

## **S PZ 35 Bothamsall Estate Farmlands**

### **Policy: Conserve & Reinforce**

#### **Character Summary**

This is a gently undulating arable landscape that lies between the River Poulter to the far north and the River Meden to the south. The rivers both meander west to east along the edges of the area towards the River Idle, which is outside the policy zone area to the east. To the south a ridgeline runs from across the area from the A614 in the west to the settlement of Bothamsall in the east. From this ridgeline, the land slopes gently to the north east forming the valley side of the River Poulter and more steeply southwards to the River Meden. To the east there are artificially created high points within the restoration scheme of the former Bevercotes Colliery which has been restored in part by the Forestry Commission for amenity use.

This well-wooded, and in places industrialised, landscape is characterised by large-scale intensively farmed arable fields, pine plantations, remnants of semi-natural woodland, pasture and localised heathland within the rides of the coniferous forests.

The former Bevercotes colliery site contains a high proportion of commercial forestry with adjacent mature deciduous woodland (Lawn Covert) surrounded by later forestry plantings. The mature areas of deciduous woodland contain Lime avenues to the colliery estate roads. Further west there are smaller areas of coniferous woodland and copses with deciduous fringes (Scots Pine, Oak, Holly). In general, the deciduous woodland is confined to fringes along the River Meden and the edges of coniferous woodlands.

West Drayton Avenue runs from east to west across the centre of the area and in parts forms a distinct visual feature within the landscape. The avenue is in poor condition with remnants of over-mature trees including Horse Chestnut, Sweet Chestnut and Oak.

The views within the area are varied and are either contained by close belts of woodland or by wooded fringes at a greater distance. Long distance views are enclosed in all directions by coniferous woodland rather than landform.

The roadside hedges (Hawthorn, Holly, Ivy) are low and well trimmed. There are some hedgerow trees including Ash, Holly and Oak. In the eastern part hedgerows are predominantly Hawthorn with some post and rail fences and few trees. Field boundaries consist of Hawthorn and are gappy and generally less well maintained. Some pasture lies close to farmsteads, village fringes and within smaller areas of coniferous woodland.

Bothamsall Village is located in the centre of the area. This small nucleated village has a historic core with red brick and pantile buildings, a number of which are listed. The area has a number of isolated red brick farmhouses to the north and west. To the east the former Bevercotes colliery site has obliterated the agricultural landscape pattern, but remnants of earlier woodland, such as Lawn Covert, have survived. The surrounding agricultural landscape is interspersed with other land uses, such as the former Bevercote colliery site, Houghton Kennels Farm, and a small oil well to the west of Bothamsall village.

There are several SINC sites including: Poulter Valley Plantation, Bothamsall Scrub, Bothamsall Lane Verges, Lawn Covert, West Drayton Woodland and Markham Moor Grasslands. A Motte and Bailey Castle, known as Castle Hill, lies to the west of Bothamsall Village. Castle Hill is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and has mature Oak trees to its central mound.

The Robin Hood Way passes north-south through the centre of the area.

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## PHOTOGRAPH



## CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

- Gently undulating topography
- Medium to large-scale geometric arable fields
- Low hawthorn hedges
- Views framed by rising ground and woodland edges
- Small, nucleated, red brick villages
- Reclaimed colliery site
- Large coniferous plantations with heathland rides

## LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

### Landscape Condition

The Landscape condition is defined as **good**. The area has **few** detracting features, which include the A1 which cuts across the eastern corner of the area. Power lines cut across the area to the west. There is also a disused airfield within the PZ with concrete hardstanding remaining in places. Overall the PZ is **visually unified**.

There are several SINC's within the area including Poulter Valley Plantation, Bothamsall Scrub, Bothamsall Lane Verges, Lawn Covert, West Drayton Woodland and Markham Moor Grasslands.

There are a number of small to medium-sized mixed deciduous woodland blocks, coniferous plantations, heathland to the rides of coniferous woodland, and some areas of grazed pasture. Open water occurs in the Meden valley to the east and lakes within the restored colliery area. This generally open arable landscape provides a network of wildlife corridors that is considered to have a **moderate** ecological integrity.

There is moderate tree coverage with a diverse age structure. There has been recent planting at the former colliery site, whereas the semi-natural woodland areas are over-mature and in decline.

Cultural integrity is **variable** in that the area contains the intact village core of Bothamsall with many listed buildings as well as restored colliery areas where most of the former historic field pattern has been lost. A Motte and Bailey Castle known as Castle Hill lies to the west of Bothamsall village. Castle Hill is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and has mature oak trees to its central mound.

A **visually unified** area with a **coherent** functional integrity/ habitat for wildlife gives a **good** landscape condition.

### Landscape Sensitivity

A number of existing areas of woodland are shown on the Sanderson Plan. The field pattern to the west of the area is mainly intact with little expansion of Bothamsall village. To the east the field pattern has been totally lost due to the former colliery and associated development, overall the features are **characteristic** of Sherwood with an **historic** time depth ( post 1600) and the area has a **moderate** sense of place.

There are long distance views enclosed by coniferous woodland on skylines to the east. The views within the area are varied and are either contained by close belts of woodland or by wooded fringes at a greater distance. Generally, long distance views in all directions, are enclosed by coniferous woodland rather than landform. The apparent landform and intermittent tree cover give a **moderate** visibility in and out of the area.

A **moderate** sense of place with a **moderate** visibility gives a **moderate** landscape sensitivity.

## LANDSCAPE ACTIONS – Conserve and Reinforce

### Landscape Features

- **Conserve** and **Reinforce** the ecological diversity and character of semi-natural woodland habitats
- **Conserve** and **Reinforce** existing hedgerows and seek opportunities to restore the historic field pattern with new hedgerow planting and trees
- Seek opportunities to restore arable land to mixed woodland, permanent pasture and heathland
- **Conserve** and **Reinforce** West Drayton Avenue and seek opportunities strengthen with additional avenue planting

### Built Features

- Contain new development in the east of the Policy Zone within existing hedgerow boundaries
- **Conserve** and **Reinforce** the historic character and setting of Bothamsall – new development should respect the scale, design and materials used traditionally in the village
- New development of the derelict Bevercotes Colliery should take account of the distinctive landscape and ecological elements within the former colliery site. Seek opportunities to reinforce the local landscape character where appropriate

## CONTEXT

NCC Landscape Type: estate farmlands

Draft Policy Zone: S DPZ 35

Land Cover Parcel: S42, S43

### Condition

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

Low Moderate High

### Sensitivity

## SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

### Condition

**Good**

Pattern of Elements: Coherent

Detracting Features: Few

Visual Unity: Unified

Ecological Integrity: Moderate

Cultural Integrity: Variable

Functional Integrity: Coherent

### Sensitivity

**Moderate**

Distinctiveness: Characteristic

Continuity: Historic

Sense of Place: Moderate

Landform: Apparent

Extent of Tree Cover: Intermittent

Visibility: Moderate