

TW PZ 17 – Besthorpe River Meadowlands

Policy: Create and Reinforce

Character Summary

This is a large scale, low lying landscape which follows the meandering course of the River Trent. Mineral extraction and intensive arable farming are the dominant land uses within this area. Several sand and gravel quarries are situated to the eastern bank along the Trent River Valley. There is a large active quarry to the north of Girton Grange and open areas of water at Cromwell. Some of the smaller water bodies are used for recreational purposes such as sailing and fishing and some have established nature reserves such as Besthorpe Nature Reserve.

Arable fields are medium to large and at the time of survey were used for cereal and oil seed rape production. Areas of pasture are fragmented and relatively small with some linear stretches along the river. Grassed flood bunds follow the line of the Trent and several small water courses and ditches drain into the river.

Some of these former gravel extraction sites, such as those around Girton, have been restored to open water and others to wetland habitats surrounded by both recent woodland planting and some regenerating scrub. Hedgerow trees are more frequent in primary hedgerows, the most common species being Ash. Hawthorn, Ash and Willow tend to follow lines of water courses.

There is little settlement in this area being a low lying flood plain. Villages tend to be situated on the slightly higher land on the periphery of the adjoining policy area. There are open views south west from the area around Besthorpe to low wooded hills. Pylons tend to be particularly prominent against the skyline and the cooling towers of High Marnham power station, although they are outside this area, are visible.

TW PZ 17 Besthorpe River Meadowlands

PHOTOGRAPH



CHARACTERISTIC VISUAL FEATURES

- A flat, low lying landscape against the River Trent.
- Medium to large scale fields in arable production.
- Hawthorn hedgerows with hedgerow trees along lanes and tracks.
- Deciduous woodland scrub associated with restored quarry sites.
- Open long distance views often with pylon lines and power stations on the skyline.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Landscape Condition

The landscape condition is defined **moderate**. This is a long stretch of the River Trent corridor that is either actively being worked for sand and gravel, restored to wetlands and open water, or is in intensive arable production. As such the pattern of elements is **coherent** with **some** detracting features including the active quarries, the railway viaduct, and pylons and power lines. This generally leaves a landscape that is **visually coherent**.

There are several SINC's and a SSSI in the area which are associated with the older more established habitats around some of the former sand and gravel quarries. However the arable fields are intensively farmed with gappy hedgerows and few hedgerow trees giving an ecological integrity of **moderate**. Cultural integrity is **variable** in that much of the historic field pattern has been lost due to mineral extraction.

A **moderate** network for wildlife and a **variable** cultural integrity leads to a **coherent** functional integrity/habitat for wildlife. An area which is **visually coherent** with a **coherent** functional integrity / habitat for wildlife gives a **moderate** landscape condition.

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity is defined as **low**. Although the wetland and riparian vegetation is **characteristic** of the Trent Washlands, this is a landscape that has been substantially modified by sand and gravel extraction and the removal of the historic field pattern. It therefore has a **weak sense of place**. Elsewhere woodland scrub around the restored gravel sites, hedges and hedgerow trees gives an intermittent level of tree cover.

A **weak** sense of place with a **moderate** degree of visibility leads to **low** landscape sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS - Create and Reinforce

Landscape Features

- Seek opportunities to recreate the historic field pattern where appropriate.
- Seek opportunities to restore arable land to permanent pasture.
- Promote measures for strengthening the level of tree cover through appropriate small scale woodland planting and hedgerow tree planting.
- **Reinforce** and strengthen the continuity and ecological diversity of stream and ditch corridors.
- **Conserve** pastoral character and promote measures for enhancing the ecological diversity of alluvial grasslands. This is a priority habitat for this area.
- **Conserve** and enhance the pattern and special features of meadowland hedgerows.

Built Features

- Promote measures for reinforcing the traditional character of isolated farm buildings using vernacular building styles.
- **Conserve** the sparsely settled rural character of the landscape by concentrating new development around existing settlements of Besthorpe and Girton.
- **Conserve** historic field pattern where it exists by containing new small scale development within historic boundaries, maintain existing hedgerows, restore and reinforce poor hedgerow boundaries where necessary.
- **Conserve** and respect the local vernacular of red brick and pantile roof construction in any new development.
- Promote sensitive design and setting of new agricultural and industrial/commercial buildings.

CONTEXT

NCC Landscape Type: River Meadowlands
Policy Zone: TW PZ 17
Landscape Character Parcel TW25 and TW28

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 Moderate

Pattern of Elements:	Coherent
Detracting Features:	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Ecological Integrity:	Moderate
Cultural Integrity:	Variable
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity Low

Distinctiveness:	Characteristic
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of Place:	Weak
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of Tree Cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate