

7 Knowsley

7.1 Location and administration

The Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley is a metropolitan borough of Merseyside, covering some 86.17km². Knowsley comprises a belt of small towns, suburbs and countryside, lying to the east of Liverpool. It takes its name from the village of Knowsley. Knowsley comprises a belt of small towns, suburbs and countryside, lying to the east of Liverpool. In 2006, the resident population of Knowsley stood at 151,300. Although the population increased slightly in 2006, population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show a decline of 12.8% over the past quarter of a century.

Longview electoral ward in North Huyton is the most populated in Knowsley with around 8,760 residents. Prescott West is the least populated in Knowsley, with around 6,290 residents.

The majority of the rest of the Borough is open countryside, punctuated by small rural villages such as Cronton and Tarbock Green, which together provide an important environmental asset, including an extensive network of green spaces within the urban environment. This plays an important role in making the Borough a more attractive place to live in.

Each of the urban areas within the Borough has its own particular historic background and characteristics and, when allied to the dramatic periods of growth and decline that Knowsley has experienced over the last four decades, presents a range of issues, needs and opportunities that can be deemed to be unique among English Local Authorities.

The borough was formed on 1 April 1974 by the merger of Huyton-with-Roby Urban District, Kirkby Urban District and Prescott Urban District, along with most of Whiston Rural District and a small part of West Lancashire Rural District, all from the administrative county of Lancashire.

7.2 Geology and Topography

Merseyside occupies part of the low-lying Lancashire plain, its structure resulting from the formation of four ice-cut channels, aligned in a northwest to southeast direction with intervening low upland ridges. Post glacial drift was then laid down around these ridges. Knowsley basically occupies one of these drift filled glacial channels with higher sandstone ridges outside the district running through Knowsley Park, Prescott and into Rainhill in St Helens district (Cowell, 1982). Occasional sandstone outliers are found within the district in the west and southeast. The drift geology is mainly boulder clay (diamicton), covering two thirds of the district with the remaining area in the north consisting of Shirdley Hill Sand and the remains of post glacial peat deposits. Coal measures occur in the central eastern part of the district (Cowell, 1982).

