



VALE OF YORK FLAT OPEN FARMLAND

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 1: FLAT OPEN FARMLAND

COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER AREA: Vale of York

Location

This landscape character type is located in the south east corner of the Vale of York, west of Market Weighton and west and south of Pockington. The area extends to the Pocklington Beck and Canal corridor in the south and the River Derwent corridor in the west.

Key characteristics of Flat Open Farmland in the Vale of York:

- Generally flat open landscape between 10m and 30m AOD gradually falling southwards
- Drained intensively farmed arable land with occasional grass fields
- Overall tree and woodland cover is sparse. One large woodland block at Allerthorpe.
- Parkland at Everingham is distinctive.
- Field boundaries consist of a combination of fragmented and intact hedgerows with few hedgerow trees.
- Field pattern is dominated by medium sized regular shaped fields that are occasionally incised by small natural watercourses.
- Drainage pattern overall is regular and man made with few small improved natural watercourses of less regular shape. Land generally drains southwards.
- Combination of linear and nucleated villages with potential Iron Age settlement origins.
- Large farmsteads are scattered throughout the area.
- Influence of past human activity includes the route of A1079 that follows the route of a Roman road.

Physical Influences

The underlying solid geology of the area is from the Triassic period and consists of Mercia Mudstone to the east and Sherwood Sandstone to the west. This has been overlain by lacustrine and glaciofluvial deposits from the Devensian period when the area was covered by Lake Humber which gradually silted up.

Soils are a mix of brown earths, podsolis and surface water gleys. Agricultural land classification for most of this landscape type is Grade 3 with small pockets of grade 2.

Topography of the area is generally flat. This is one of the characteristics that distinguish it from the adjacent character type to the north. Hummocky glacial deposits such as the Escrick Moraine western edge of this character type contribute to a slightly more varied landform in places.

Water drains to the south feeding into the River Derwent via the Pocklington Canal and Beck and the River Humber via the River Foulness and the Market Weighton Canal.

Human Influences

Visible evidence of early human activity in the area has largely been lost due to modern agricultural practices. Mesolithic and Neolithic sites have been found in the Vale of York and are evidence that human activity in the area has continued over many hundreds of years. However, the influence of early settlers on landscape character in this landscape type is not apparent today.

In the Roman and early medieval periods marine regression allowed the occupation of the lowlands of the Vale of York. Evidence of Roman occupation comes from the presence of forts and one was located at Hayton, south east of

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Pocklington. There is extensive evidence of rural Romano-British settlement throughout the area and the rectilinear field pattern at Barmby Moor dates from the Romano-British Period and is a Scheduled Monument. The A1079 follows the line of a Roman road from Brough to York, and a second Roman road runs to the south of Market Weighton.

Settlement in the area continued through the medieval period and most of the villages will date to this period. Some of the parish boundaries may follow the line of early enclosure or emparking from this period and hedgerows along these boundaries are important historic features in the landscape.

The World War Two airfield located south of Pocklington is a prominent feature in this landscape type. It was opened for military operation in 1941 and closed in 1946. The airfield is used today by the Wolds Gliding Club. There was a landing field at Barmby on the Moor during the First World War approximately one mile to the west of the RAF field. Industrial and commercial development has developed to the southwest side of the runways between them and the A1079 to Hull. The development is isolated from the town of Pocklington and has impacted on the landscape setting of the town.

Agriculture is the dominant land use in the area. Arable cropping is predominant. Fields tend to be medium in size and rectilinear, and several phases of enclosure are evident.

Settlement is scattered through the area with the largest concentration along the A1079 York to Hull Road. A dismantled railway line runs to the north of the A1079 between Market Weighton and Pocklington. The route of the Market Weighton Canal, built in 1772-82 crosses the character type to the south. The canal was important for transportation and drainage.

Market Weighton is a medieval market town that had a corn market. It also became an important centre for the railways in East Yorkshire and had a foundry and a brewery. The oldest buildings are Georgian.

Ecological Influences

Under natural conditions, the fine sandy soils overlying clay would support heathland vegetation; however ploughing has largely destroyed the original morphology. Some isolated patches still remain. Due to the sandy texture and low moisture retention capacity, these soils are susceptible to seasonal drought and removal of hedgerows increases the potential for wind erosion.

