

Bassetlaw Landscape Character Assessment
Idle Lowlands: IL PZ 08

Idle Lowlands

Policy Zone 08: Retford

POLICY: CONSERVE

Character Summary

The area wraps around the north-east and east of Retford between the Chesterfield Canal, which forms much of the eastern boundary before traversing south-west through the Policy Zone, and the River Idle and Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits [SSSI/SINC] in the west. Hayton village and Clarborough are located east of the area.

Generally the Policy Zone is a low lying river valley floor rising slightly towards Retford which sits on higher ground immediately south. Views are quite open towards higher ground in the north becoming more restricted in the south due to high hedges lining roads and field boundaries.

Arable farmland extends across the landscape with some rough grazing, pastoral is particularly apparent in the west. The Lincoln to Sheffield railway line runs through the eastern section of the area. Isolated farmsteads are a feature within the south and south-west of the Policy Zone, in the vicinity of Retford. Recreational facilities are available at Bolham, which encompasses Bolham Hall and Manor, and further south, closer to Retford.

Drainage ditches are common field boundaries, though hedgerows are more prominent centrally and further west where ditches are mostly along roadsides. Hedgerows are generally well maintained, they have been allowed to grow quite tall in some areas and encompass occasional trees. Woodland cover is quite fragmented, with scattered trees being apparent across the open farmland.

Idle Lowlands – Policy Zone 08: Retford

PHOTOGRAPH



CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

- Mixed open farmland divided by drainage ditches and well maintained hedgerows with occasional trees. Individual trees are evident within the fields.
- Low lying river valley floor.
- Bolham Hall and Manor; includes recreational facilities.
- Isolated red brick farmsteads.
- Lincoln to Sheffield railway corridor.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

The landscape condition is very good. There is a unified pattern of elements with some detracting features within the Policy Zone, including the A620, Smeath Road and pylons. Although outside the area, a commercial development located at the edge of Retford is also considered a detracting feature. Overall the area is **visually unified**.

There is evidence of the historic field pattern throughout the Policy Zone, hedgerows are strong with occasional willow and ash trees. Fields are also divided by a network of ditches. Built development is limited and largely vernacular comprising large houses i.e. Bolham Hall, red brick farmhouses with a mix of traditional and modern farm buildings and few residential dwellings. Mixed farmland is dominant with an area of pig farming and some rough grazing, the livestock are enclosed by fencing. The overall cultural integrity is **good**.

Through tree cover is low there is a relatively good green infrastructure provided by tree belts interlocking with hedgerows and several isolated woodland blocks and plantations of Scots Pine throughout the Policy Zone. Scattered oak trees are also evident across the farmland. Ecological designations include four SINC's. The ecological integrity is **moderate** which gives a **strong** habitat for wildlife/functional integrity overall. A **visually unified** area combined with a **strong** functional integrity gives a **very good landscape condition** overall.

Sensitivity

Features which give the area local distinctiveness are **characteristic** of the Idle Lowlands region and the continuity/time depth is **historic** [post 1600] resulting in a **moderate** sense of place.

Moderate visibility is afforded due to views generally being contained within the Policy Zone, and the landform is considered **apparent**. A **moderate** sense of place with **moderate** visibility results in **moderate** landscape sensitivity overall.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS

Conserve

Landscape Features

- **Conserve** permanent pasture and seek opportunities to restore arable farmland to pastoral.
- **Conserve** and enhance tree cover and landscape planting generally to improve visual unity and habitat across the Policy Zone.
- **Conserve** the ecological diversity and setting of the designated SINC's, seeking to enhance where appropriate.
- **Conserve** the historic field pattern, maintain existing strong hedgerow structure, restore and reinforce poor hedgerow boundaries where necessary and reinforce with additional hedgerow trees as appropriate.
- **Conserve** network of drainage ditches.

Built Features

- **Conserve** the open rural character of the landscape by concentrating new development around the north-eastern fringe of Retford.
- **Conserve** and be sympathetic towards the local architectural style in any new development.
- **Conserve** and respect the character, setting and historic integrity of Bolham Hall and Manor House.
- Contain new development within existing field boundaries.
- Create woodland areas to contain and soften built development, preferably in advance of new development.

CONTEXT

Policy Zone: IL PZ 08
Land Cover Parcel[s]: IL28, IL29, IL30

Condition

Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
Moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
Poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE

Low Moderate High
Sensitivity

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition

Very Good

Pattern of Elements: Unified

Detracting Features: Some

Visual Unity: Unified

Ecological Integrity: Moderate

Cultural Integrity: Good

Functional Integrity: Strong

Sensitivity

Moderate

Distinctiveness: Characteristic

Continuity: Historic

Sense of Place: Moderate

Landform: Apparent

Extent of Tree Cover: Intermittent

Visibility: Moderate