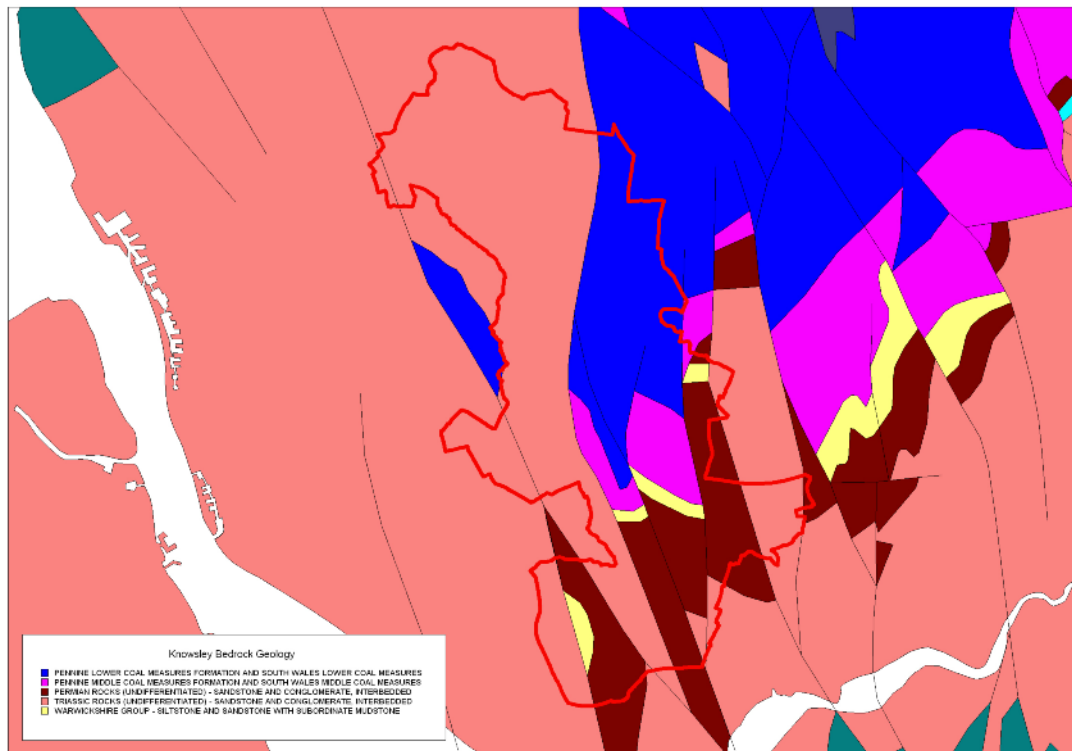


Figure 7 Bedrock Geology of Knowsley

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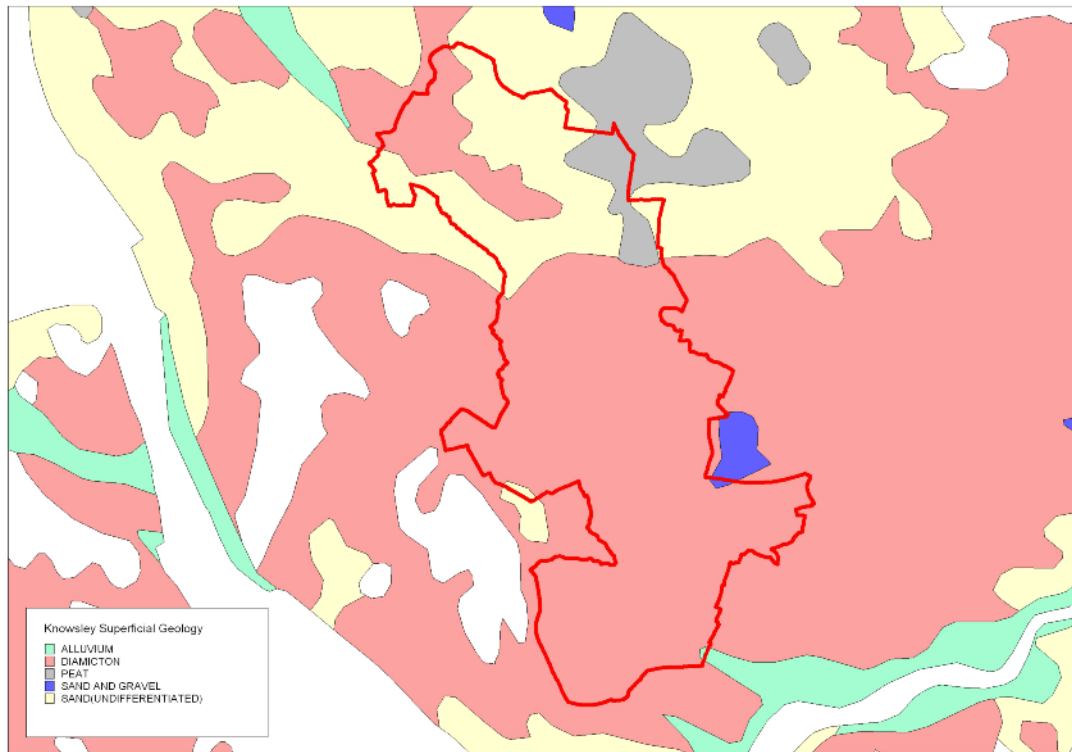


Figure 8 Superficial Geology of Knowsley

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The drainage pattern in the main follows the northwest, southeast alignment, with the main river, the Alt, flowing from Kirkby along the western edge of the district and the Ditton Brook draining the southern part of the channel into the Mersey (Cowell, 1982).

7.3 Knowsley – Social and Economic Development

Knowsley comprises a belt of small towns, suburbs and countryside, lying on the eastern side of Liverpool. The Borough is just over 17 km long from north to south and up to 12 km wide from west to east. Its character has changed dramatically during the present century, giving it a range of issues, needs and opportunities that is probably unique among British local authorities (Knowsley Development Guide, 2005, .15). The communities within Knowsley are, probably more so than almost any other metropolitan area, a creation of the 20th century. With the exception of Prescott and a few other smaller older settlements, the majority of the existing development in the area now known as Knowsley took place between the 1920s and the mid 1970s. Much of this expansion was as a result of Liverpool over-spill development. The expansion of the Borough's population, however, ceased in the early 1970s.

From the 1920s onwards, the combination of council house building, to house families displaced by slum clearance in the working-class areas of Liverpool and Bootle, and speculative private building, for sale to the middle classes, led to a spreading out of rapid urban growth, over the boundaries of the older urban areas and into the small towns and villages that surrounded them (Knowsley Development Guide, 2005). The process accelerated steadily up to the mid-seventies, interrupted only for a few years, by the Second World War.

Many of these new residents continued to work in the older areas of Merseyside but public policy and investment encouraged new industrial development, particularly on Kirkby Industrial Estate, which became one of the largest in Europe, and at Speke, just inside Liverpool. Longer-established industry in Prescott and Huyton also continued to provide jobs.

Until the early years of the 20th century Merseyside, like other major urban areas, did not have its present wide fringe of low-density suburban development. The only settlement of any size, in the area that now comprises Knowsley, was the small manufacturing town of Prescott. Huyton-with-Roby was a large village, with some industrial development and housing some commuters to Liverpool, while Kirkby and Halewood were small villages. By and large, the territory of the present Borough consisted of highly productive farmland.

