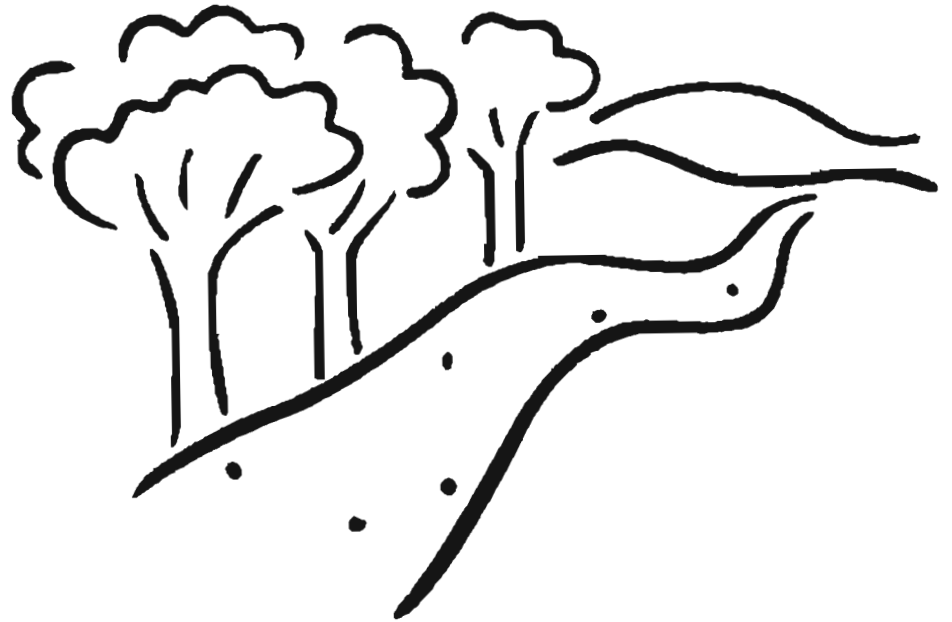


WEST LINDSEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



West Lindsey District Council

West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment

August 1999

Environmental Resources Management

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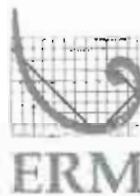
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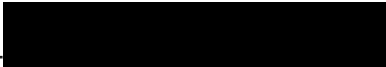
West Lindsey District Council

West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment

August 1999

Reference 5996

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For and on behalf of Environmental Resources Management
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FOREWORD

The West Lindsey Landscape Assessment

In February 1999, West Lindsey District Council appointed Environmental Resources Management (ERM) to carry out a landscape assessment of West Lindsey District. The District Council was seeking to advance its knowledge and understanding of issues relating to local landscape character and quality and the study was intended to support the forthcoming review of the West Lindsey Local Plan.

The brief for the study required a detailed assessment of the special character, distinctiveness and qualities of the landscape of West Lindsey District in order to provide a framework for planning and policy development within the area. The landscape assessment was to incorporate landscape guidelines to assist the decision-making of landowners, managers and farmers and to identify priorities for action. In addition to the landscape assessment, ERM was asked to prepare a *Countryside Design Summary* (CDS) which shows how necessary development can be accommodated in ways which protect local character and distinctiveness.

This report presents the findings of the landscape assessment. The CDS is a separate, related document, which forms the basis for the production of Supplementary Planning Guidance.

1.1.1

Structure of the Report

The landscape patterns that we see today have evolved gradually over thousands of years, through both natural and human forces. Section 1 describes the principal forces that have shaped the landscape of West Lindsey. Important and distinctive geological, cultural and habitat features are highlighted, and their distribution is described.

This sets the scene for *Section 2*, which reviews variations in landscape character across the region, drawing attention to those characteristics and features that are particularly distinctive. The descriptions of landscape character incorporate guidelines for landscape management and for accommodating new development which are tailored to reflect the specific characteristics of each landscape character area.

Today, landscape change continues to be necessary, but it should not be allowed to erode landscape patterns or local identity. By recognising landscape character, new land uses or development can often be accommodated successfully. Indeed change may provide opportunities to reinforce or enhance the landscape for the benefit of future generations. *Section 3* of this report reviews the scale, pace and landscape implications of development and land use change across West Lindsey. It presents broad guidance for accommodating different forms of change within the landscape.

The key to accommodating landscape change successfully is to understand landscape scale and character; appreciate geology, habitats, field and settlement patterns; and respect local materials and building styles.

The final section of this report, *Section 4*, outlines the key issues that face West Lindsey's landscapes today, and suggests a strategic approach to their conservation and enhancement. The first steps are to recognise the value of 'ordinary landscapes', and to understand the evolving patterns of land use and landscape character. The *West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment* is an invaluable tool, for use by the relevant government departments and agencies, district council officers and members, community groups, individual land owners and land managers, public and private sector developers and their professional advisers, and all those involved in the development or management of land.

Among the key issues to be addressed are the loss of distinctive landscape settings to settlements, the erosion of traditional rural landscape patterns and features and the impact of large agricultural buildings in the rural landscape. There are also more subtle, insidious threats, such as damage to the settings of historic features, and loss of areas of semi-natural habitat. Priority actions are put forward for tackling each of these issues.

To sum up, the *West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment* is intended to lay the foundation for common policies and action on landscape issues. It is a tool for creative conservation and landscape enhancement; and it can help to identify opportunities for robust and attractive new development. The landscape is a unique and valuable asset, but one that is very vulnerable to ill-considered change. Action now to recognise landscape character in planning for development and change will enable that change to be positive, creative and effective.

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GLOSSARY

1.1

THE LIE OF THE LAND

The consistent north-south grain of the West Lindsey landscape is one of its most striking characteristics (*Figure 1*). The broad valleys of the Trent and the Ancholme/Barlings Eau are subdivided by a narrow limestone ridge, known locally as the 'Cliff'. This is the northern part of an upland spine which extends from the Humber to Stamford. The ridge is relatively narrow (5km) and low (77m OD) in West Lindsey in comparison to the Kesteven Uplands to the south, but it is nevertheless a significant local feature, with a west facing scarp and a shallow eastern dip slope which falls gently to the Lincoln Clay Vale.

The Lincoln Clay Vale is drained by the River Ancholme, which flows northwards to the Humber Estuary, and the Barlings Eau, which flows southwards to join the River Witham and the Wash. The vale has predominantly heavy clay soils, but local variations in the solid and drift geology have a marked influence on landscape character, with low hillocks of boulder till forming shallow 'islands' on the flat alluvial land.

The steep, fluted chalk escarpment of the Lincolnshire Wolds dominates the eastern vale. The escarpment is particularly pronounced in West Lindsey and reaches its highest point at Normanby Top (168m). The indented escarpment slope is a backdrop for views across the eastern part of the district and the undulating crest offers commanding panoramic views to the north and west. The dip slope of the Wolds is dissected by the intimate, winding valley systems of Laceby Beck and Waithe Beck; their lush, domestic character contrasting with the open, sweep of the arable 'tops'.

1.2

ORIGIN AND FORM OF THE UNDERLYING ROCKS

The character of West Lindsey's landscape is derived from the underlying skeleton of rock. Operating over millions of years, the twin processes of erosion and deposition have evolved a unique topographic form which has, in turn, influenced the pattern and distribution of soils, landcover and human activity.

In North Lincolnshire the most influential sequence of change began 65 million years ago at the end of the Cretaceous period and the accumulation of a shallow dome of chalk, which covered much of Britain. Movement of the earth's crust tilted the rocks and led to the formation of rivers which flowed eastwards across the sequence of rock strata. Tributary streams developed on the softer clays, leaving the more resistant limestones, ironstones, sandstones and chalk as upstanding ridges, with steep west facing scarps. At this stage, the drainage pattern was dominated by east flowing rivers, which removed substantial amounts of chalk. Gradually, the rock surfaces were eroded until,

only one million years ago, a flat peneplain was formed at almost the same level as the sea.

During the late Pleistocene, earth movements caused the gradual regression of the sea. This occurred in marked stages and the resulting marine platforms are still evident in parts of the Wolds and at Burton Cliff on the margins of the Trent Valley. Each stage of regression would cause renewed erosion by streams, accentuating the form of the emerging scarp and vale topography.

1.3

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ICE AGE

The present day form of the land, its cover of soils and the pattern of drainage is the result of the formation and movement of the ice sheets which developed around 200,000-150,000 years ago. Ice moved across northern Lincolnshire in a southerly direction and at the peak of glaciation, covered all but the highest summits of the Wolds. The erosive action of the ice sheets was particularly effective in the softer clays of the Trent valley and Lincoln Clay Vale, which were over-deepened by the ice. The ice also moulded and smoothed the form of the Lincoln Cliff and northern Wolds escarpment.

The ice age included several episodes of glaciation, interspersed with warmer inter-glacial periods in which meltwater streams incised new drainage patterns and the seawater rose.

The final period of glaciation, which lasted over 100,000 years, led to the plugging of the Humber and the wash with a combination of ice and boulder till. This in turn caused the impounding of a massive glacial lake in the Fens, central Lincolnshire and the lower Trent valley. As the lake dried out, glacial sands were blown eastwards from central England across north Lincolnshire and accumulated against the Lincoln Cliff (at Scotton Common) and the Wolds escarpment between Caistor and Market Rasen. These windblown 'coversands' probably originated from sandstones to the west of the Trent and were easily blown across the unvegetated frozen landscape. The coversands added to the complex pattern of meltwater deposition in the Lincoln Clay Vale, where boulder till, clay, gravels and alluvium formed an uneven covering.

As the ice began to melt in the Wolds, a complex pattern of lakes and spillways developed on the fringes of the ice sheets. Meltwater was often forced to escape across valley divides into adjacent catchments when it became blocked and ponded by ice. The deeply fretted coombes in the chalk escarpment near Caistor were formed during this period by the rush of meltwater from ice sheets in the eastern Wolds.

1.4

THE GEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 2 shows a simplified solid and drift geology of West Lindsey.

Figure 1 Physical Features

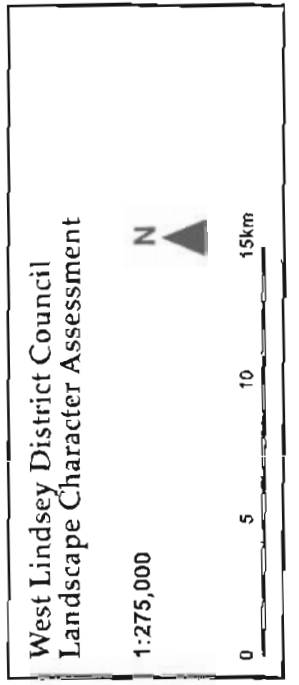
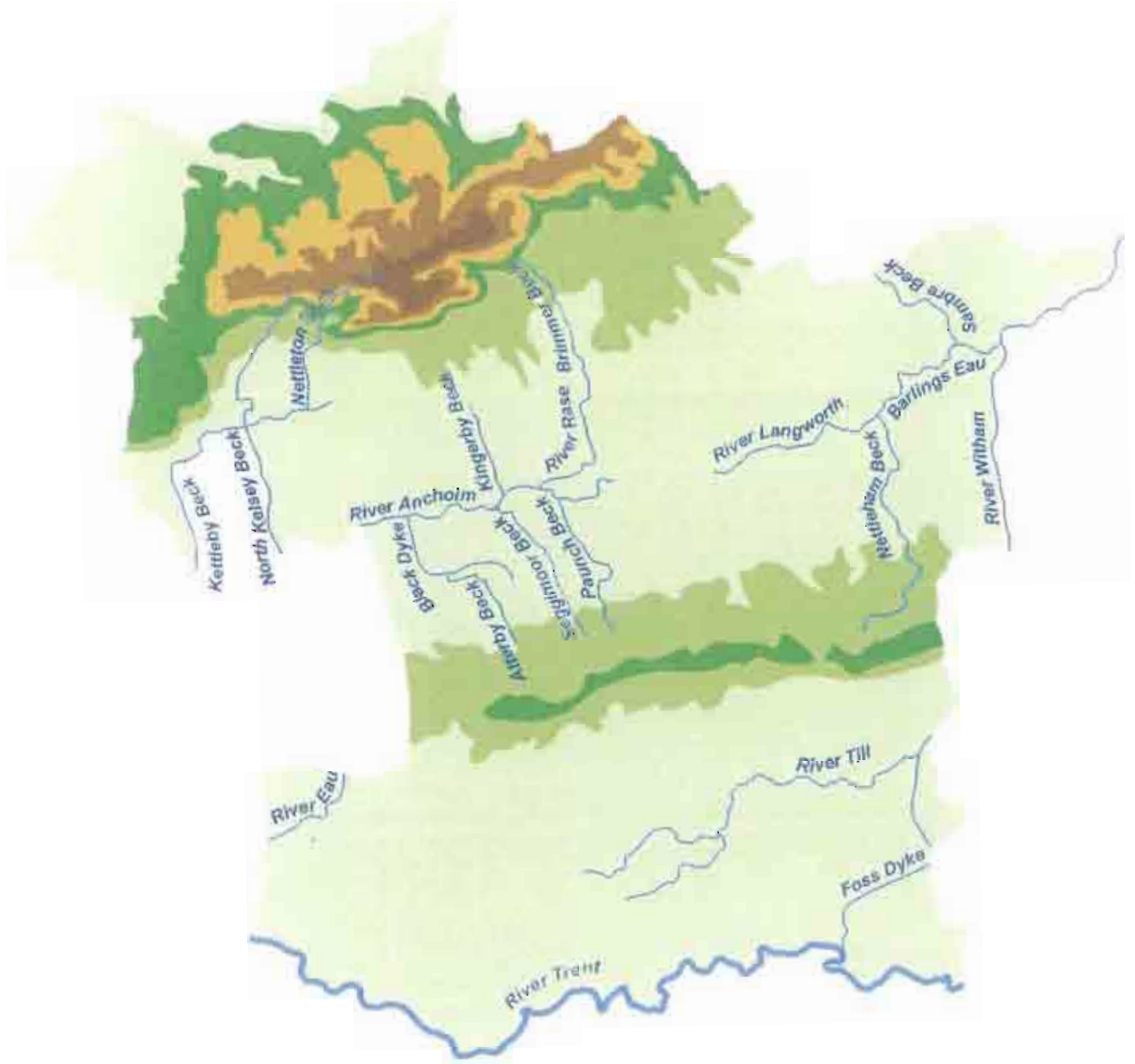
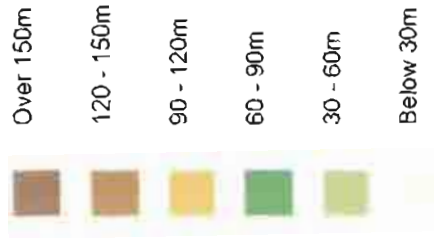
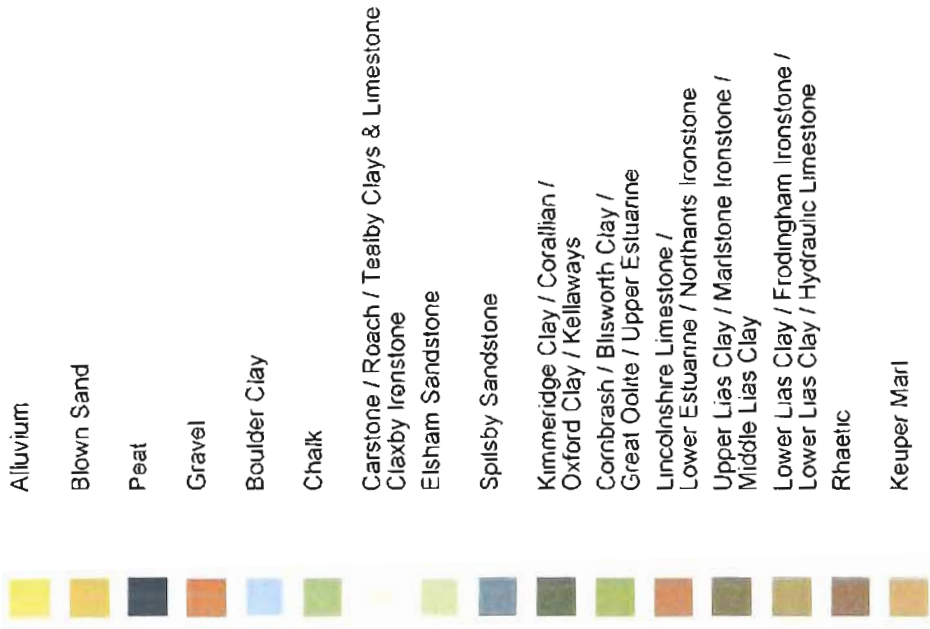


Figure 2 Simplified Geology



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Landscape Character Assessment

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Working across the district from west to east, the River Trent flows within a broad alluvial valley. A series of shallow hills, formed by the more resistant Hydraulic Limestone in the Lower Lias, are flanked by deposits of coversands. These are particularly extensive at Laughton and Scotton, where the acidic, sandy heaths are partially forested. The higher terrain on the fringes of Gainsborough is the result of outcrops of the more resistant gypsum within the rock strata. The broad, gently rolling vale between the Trent and the Lincoln Cliff is drained by the River Eau to the north and the River Till to the south. The area is covered by heavy Boulder Clay, with pockets of coversands, although areas of drift-free Lias on the eastern margins of the vale are the favoured site of a line of small spring line villages at the foot of the Lincoln Cliff scarp at the junction of the Lias and associated permeable rocks.

Capped by Lincolnshire Limestone, the Lincoln Cliff extends north-south across the centre of the district. The gentle, rolling dip slopes comprise a sequence of Jurassic clays which become overlain by the drift deposits of alluvium, boulder clays, coversands and gravels in the Lincoln Clay Vale. In the northern part of the vale, the River Ancholme has particularly extensive alluvial deposits, a result of overdeepening and subsequent deposition following changes in sea level at the end of the Ice Age. The stony Boulder Clay has capped hummocks of clay in parts of the north east vale to form low hills on which the villages of Kingerby and the Kelseys are sited. Again afforestation gives some areas of coversands prominence in the wider landscape.

To the east, the chalk landscapes of the Lincolnshire Wolds are dominant. Although chalk caps the hills, the underlying strata of ironstones and sandstones are revealed at the escarpment and on the floor of the deeper valleys. The exposure of many thin layers of bedrock makes the scarp face relatively unstable and there are numerous minor landslips. Boulder Clay also forms superficial deposits in some valleys.

1.5

HUMAN INFLUENCES

The ice finally melted away around 12,000 years ago leaving a tundra-like landscape. As temperatures increased, first pine, then elm, oak and the small-leaved lime became the dominant species. The heavy clay lands supported dense forest, while upland areas were open heath, with a few trees.

