co-ordination of Effort*'.
- There is a need for focusing of management through a single organisation. It is recommended this role is adopted by the Unitary Authority.



## Preferred Organisational Structure

The 'Co-ordination of Effort' will allow all relevant parties to work together in achieving the vision of the landscape strategy. This is most readily achieved through an Environmental Forum. Within Flintshire, there is already a structure in place through the Clwyd Environmental Forum. Although the future of this body is unclear, it provides an established starting point to bring together the necessary groups and organisations. Every effort should be made to secure its retention in Flintshire. Implementation will be carried out by a smaller, focused group. However, it is recommended that the implementation programme is administered by a smaller, more focused body which draws its membership from the broader environmental forum. The range of bodies and their roles are as follows:-

- (a) Flintshire County Council - both a land owner and strategic planning authority and a body which is accountable to the local community. It will be in the most effective position to provide and co-ordinate environmental initiatives through:-
- policy guidance
  - development control
  - environmental programmes and initiatives - direct action
  - education and publicity
  - guardianship
  - Agenda 21

It also has a pivotal role in focusing the management of the forum and implementation body, which it is important that it adopts if the impetus gained to date is not lost and dissipated.

- (b) Other planning and funding agencies have a clear remit:-
- Welsh Development Agency
  - Countryside Council for Wales
  - Forestry Authority
  - The Environment Agency
  - Welsh Office Agriculture Department
  - Welsh Office Highways Directorate
  - Wales Tourist Board
  - Coed Cymru

These agencies will assist the implementation of the strategy through:

- assistance with skills development
- close liaison, monitoring and feedback to the Unitary Authority
- commissioning of new work and continued commitment to the grant system
- the sponsoring of ongoing research
- the management of their own land holding in accordance with the strategy

- (c) Private sector inputs are also important, some of the local land owners include:-
- Welsh Water
  - British Steel
  - Kimberley Clark
  - Railtrack
  - Private Estates
  - Utilities (BT, British Gas, Manweb)
  - Community Councils must be regularly consulted and their views acknowledged and incorporated into action programmes.
  - Community representation must be included on the Environmental Forum.
- (d) Voluntary Sector - has a critical role to play in achieving lasting results on the ground. Relevant agencies include:-
- North Wales Wildlife Trust
  - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
  - British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
  - The Prince of Wales Committee
  - Groundwork Trust



## Operation of the Framework

In view of the large number of agencies involved locally in environmental work, the need for a co-ordinated approach cannot be over emphasised to ensure resource allocation and efforts are optimised. Accordingly:-

- (i) The landscape strategy should be adopted as a baseline document for environmental planning within Flintshire.
- (ii) It is important that the ongoing changes taking place within the landscape are understood, analysed and appraised. Thus consideration should be given to the establishment of a mechanism to monitor landscape change.
- (iii) The landscape strategy provides a framework against which resource allocations and programmes can be developed. Priorities will need to be assessed and amended in the light of changing financial, strategic and operational circumstances.
- (iv) Opportunities should be taken to encourage the development of partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors to address local environmental issues.
- (v) The proposed implementation body will provide the means to promote and deliver much of the vision of the landscape strategy, under the guidance of the County Council through:-
  - the agreement of a common environmental purpose and goals
  - the refinement of individual resource allocation and work programmes
  - improved communication and point of contact for all levels of interest.
  - the raising of environmental awareness and a common sense of purpose.

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