Year	Population 10 years earlier	Current Total Population in Year
1801		8,369
1811	8,369	9,197
1821	9,197	11,130
1831	11,130	12,504
1841	12,504	13,993
1851	13,993	15,578
1861	15,578	18,458
1871	18,458	21,337
1881	21,337	24,216
1891	24,216	27,208
1901	27,208	28,368
1911	28,368	29,581
1921	29,581	38,214
1931	38,214	49,375
1941	49,375	74,090
1951	74,090	111,179
1961	111,179	147,063
1971	147,063	194,549
1981	194,549	172,991
1991	172,991	156,802
2001	156,802	150,468

Table 5 Population Change in Knowsley 1801 to 2001 (Source: Vision of Britain. www.visionofbritain.org.uk)

This period of rapid growth came to a sudden halt in the mid-1970s. The increase in population, driven by huge slum-clearance schemes in the older areas, was cut off abruptly when housing policy switched from clearance towards improvement of older

houses. Meanwhile, the decline of port-related industries and Merseyside's chronic shortage of jobs compelled many residents to leave the area to find work elsewhere. Knowsley's own lack of cheap housing to buy, at a time of unprecedented growth in the demand for owner-occupation, combined with the economic crisis to create one of the country's highest rates of population out-movement. While economic forces drove many Knowsley residents away from Merseyside altogether, housing preferences persuaded others to move back into Liverpool.

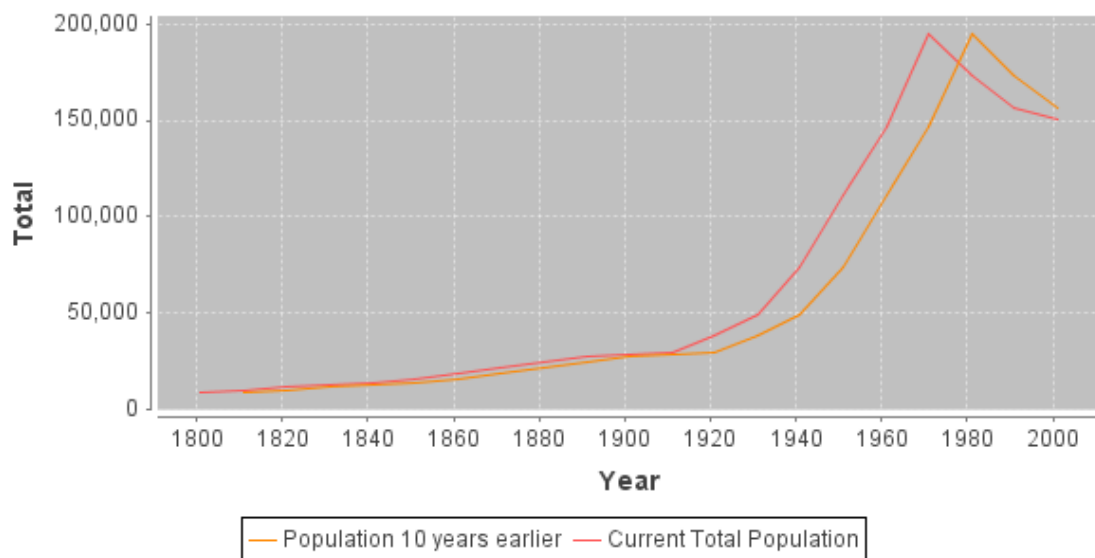


Figure 9 Knowsley Population for the years 1801 to 2001. (Source: Vision of Britain. www.visionofbritain.org.uk)

Rapid growth gave way to almost equally rapid decline, without any intervening period of stability at all. Knowsley's population fell from 194,000 in 1971 to 172,000 in 1981 and 157,000 in 1991.

The total population of the Borough of Knowsley in 2001 was 150,459 of which 53% are female, 23% are below 16 years of age compared with 20% nationally and 5.7% of the population are 75+ compared to a national average of 7.6%. The total population declined by 3% over the period 1991 to 2001, contrasting with the national trend of an increase of 2.5%. The population of Knowsley is expected to continue to decline over the next 10 years. Other significant demographics include the fact that 42% of all households have no car and 12% of people are permanently sick or disabled. In addition, there is a high unemployment rate in comparison to the national average.

The council housing programmes of the thirties, fifties and sixties had concentrated on the urgent needs of young families with children. Consequently by the seventies, Knowsley had the youngest population in the country and one of the lowest proportions of retired people. As rapid population growth gave way to equally rapid decline, this unusual population composition led to a variety of especially severe problems (Knowsley Development Guide, 2005).

8 The Historic Character of Knowsley

8.1 An Overview of Knowsley's Historic Character

The following is an overview of the Wirral character types analysis (see section 9).

About 30% (2592 ha) of the area of Knowsley has been classified as **Field System**. Much of this is concentrated in the northern and southern parts of the district. Extant field systems can be found in two areas in Knowsley - in the north and south of the district. Enclosed farmland lies mainly in the northern and southern parts of the borough, with an associated settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads, many with early origins. Much of this land is made up of surveyed enclosure and agglomerated fields formed in the mid-19th and 20th centuries, although there are some areas where earlier enclosure patterns are still visible within the landscape, including pockets of piecemeal enclosure and small but significant areas of former small / semi-regular open fields at Tarbock and Cronton in the south, and near Fluker's Brook Farm in the north. Much of the enclosed land to the north represents former mossland that has been drained and improved.

Residential areas in the borough are clearly concentrated in three bands - in the northern, central and south-western parts of the borough. The earliest settlement patterns in the Knowsley landscape are visible as dispersed farmsteads, vernacular cottages and ribbon settlement. These are present in rural areas, but have also become surrounded by later urban development. A number of small village settlements have origins in the medieval period - these include Knowsley, Kirkby, Cronton and Roby.