Mesolithic and subsequently Neolithic settlers are thought to have preferred the drier, relatively open sites of the Lincoln Cliff, the coversands and the southern Wolds. The process of woodland clearance was begun by the Neolithic farmers and continued by Bronze Age settlers, who probably occupied all but the heavy clay lands. Cropmark evidence of ditched and linear boundaries shows a concentration of sites close to the north Lincoln Cliff (at Blyborough, Willoughton, Hemswell and Grayingham). These are not defensive sites and the boundaries are thought to have been constructed to maintain some spatial and social organisation within kinship groups. There

is also evidence of prehistoric activity in the coversands parishes of Scotton, Holton le Moor, Claxby and Caistor.

There is evidence of Roman occupation in most West Lindsey parishes, from the elaborate villa sites such as Kirmond le Mire on the Wolds and Sturton by Stow in the clay vale, to the many smaller farmstead sites on coversand areas such as Blyton, along the Trent as at Marton, or within the clay vales at Lea and Linwood. Lincoln was a fortified city with a population of about 5,000, linked by Ermine Street and the Fosse Way to other major settlements across Britain and Caistor was a significant walled town. Ermine Street follows the crest of the Lincoln Cliff on a direct line to the Humber crossing. The area was relatively well-connected in Roman times; Tillbridge Lane links Lincoln with the Trent crossing at Littleborough and the Fosse Way extended beyond Lincoln to the Wolds and a ferry across the Wash.

The main evidence for the Anglo Saxon settlement of West Lindsey comes from their pagan cemeteries, which were concentrated on the drier lands of the Lincoln Cliff, the coversands and the Wolds escarpment. The sites contain urns and often examples of metalwork. The settlers were farmers, who sought cultivable lands and a water supply. Again the Lincoln Cliff, with its loamy soils and springs was a favoured area. Patterns of woodland clearance during this period had a lasting influence and is often reflected in the present day parish boundaries. Along the Lincoln Cliff, where belts of different soils run parallel to the ridge, the clearings formed oblong blocks at right angles to the cliff, whereas on the more homogeneous clays of the Vale, clearings were a more irregular, circular shape.

By the 12th century, most parishes contained a number of agricultural townships, which were laid out to provide access to a range of resources. However there was a complex pattern of land administration; many settlements show no evidence of townships and some townships retained an interest in larger areas of common land, such as Scotton Common, Caistor Moor and a meadow known as Lissingleys. Most settlements lay within well defined parcels of land which were usually farmed by the inhabitants as a single unit. Once created, the townships appear to have resisted further change and the boundaries are traceable in the landscape today. Many townships were grouped into ecclesiastical parishes and formed parts of landed estates. Within the townships, settlements were concentrated on river edge, scarp foot, spring line and clay edge locations, although some seem more arbitrary; Otby and Risby are on unstable parts of the Wolds scarp and Tealby Thorpe has at least part of its main street located in a stream. There is also evidence of farmsteads and tiny hamlets, as well as nucleated villages.

Villages such as Riseholme and Buslingthorpe had a planned, gridlike layout, possibly a result of consolidation and the influence of manorial power in Medieval times. The church and the manor were the most important buildings, often with a close physical relationship. At Buslingthorpe and Wickenby, the church lay within a defined manorial enclosure which also contained fishponds, water-mills and various other features. Many of the manors in the clay vale had moated sites, as at Linwood and Kingerby. The

heavy lands of the river valleys were also used for deer parks, for instance, the Trent valley had parks at Gainsborough, Kettlethorpe and Stow.

The late medieval period was generally one of settlement shrinkage, although this was not universal, for instance Spridlington and Harpswell appear to have grown at this time. Everson ⁽¹⁾ suggests that the 13th century decline may have been the large-scale acquisition of land by monastic houses in West Lindsey and a subsequent development of sheep farming. The Black Death was also extremely influential and villages such as Swallow, Croxby and Owersby were apparently almost completely depopulated.

The 16th and 17th centuries were also a time of population decline in rural areas. There was a general migration to towns, conversion from arable to pasture and a rationalisation of agricultural holdings. The process was overseen by a number of acquisitive land-owning families, such as the Tyrwhitts at Kettleby and the Monsons at South Carlton. Some villages went through a large-scale reorganisation or even redevelopment at the instigation of their lords.

The basis of the local economy was pastoral farming and there was piecemeal enclosure of common land, particularly on the heavy land of the river valleys. Nevertheless, most areas retained substantial areas of common land. During the late 18th century, the enclosure movement transformed the open fields and commons into compact, neat farms with small, hedged fields. In some areas there was an increase in arable farming, although the region was still noted for its stock. A number of new roads across the Till Vale and the Lincolnshire Clay Vale, which were built after the enclosures, have acute right-angled bends as they were forced to twist around the new boundaries. These 'enclosure' roads often retain their wide verges, which were let by the parish for grazing and which allowed carts to pass, avoiding the inevitable muddy ruts during wet weather. The impact of the new canals and railways came later. Initially the Fossdyke linked Lincoln to the Midlands and the north via the Trent, but parts of the Ancholme and Witham were also made navigable. The Trent carried a great deal of trade and Gainsborough became a major port. The railways were also influential and their success led to the decline of the minor canals. They opened up the rural areas, easing the passage of goods and passengers and making distances seem shorter. The railways fostered urban growth, while also supplying fertilisers, agricultural machinery and trade.

The landscape pattern established in the nineteenth century has persisted long into the twentieth, although the two World Wars had a significant impact on the landscapes of West Lindsey. The first air bases in the district were established when 33 Sqdn. set up headquarters at Gainsborough and developed airfields at Brattleby, Cockthorne, Blyborough, Harpswell (later to become Hemswell) and Scampton. The latter became the Royal Flying Corps training station. The aerodromes were disbanded after the First World War

(1) *Change and Continuity: Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, P.J. Everson, CCTaylor and C.J. Dunn, 1991 London, HMSO

and the areas returned to agriculture. However, the lead up to 1939 saw the re-opening of Scampton and Hemswell, as well as a new station on the Wolds at Binbrook. By the end of the war there were 12 airfields in West Lindsey. They remain a major influence on the landscapes on the limestone dip slopes and the adjacent clay vales.

1.6 THE LANDSCAPE TODAY

1.6.1 *Archaeology & Heritage*

The recent National Mapping Programme and survey work by the Royal Commission has provided a wealth of valuable data. Analysis of the recent aerial survey data has raised new research questions and opportunities for comparative study. Over the years, intensive agricultural production has erased many obvious traces of settlement, making the remaining sites all the more important. Current pressures for landscape change which may continue to threaten important (and as yet undiscovered) archaeological sites are covered in *Section 3*.

The Royal Commission's work on medieval settlements in West Lindsey has shed new light on many aspects of settlement and land use ^{OP CU}. In particular it demonstrates the importance of change in the landscape and the complexity of many of the issues. The introduction to the Commission's report lists the sites considered most worthy of preservation in 1991. They include settlement remains, moated sites, abbey sites, fishponds, deserted village sites and deer parks. Lincolnshire's light arable land and relatively low rainfall make it an ideal location for cropmarks and those in West Lindsey provide examples of settlements from the Bronze Age to the Roman and medieval periods. Often the cropmarks represent a palimpsest of traces from different phases of settlement activity. With each shift in the regional economy, traces of previous activity have been left behind. Often they are erased by subsequent settlement, but patterns of past land use have frequently formed a framework for future development. Today it is possible to 'read' the layers of history in the landscape. It contains a plethora of ancient landscape patterns, archaeological sites and historic settlements which provide a fascinating glimpse into the past, as well as a framework to guide future change.

There is little value in ranking the district's sites in any way in a study of this kind. Together they contribute to the distinctiveness of the local landscape and our understanding of landscape character.

1.6.2 *Ecology*

While much of West Lindsey is dominated by arable farmland, with a relatively low level of ecological interest, there remain some valuable heathland, grassland, wetland and woodland habitats.

The coversands of Scotton Common in the north west corner of the district support brecklands of exceptional quality. This is the best area of heathland

in Lincolnshire from an ecological point of view. A nature reserve is being actively managed by the Lincolnshire Trust for Nature Conservation and an adjacent area within Laughton Forest is being restored by Forest Enterprise for the Forestry Commission. The area already has 40 pairs of breeding nightjars. As the forest is cleared, the draw down of water is reduced and the area of valuable wet heath is expanding. The coversands in the Market Rasen area remain extensively forested and there is less opportunity for heathland restoration. However the racecourse and golf course have important habitats and there is a heathland nature reserve at Linwood Warren.

To the south, the eastern fringes of Gainsborough include a number of semi-natural (and a very few ancient) birch oak woodlands on the fringes of the area with acidic heathland soils.

Lea Marsh, on the immediate margins of the Trent, is an extensive area of wet meadow which is regularly flooded. The majority of the area is heavily grazed, but it is a crucially important habitat for breeding waders such as curlew and redshank. A small meadow in the centre of the Marsh is an SSSI with a valuable wet meadow flora. The riverside landscapes elsewhere in the district are less valuable as the river channels have been extensively canalised and land drainage controlled. However, valuable ancient clay meadows have survived at Kingerby Beck and Pickerings Meadow.

The most important grassland habitats are found on the chalk escarpment. The Wolds are unusual in that there are acidic and calcareous grasslands in close juxtaposition. The area has the best concentration of acid grassland in Lincolnshire, much of which has been managed through the Countryside Stewardship scheme. There are also some valuable small chalk grassland sites, for instance at the Binbrook airfield and Swallow Wold.

Limestone grassland sites are rare, but there is a small pocket of managed grassland at Broomhill caravan park and some of the wide verges of enclosure roads on the limestone dip slope harbour valuable limestone grassland flora.

The southeast corner of the district is renowned for its ancient lime woods. The area is now a national nature reserve and is thought to represent the best lime dominated woods in England. The woods have a long history of management and the species composition (lime, ash, wayfaring tree) has hardly changed over the past 300 years.

Ancient habitats, particularly those managed in traditional, sustainable ways, remain exceptionally rich in wildlife diversity. But many remnant pieces of land which are simply marginal to current land use requirements are also ecologically valuable. They include the wide roadside verges of the Wolds enclosure roads, regenerating scrub on disused industrial sites, patches of marsh in fields with gleyed soils and even field drainage ditches. All are becoming rarer and more valuable as they are progressively fragmented by modern agriculture, infrastructure and built development, yet all contribute to the rich diversity and unique character of West Lindsey's landscape heritage.

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The United Kingdom is renowned for the diversity of its landscapes and West Lindsey is no exception. A 30 minute drive across the district from Gainsborough reveals a sequence of distinct contrasts in landscape character, from the woodlands and hedgerows of the Trent valley to the expansive, rolling arable landscapes of the Till Vale and the abrupt escarpment of the 'Cliff'. Further east there is a gentle transition from the smooth, rolling limestone dip slope to the flatter landscape of the Clay Vale, where a subtle pattern of small woodlands and hedgerow trees filter the long views. A band of heathy coversands borders the dramatic Wolds' escarpment, where there are striking contrasts in landscape character between the hummocky grasslands of the scarp slopes and the smooth, rolling farmland on the dip slope of the chalk.

This section explores variations in West Lindsey's landscape character in more detail. The predominant influence is the underlying geological structure, which has determined the development of landforms and soils. Centuries of settlements and land management have also played a part, so that man-made features, such as villages, fields, tracks and dykes add an extra dimension to the landscape pattern.

This is a relatively expansive landscape characterised by long views and dramatic skies. Features such as Lincoln Cathedral, the Humber Bridge, the Stenigot and Benniworth masts, Grimsby Dock Tower and the Trent Valley power stations are focal points in long distance views throughout the district. On a local scale, parish churches are often memorable landmarks. Buildings, trees and ridges, which appear in silhouette against the sky always have a striking impact and many villages have a specific, memorable outline.

In simple terms, West Lindsey can be divided into four *Broad Landscape Character Areas*, which generally reflect the character areas of the Countryside Agency's *Countryside Character Map* and English Nature's *Natural Areas*. The broad divisions between the *Trent Valley*, the *Lincolnshire Cliff*, the *Lincolnshire Clay Vale* and *The Wolds* are shown on *Figure 3*. These *Broad Landscape Character Areas* reflect the principal contrasts in scale, geology, relief, landcover and settlement pattern but they represent a highly simplified view.

The landscape assessment provides a more detailed review. It identifies the 14 different *Landscape Character Areas* which are shown on *Figure 4*. A glance back at the simplified geology map in the previous section (*Figure 2*) will highlight the strong relationship between landscape character and the underlying structure of solid and drift geology. Together, the landscape character areas provide a new descriptive map of the district which draws attention to the contrasts in landscape character which we so often take for granted.

The following Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are identified:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Laughton Woods | 8. Lincolnshire Lime Woods |
| 2. Trent Valley | 9. Lincolnshire Clay Vale |
| 3. The Till Vale | 10. The Kelseys |
| 4. The Cliff | 11. Heathland Belt |
| 5. Limestone Dip Slope | 12. North West Wolds Escarpment |
| 6. Lincoln Fringe | 13. Lincolnshire Wolds |
| 7. Fenland | 14. Wolds' Estates |

A more detailed map, which shows the boundaries of the *Landscape Character Areas* at 1:50,000, accompanies this report. In some places the boundaries between different *Character Areas* follow precise natural 'visual edges' in the landscape, but it is more usual for them to represent a transition from one type of landscape character to the next. Areas close to these boundaries may therefore display some typical characteristics from each of the adjoining landscapes.

The assessment recognises and aims to build on the inherent character of West Lindsey's landscapes. It is important that it provides a means to analyse the relative vulnerability of the different landscape elements, features and patterns which contribute to landscape character. The written notes for each *Landscape Character Area* therefore include:

- *a description of landscape character* - recording the key visual characteristics and qualities of the landscape, including its scale, the degree of enclosure, the diversity and form of patterns made by fields, woods and settlements and the balance and proportion of the different landscape elements within typical views;
- *an analysis of its sensitivity to change* - taking account of the degree of enclosure and definition of landscape pattern, landscape condition and context and special scenic, historical, archaeological or nature conservation interests.