There are relatively few trees and areas of woodland giving the character type its openness. Drains and ditches are utilised for land drainage and currently offer little potential for wildlife. However, the estate farmland and parkland at Everingham is well wooded within this character type.

Statutory designations in the area are linked to the Pocklington Canal corridor and Allerthorpe Common.

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View across farmland from Crudhall Lane (2005)

CHARACTER AREAS

Four character areas have been identified in this landscape character type. They are:

Character Area 1A: Shiptonthorpe and Market Weighton Farmland

Character Area 1B: Everingham Estate Farmland and Parkland

Character Area 1C: Newton upon Derwent, Wilberfoss, Allerthorpe and Hayton Farmland

Character Area 1D: Barmby Moor Farmland

Character Area 1A: Market Weighton Farmland

This character area occupies the southern corner of the Vale of York Countryside Character Area and the Flat Open Farmland character type. It is located to the west of Market Weighton and extends around the village of Shiptonthorpe. The area is a mix of flat to very gently undulating land between 5 and 35m AOD.

Fields are generally medium to large in size surrounded by fragmented hedgerows with few trees. There is no significant woodland present except for a small number of plantations around farmsteads.

Market Weighton is located on the eastern edge of the character area at the bottom of the west facing scarp slope of the Yorkshire Wolds. Arras Hill, on the edge of the wolds is not in this area but is the highest point in Market Weighton and evidence suggests there has been human presence.

There is an extensive drainage ditch system throughout the farmland, which is reflected by the associated wetland fauna. Water voles were once common and still survive at some sites and otters are known to use Weighton Beck, whilst

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great crested newt and smooth newt have been recently recorded at Market Weighton.

Kestrels are regularly seen hunting along the verges of the A1079, which support various small mammals. In addition there are several known bat roosts in the vicinity of Market Weighton and Shiptonthorpe, including a pipistrelle roost.

Character Area 1B: Everingham Estate Farmland and Parkland

This character area is distinctive from its neighbours due the amount of tree and woodland cover in comparison to the surrounding farmland and the layout of the tree cover.

Everingham is a small former estate village located approximately 4 miles south of Pocklington and 4 miles west of Market Weighton.

Everingham was the site of a 7th Century convent set up by St Everilda to whom the two churches in the village are dedicated. The estate came into the ownership of the Constable family in the early 16th Century and in 1756 William Haggerstone Constable commissioned John Carr to build Everingham Hall. The surrounding park was laid out in the 1730's on the site of an earlier medieval deer park, with future additions in the 1760's and early 19th century. This work also resulted in the diversion of a road around the park. Much of the 18th and 19th century landscape survives intact giving the area a distinctive character. The village and park are a designated Conservation Area in the East Yorkshire Borough Wide Local Plan.

The broad-leaved woodland contains large, mature trees, which provide a habitat for dead wood invertebrates. This woodland also provides good foraging and roosting habitat for several species of bat: there is at least one known whiskered

bat roost in this area. Birds characteristic of parkland areas like the one at Everingham Estate include nuthatch and hawfinch.

Character Area 1C: Newton upon Derwent, Allerthorpe and Hayton Farmland

The flat to gently undulating arable landscape of this area is centred on the villages of Newton upon Derwent, Wilberfoss, Allerthorpe and Hayton. The A1079 which follows the route of the former Roman road from Brough to York passes across the northern boundary of the character area. A Roman fort was located at Hayton. Evidence of Iron Age and Anglo Saxon activity has also been found at the site.

Allerthorpe was enclosed by agreement in 1640 and the field pattern seen today retains pockets of the original enclosure pattern. Long narrow closes can be seen on the edge of the village demonstrating the reverse 's' shape that is often seen with early enclosure and it is the pattern that has resulted from enclosing open field furlongs and strips.

Pocklington Canal is an important feature in this area and Canal Head is an attractive area that is well used by the public.

Despite apparently suitable habitat, targeted surveys have not revealed the presence of water vole. American mink, however, has been recorded. This introduced mammal is known to prey on water vole and may be partly to blame for its absence. The otter frequents Bielby Beck and other waterways.

There are several identified bat roosts in this area, whilst common pipistrelle and noctule bats have been observed foraging around Burnby Hall Gardens in Pocklington.

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There are scattered blocks of woodland throughout this area. The main one being at Allerthorpe Common: an extensive area of coniferous plantation on land that was formerly heathland. A small area of heathland still survives, composed of heather, cross-leaved heath, cotton grass and purple moor grass. Some isolated patches of heathland still remain, however, such as that at Allerthorpe Common.

Although the area of heathland at Allerthorpe Common is relatively small, it supports healthy populations of adder, common lizard and various invertebrates. Nightjar, whinchat and tree pipit are known breed in this area, whilst otter has been recorded using the beck that runs through the nearby village of Wilberfoss. Blackfoss Beck and Sails Beck run from north to south through the area and drain into Pocklington Beck. These two small water courses meander through the intensive arable landscape and provide some variation in field pattern.

Character Area 1D: Barmby Moor Farmland

This area is largely arable but includes areas of commercial development to the south of the A1079 and at the airfield south of Pocklington. There are few small rectilinear blocks of woodland scattered across the area. The village of Barmby Moor to the west of Pocklington probably originated as a Scandinavian settlement. There is a medieval moated site in the centre of the village. The church was largely rebuilt in the early 1850s but the 15th century tower and stone spire were retained. Enclosure of open fields and common land largely took place in the late 18th century and that field pattern remains today. However, there is an area of rectilinear Roman fields, now visible only as a crop mark, designated as a scheduled monument west of the village. Overall fields are medium in size and this reflects the scale of the landscape.

Several minor roads run through the area and there is a relatively high density of scattered development.



Arable field on the southern edge of Pocklington (2005)

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EVALUATION

Positive Landscape Features

- Everingham Parkland is a distinctive designed landscape within this landscape type.
- Small water courses provide some variation in the rectilinear field pattern.
- Hedgerow field boundaries highlighting the regular field pattern with occasional deviations where natural watercourses introduce more organic lines.
- Areas of early enclosure field pattern around villages
- Allerthorpe Common is an important feature of considerable size providing an element of diversity to the area.
- Trees and woodland, where present are important landscape features contributing to ecological value as well as visual amenity.

Condition and Strength of Character

This is a fragmented landscape that includes areas where key characteristics such as hedgerow boundaries, field pattern and tree cover remain intact. These areas include the parkland and estate farmland around Everingham. In contrast there are areas where key characteristics are in poor condition e.g. gappy hedgerows and lack of hedgerows weaken landscape pattern, and significant detractors have been introduced. For example the industrial development on the south edge of Pocklington has encroached into the countryside and large scale agricultural buildings are scattered across the open landscape.

The Market Weighton Bypass and general improvements to the A1079 have impacted on the rural character of the landscape. Hedgerows have been lost and fields have become larger.

In addition to the large scale building detractors in the landscape include electricity pylons and communications masts. These vertical elements affect openness.

Quality

The quality of the landscape is affected by its condition. The area does retain its strong rural character in places in particular character Area 1D between the A1079 and the Pocklington Canal retains a relatively remote character due to the lack of roads and villages.

Field size, settlement pattern and tree cover contribute to the medium scale of this landscape where long distance views are intermittent and there is an element of enclosure where tree cover is greater and hedgerows have been allowed to grow tall.

Some areas in the landscape character type could be considered high quality e.g. Everingham Parkland. However, even here elements of the parkland character have been lost. Overall the quality of the landscape in this area is assessed to be ordinary.

Forces for Change

Intensive agricultural production has shaped the landscape we see today. Large scale agricultural buildings that can be seen throughout the area detract from rural character.

Continued pressures on the agricultural industry are likely to result in changing land management practices that will impact on landscape character in time. Diversification may be the key force for change away from the edge of the larger towns.

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The development of facilities such as the water park near Allerthorpe that is intended to become a water sports venue introduce formal recreation activities to the rural landscape. This is also likely to increase traffic on minor roads in rural areas. There are other recreation/tourism developments in the area such as log cabins and caravan sites.