The only known medieval town in the district is Prescott. Prescott is an old market town which follows the traditional medieval grid pattern. Much of the plot layout and street pattern of medieval Prescott survives virtually intact.

There are few early settlement cores of a significant size in the district. There is potential for archaeological remains to be found at locations dating from the medieval period, notably Roby, Huyton, Kirkby and Prescott. Other commercial cores in the district were formed in the late post-medieval period (c.1700 to 1851). The distribution of surviving examples indicates that they developed as part of historic settlements along early transport routes and at river crossing points.

The industrial revolution generated unprecedented urban growth - much settlement from this period does survive, particularly in Roby and Prescott. Gridiron terraced housing developments are limited, but are present around Prescott. Middle class villa and detached housing is most common in Huyton with Roby, probably representing suburban overspill from Liverpool.

The communities within Knowsley are, probably more so than almost any other metropolitan area, a creation of the 20th century. With the exception of Prescott and a few other smaller older settlements, the majority of the existing development in the area now known as Knowsley took place between the 1920s and the mid 1970s. The Knowsley suburbs became more developed in the early 20th century with the introduction of social and private housing estates. Such housing forms distinct zones around the fringes of Knowsley's urban cores. However, by far the greatest amount of residential development in the district has taken place since the 1950s. Much of this has been built on agricultural land on the fringes of established settlement. There are concentrations of social housing in the northern parts of the borough, including the 'new town' of Kirkby and the purely 20th century expansion of Halewood to the southwest.

There is a large concentration of **Industrial** and **Commercial** land in Knowsley Industrial Park at the northern tip of the borough. There is a second major industrial area around the manufacturing works at Huyton Quarry, and a third, smaller, area at Halewood. Early industry in the borough tended to be smaller in scale than was generally found in the region, and was concentrated in the urban centres, particularly within Prescott.

Recreational and Ornamental land is generally found at the fringes of settlement in Knowsley, and includes several golf courses and numerous playing fields and recreation grounds. Much of the borough is dominated by Knowsley Park. Halewood Triangle Park, created in an area of former railway cuttings, lies at the western edge of the borough.

The earliest **Civil** buildings in Knowsley are predominantly churches and chapels. There are numerous examples dating from the post-medieval period onwards. Surviving examples of early local government sites include corporation yards, schools, hospitals, government buildings, public parks and cemeteries. Civic, municipal and

other public buildings were also built in the 20th century in the urban centres. Schools occupy the greatest area of land (252.7 ha). They are most often associated with large planned suburban residential developments.

Knowsley contains a number of **Communication** features that were established before 1850. These include important turnpike roads that have led to urban and industrial development. The main 19th century railways have generally survived as linear features although the nature of their usage has changed in the 20th century. Disused lines have tended to survive as footpaths or within public parks, with only minimal redevelopment taking place. Industrial railways, sidings and colliery tramways do tend to have been lost. A small section of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal can be found to the extreme northeast of the district. The canal has for the most part fallen into disuse. The most prominent communications features in modern Knowsley are the motorways, with the M62 crossing the central part of Knowsley and the M57 running north to south.

The only **Water Bodies** of a significant size at a landscape scale in Knowsley are reservoirs. Some are corporation waterworks, but the majority have industrial origins. The majority of these artificial water bodies are located in the south of the district.

8.2 Knowsley - Statistical Data and Mapping

Knowsley Broad Types	1850 (hectares)	1893 (hectares)	1939 (hectares)	Current 2003 (hectares)
Industrial	74.634	82.471	174.249	713.934
Residential	1704.36	1795.44	1889.31	2966.79
Field System	6449.8	6196.72	5664.41	2592.18
Woodland	232.494	295.377	314.312	191.77
Rough Land	90.391	62.695	110.779	298.711
Civil	11.15	29.084	62.599	326.264
Defence	0	0	0.258	1.322
Commercial	15.639	18.353	26.179	465.27
Communication	41.28	115.127	121.25	311.51
Recreational and Ornamental	4.475	18.208	255.968	745.11
Water Bodies	1.081	2.733	9.603	16.406
Coastal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	0	0	0	0

Table 6 Knowsley Broad Character Types

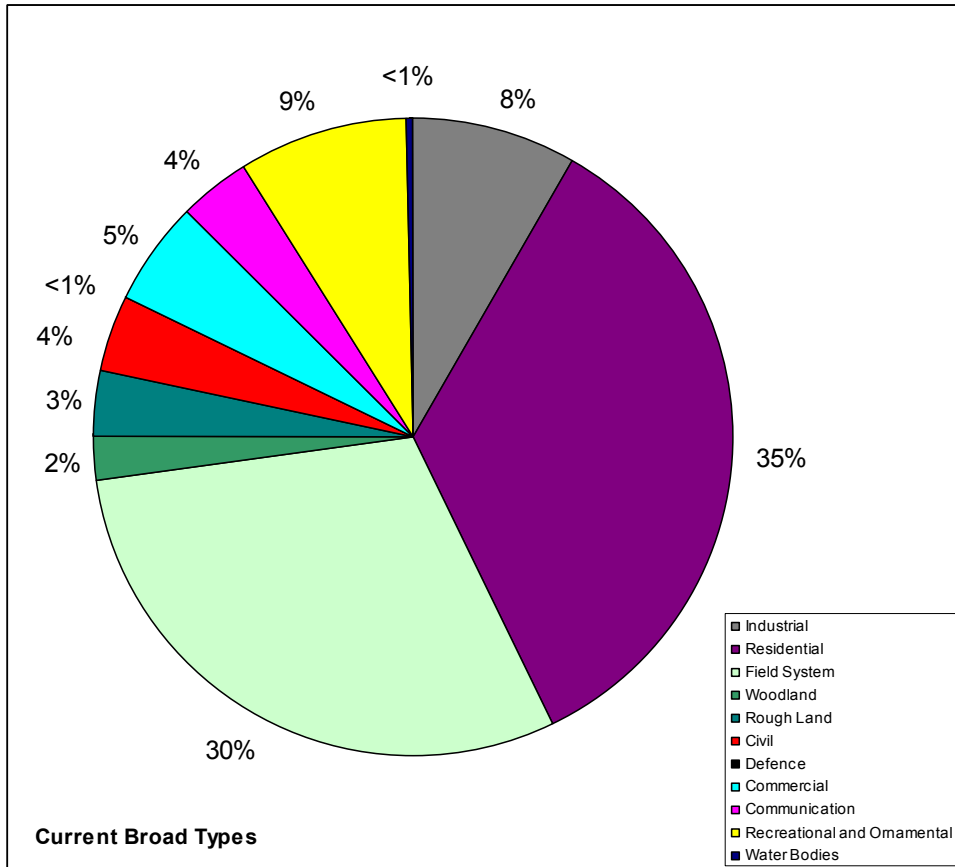


Figure 10 Pie chart showing Current (2003) Broad Types in Knowsley (% of land)

