

**Bassetlaw Landscape Character Assessment
Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands: MN PZ 03**

Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands

Policy Zone 03: Beckingham

POLICY: CONSERVE

Character Summary

The area is located west of Gainsborough and north-east of Retford and stretches from Walkeringham in the north to North Wheatley just beyond the A620 in the south. The A631 crosses the centre of the area east to west and is joined by the A620 at Beckingham which runs south and west before skirting North Wheatley. Beckingham Road [A161] and the Doncaster to Grimsby railway line follow much of the eastern boundary. The villages of Beckingham, Saundby and North Wheatley lie within the Policy Zone. Gringley on the Hill is located just outside the area at the north-western corner and similarly West Burton Power Station at the south-eastern corner.

Topographically the landscape is gently undulating and rolling, generally descending from the west towards the east. Wheatley Grange sits on a high point in the south-west. Views of the surrounding landscape to the north and west are limited by landform, woodland and settlement within the Policy Zone, views to the east and south are less restricted however. More extensive views are afforded eastwards from higher points within the Policy Zone.

Land use is almost entirely arable farmland with some fruit growing in the south and small pastoral fields associated with farms and Walkeringham at the northern fringes, and interspersed through the centre and south including that at Saundby Park. Woodland is scattered with larger more prominent blocks in the south including Beckingham Wood [SINC]. Hedgerows are generally continuous and well maintained with frequent hedgerow trees. Several minor watercourses cross the Policy Zone.

Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands – Policy Zone 03: Beckingham

PHOTOGRAPH



CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

- Intensive arable farmland with hedgerow field boundaries; generally intact though some are fragmented/outgrown or have been removed.
- Oil investigation works.
- Settlement comprises scattered villages predominantly, with isolated farmsteads, and includes several listed buildings.
- Scattered blocks of woodland/plantation.
- Narrow hedged lanes with verges and ditches/scrub.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

The landscape condition is very good. There is a **coherent** pattern of elements with **few** detracting features including the A161/A620/A631 and several oil wells. Overall this results in a **visually unified** area.

Intensive arable farmland dominates the Policy Zone and encompasses some localised oil investigation works. Fields are generally bounded by hedgerows [predominantly hawthorn/blackthorn, evidence of field maple and other species] which are mostly intact although some are fragmented, have been removed or are outgrown. The historic field pattern appears more evident closer to areas of settlement; Beckingham, North Wheatley, Saundby, Walkeringham. Hedgerow loss is apparent south of Walkeringham, north of North Wheatley and west of Saundby. Villages show evidence of expansion, tending to have a vernacular core [generally red brick construction] with peripheral new build. Isolated red brick farmhouses occur across the Policy Zone and several buildings within Beckingham, North Wheatley and Saundby are listed. More modern development lies further east, adjacent to the A161/A631, and in the south which hints towards the local style. The overall cultural integrity is **good**.

Blocks of woodland and plantation are scattered, tree cover is also associated with the water channels and boundary hedgerows and is mainly ash with some oak. A total of 8 SINCs are identified, these include woodland sites and areas of valuable ground flora. The ecological integrity is described as **moderate** which gives a **strong** habitat for wildlife/functional integrity. A **visually unified** area with a **strong** functional integrity gives a **very good landscape condition** overall.

Sensitivity

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

Intermittent tree cover offers **moderate** visibility which is further limited by field boundaries. The landform is considered **apparent**. A **moderate** sense of place with **moderate** visibility equates to **moderate landscape sensitivity** overall.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS

Conserve

Landscape Features

- **Conserve** historic field pattern by containing new development within historic enclosed boundaries, maintain existing hedgerows, restore and reinforce poor hedgerow boundaries where necessary.
- Seek opportunities to restore arable land to pasture.
- **Conserve** and enhance woodland/plantation blocks, seek to reinforce as appropriate and improve connectivity across the area.
- **Conserve** hedgerow planting along roadsides, seek to reinforce and enhance as appropriate.
- **Conserve** the biodiversity and setting of the designated SINCs, seek to enhance where appropriate.

Built Features

- **Conserve** the open rural character of the landscape by concentrating new development of appropriate design and scale around the existing settlements of Beckingham, Saundby and North Wheatley.
- **Conserve** and respect the local brick built vernacular in any new development.

CONTEXT

Policy Zone: MN PZ 03
Land Cover Parcel[s]: MN04, MN06, MN07

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:	Coherent
Detracting Features:	Few
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