The development of employment sites and mixed use sites on the south side of Pocklington adjacent to the airfield and on the opposite side of the A1079 is altering the rural character of the area and cumulative impact is an issue to consider.

Renewable energy targets are likely to result in pressure for development of Wind farms. Other renewable energy schemes may also be promoted in the area such as coppicing for biomass production in the future.

Sensitivity and Capacity

The existing landscape character of the area is already influenced by the development of commercial activity south of Pocklington and Barmby Moor. There is also a considerable amount of agricultural development in this working landscape. The cumulative impact of agricultural development in the rural areas away from the towns of Market Weighton and Pocklington and the village of Wilberfoss has impacted upon the rural character of the landscape and the condition of the landscape.

Fragmentation as a result of loss of hedgerows and enlarging fields and the introduction of large scale agricultural buildings that do not reflect vernacular has served to reduce the sensitivity of the landscape to change.

However, the open rural character of the area remains dominant and new built development or changes in management practices would result in landscape change. The capacity of this medium scale landscape type to accept large scale built commercial development outside existing development limits without detriment to landscape character is low.

There are a variety of potential renewable energy developments including biomass production and wind turbines. A small number of low key, small scale developments may not result in detrimental change to landscape character. Larger scale developments will inevitably impact upon the open character of the landscape. The introduction of wind turbines in this character type may affect views as well as introduce uncharacteristic features. However, the ordinary landscape quality reduces that sensitivity and small scale wind farm development (less than 10 turbines) may offer the opportunity to improve the condition of key characteristics in some locations.

Recreation development in the countryside comes in various forms. There is potential to enhance landscape character but equally the potential exists to detract from landscape character and lose key landscape characteristics and features. The cumulative impact of these developments may also impact on landscape character. However, with appropriate mitigation and scale of development the landscape does have the capacity to accommodate moderate scale development that avoids impacting on key characteristics and takes the opportunity to enhance character by reintroducing key characteristics such as native hedgerows and heathland.

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Strategy

The strategy for this landscape type is to enhance landscape character. This would involve strengthening the presence of key positive features and reintroducing distinctive characteristics where they have been lost.

Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are important features that reinforce characteristic field patterns. The planting of hedgerows on field boundaries where they have been lost and the gapping up of existing hedgerows to reinforce the landscape pattern is recommended. The dominant hedgerow species is hawthorn. Other species include Blackthorn and Field maple. A survey of important hedgerows in the area concentrating on those following parish boundaries or other historic boundaries would help to identify boundary hedges that contribute to the historic character of the landscape.

Woodland provides visual diversity, habitat and can help to screen detractors in the landscape. New woodland planting should be promoted throughout the area and especially around new development to help integrate the development with the landscape. Birch, hawthorn, oak and ash are found in the area. Willow is present in the wetter areas.

New agricultural development should only be permitted where its location and design are such that the development is not prominent in the open landscape. Mitigation measures should include woodland, tree and hedgerow planting. The characteristic openness of the landscape character type and views of the Wolds and key features such as village churches should be protected.

New industrial development in this character type would further impact on landscape character. Where new development is permitted mitigation measures should include woodland structure planting that respects the scale of the

development in its landscape context i.e. larger buildings would require larger scale planting schemes to successfully integrate the development with the surrounding landscape.

Development may result in the amalgamation of farmsteads visually and increase their prominence in the landscape. It is recommended that new development respect the openness of the landscape and the rural setting of Pocklington and neighbouring villages.

Historic features are not immediately evident but landscape pattern, particularly field and drainage pattern has developed over time and contribute to the evidence of past activity in the area. Landscape pattern should be retained and wherever possible reintroduced to provide a future visible resource of the history of the area. Avoid the amalgamation of fields. Where new development is permitted its design should respect landscape pattern.

Renewable energy development such as wind farms should only be permitted where their location, scale and layout respects landscape pattern and key views into and out of the area.

New recreation developments in open countryside impact on landscape character introducing structures and features that have urban characteristics and do not respect landscape pattern. Proposals for recreation and tourism schemes in the countryside should seek to reflect local character through appropriate use of materials, design and layout to respect local architecture and landscape pattern, and incorporate measures such as tree and woodland planting. Opportunities to restore areas of heathland may be appropriate to this type of development.