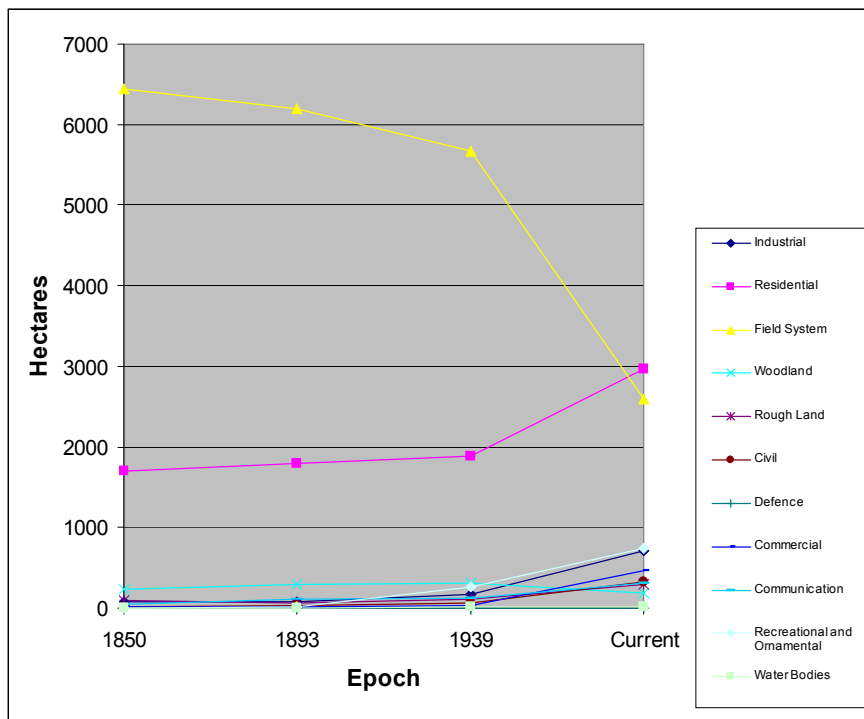


Figure 11 Graphical Representation of Knowsley Broad Types through time

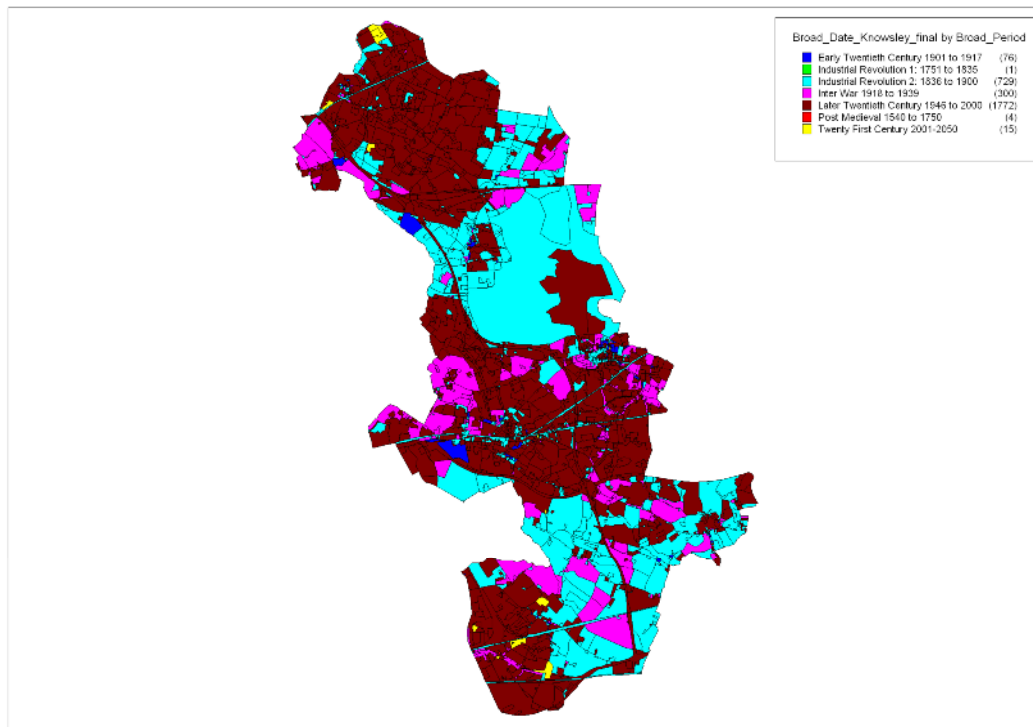


Figure 12 Knowsley by Broad Period of origin
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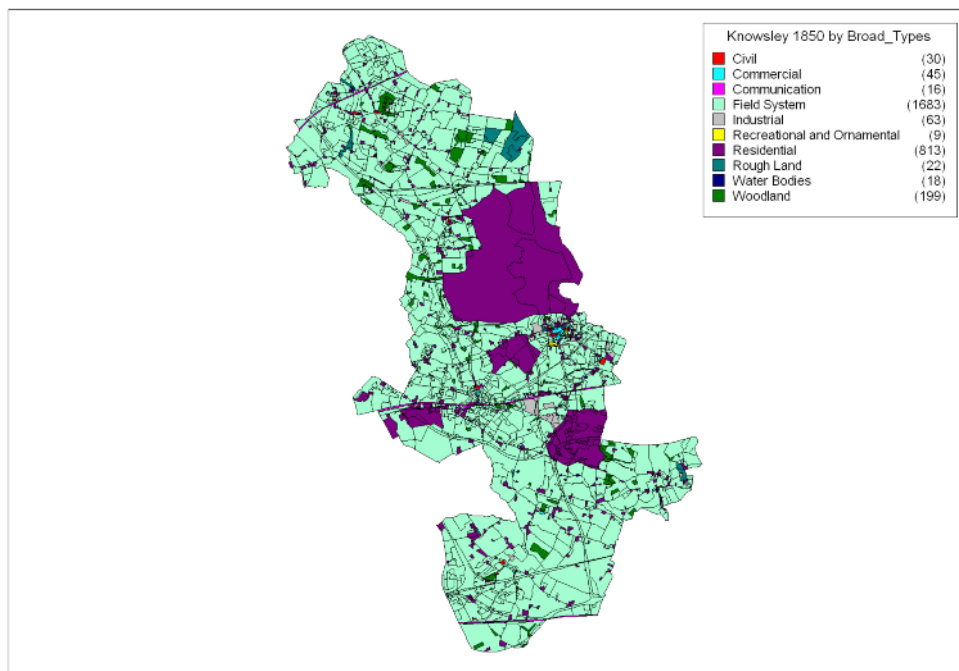


Figure 13 Knowsley Characterisation in 1850
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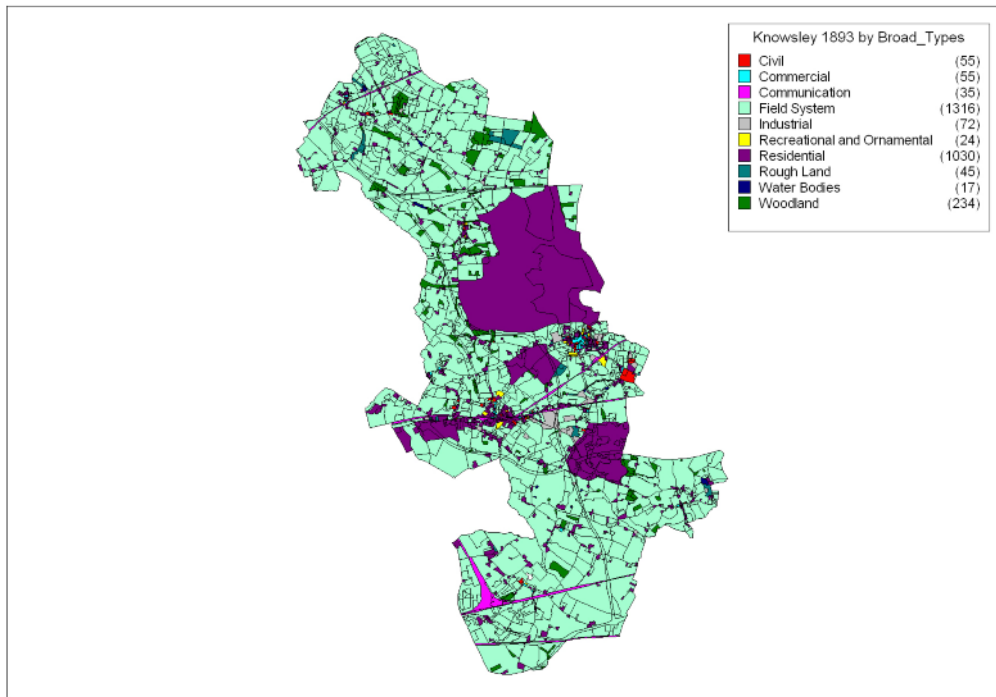


Figure 14 Knowsley Characterisation in 1893
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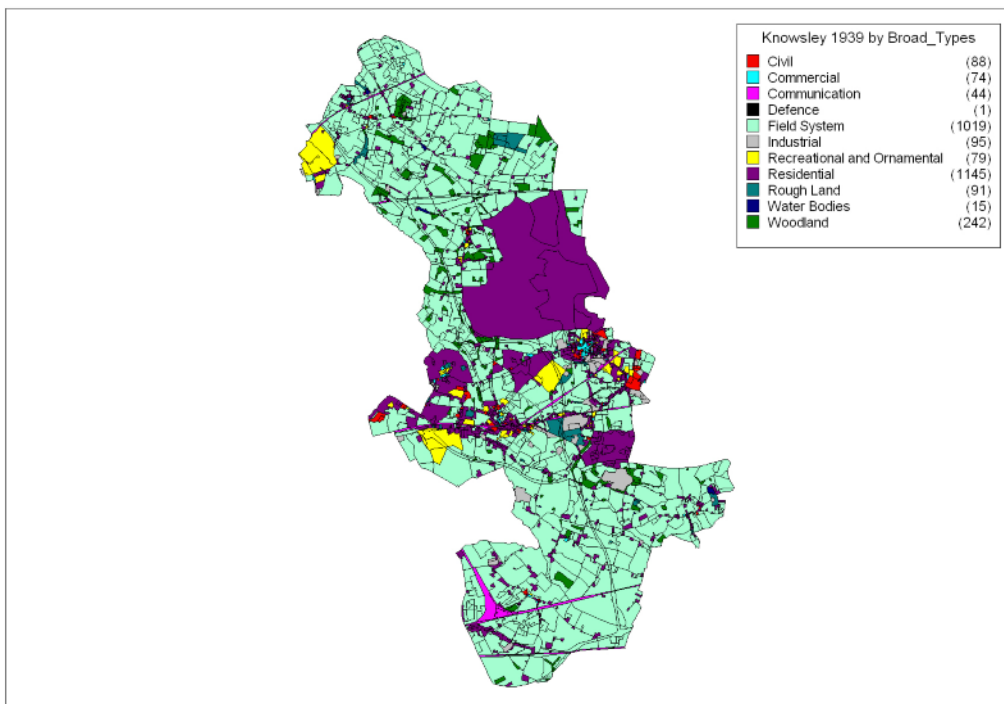


Figure 15 Knowsley Characterisation in 1939
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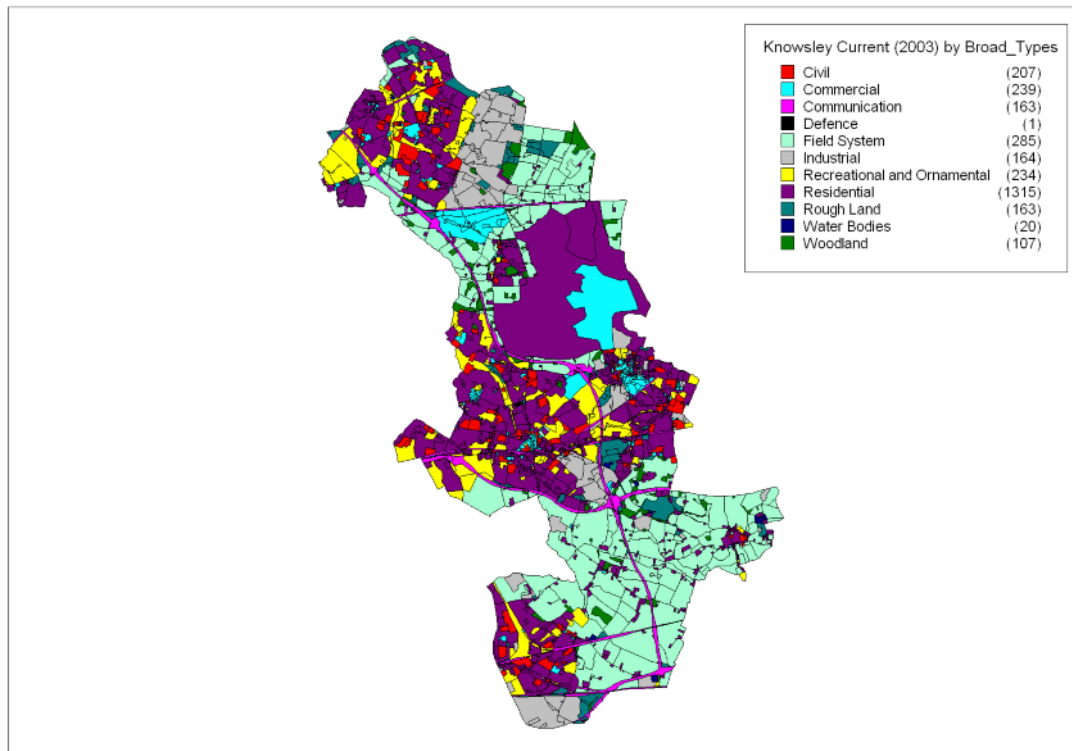


Figure 16 Knowsley Characterisation Current (2003) Mapping.
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Table 7 Sub Type Characterisation for Knowsley from 1850, 1893, 1939 and Current (2003) (Hectares)

Knowsley Sub Type	1850	1893	1939	2003
Airfield	0	0	0	0
Allotment Gardens	2.61	4.78	15.10	3.11
Ancient Woodland	0	0	0	0
Artificial Water Body	4.36	10.19	8.91	15.71
Barracks	0	0	0	0
Business Park	0	0	0	114.45
Camp	0	0	0	0
Canal	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21
Cemetery	0.56	1.72	3.50	6.40
Chemical Industry	0	0	0	0
College/University	0	0	1.55	7.89
Commercial Core	7.66	8.53	8.59	6.24
Commercial Core (Office)	0	0	0	4.35

Commercial Core (Retail)	7.98	8.18	14.93	276.86
Council Housing	0	0	0	52.69
Crematorium	0	0	0	0
Cultural	0	0.55	1.19	8.96
Curved Edged Woodland	0	0	0	0
Designed Parkland	0	0	0	0
Detached / Villa Housing	177.64	188.53	203.79	162.95
Disused Industry	1.49	7.45	20.91	5.86
Dock and Port Related Industry	0	0	0	0
Dunes	0	0	0	0
Extraction Industry	52.42	42.97	60.91	12.87
Farmhouse	108.13	86.65	109.02	69.19
Forestry and Plantation	10.59	10.59	10.59	10.59
Glass Industry	0	0	0	0
High-rise Development	0	0	0	14.00
Historic Route	0	0	0	0
Hospital	0	2.35	18.06	20.71
Industrial	1.50	1.91	3.58	445.07
Institution	3.14	10.74	5.51	4.60
Iron Industry / Foundries	0.96	3.85	0.96	0
Irregular / Large Field	0	0	0	0
Irregular / Small Field	70.67	65.27	65.27	32.44
Irregular /Medium Field	4.89	0	0	32.83
Lowland	0	0	0	0
Managed Woodland	0.25	0.44	2.29	0
Manufacturing Industry	7.19	8.00	32.54	156.79
Maritime Commercial Area	0	0	0	0
Model Village	0	0	0	0
Modern Housing Development	0	0	0	581.35
Moss (Wetlands)	69.28	26.90	32.08	26.14
Municipal Depot	0	0	0	7.96
Municipal Works	0	4.62	28.15	49.11
Natural Water Body	0.69	0.59	0.69	0.69

Nature Reserve	0	0	0	0
Nursery	11.07	12.76	27.21	18.64
Offices	0	0	2.66	41.96
Other (defence)	0	0	0.26	1.32
Other (recreational and ornamental)	1.43	4.38	9.60	94.76
Other Land (Rough Land)	4.92	13.31	56.36	202.89
Other Land (other)	0	0	0	0
Place of Worship	4.87	8.34	12.37	24.45
Plantation	172.61	234.21	249.24	129.60
Police Station	0.26	0.44	0.69	2.26
Prison	0	0	0	0
Private Estate	1392.33	1392.33	1189.39	799.37
Public Park	0	1.00	22.83	213.96
Railway	41.07	114.92	119.63	75.66
Range	0	0	0	0
Reclaimed Land	0	0	0	0
Regular / Large Field	0	39.04	79.33	192.78
Regular / Medium Field	148.92	1135.82	1392.26	531.32
Regular / Small Field	1611.82	3236.84	2334.76	812.15
Retail Park	0	0	0	21.42
Road	0	0	1.42	235.65
Salt Marsh	0	0	0	0
Sand and Mud Flats	0	0	0	0
School	2.32	4.95	19.73	250.99
Scrub	8.65	16.51	17.54	64.88
Semi Detached Housing	10.31	32.03	305.24	971.74
Semi Regular / Large Field	6.38	28.81	96.59	42.31
Semi Regular / Medium Field	504.91	312.60	677.85	403.66
Semi Regular / Small Field	4102.21	1378.35	1018.35	544.68
Sports Ground	0.43	8.05	208.43	426.95
Terraced	15.96	36.43	81.86	315.50
Upland	7.55	4.80	4.80	4.80
Warehousing	0	0	0	17.63

Woodland	49.04	50.13	52.19	51.58
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