The study assesses the character of *all* the district's landscapes, not just areas which are considered to be of high quality. However, the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), in the north east part of the district, is a nationally important landscape, recognised for its outstanding scenery, as well as for its cultural, historic and nature conservation value. The AONB landscape merits careful protection and conservation and is the subject of a separate landscape assessment. ⁽¹⁾ The boundaries of the landscape character areas in the district landscape assessment broadly accord with those identified in the Lincolnshire Wolds assessment.

The landscape descriptions are the starting point for policies and guidelines for the future conservation, management, restoration and enhancement of the landscape. They provide a point of reference and context for designing new landscapes to accommodate change, ensuring that future change has a

(1) Countryside Commission (1993), *The Lincolnshire Wolds Landscape* CCP 414.

Figure 3 Broad Landscape Character Areas

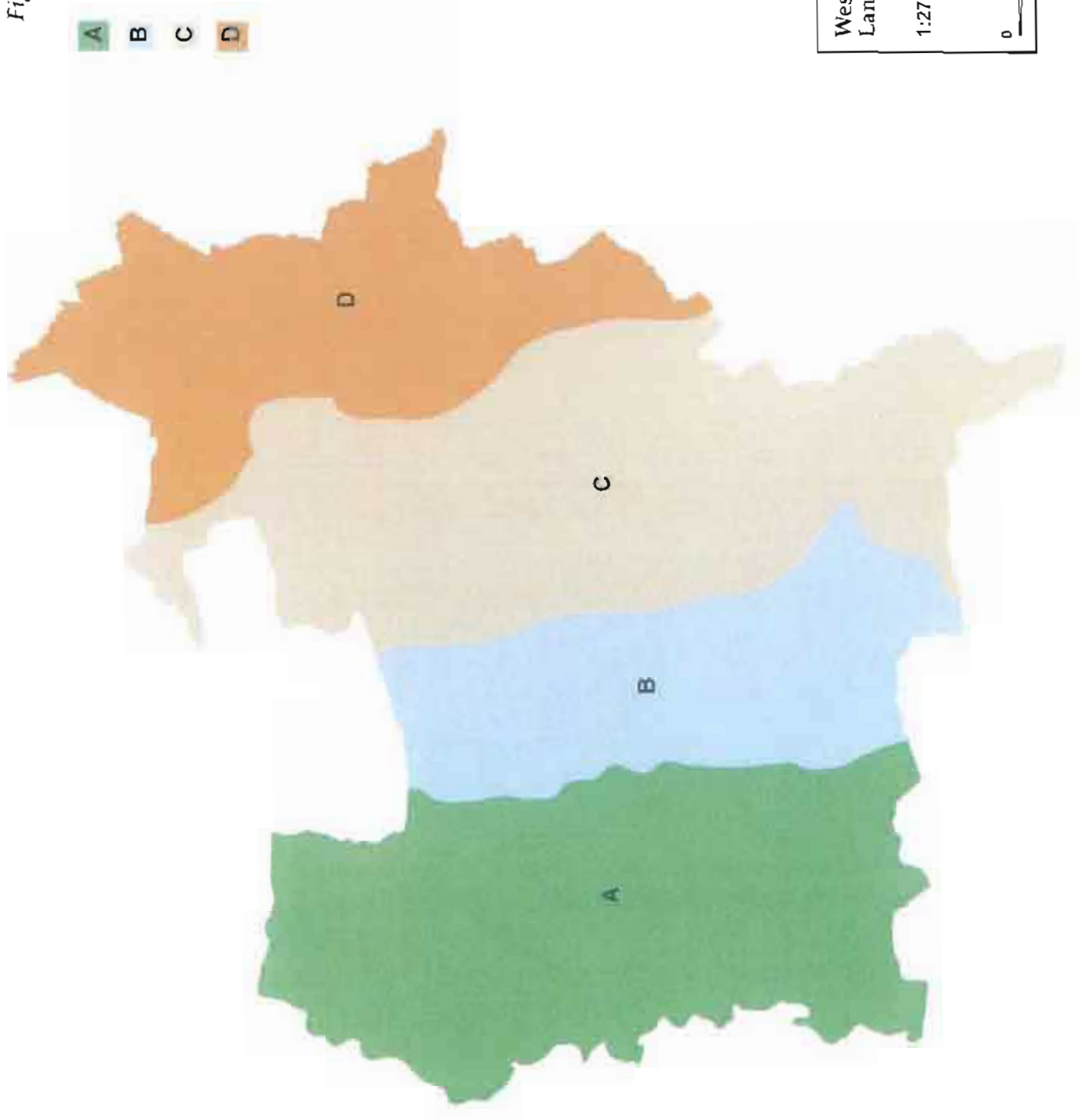
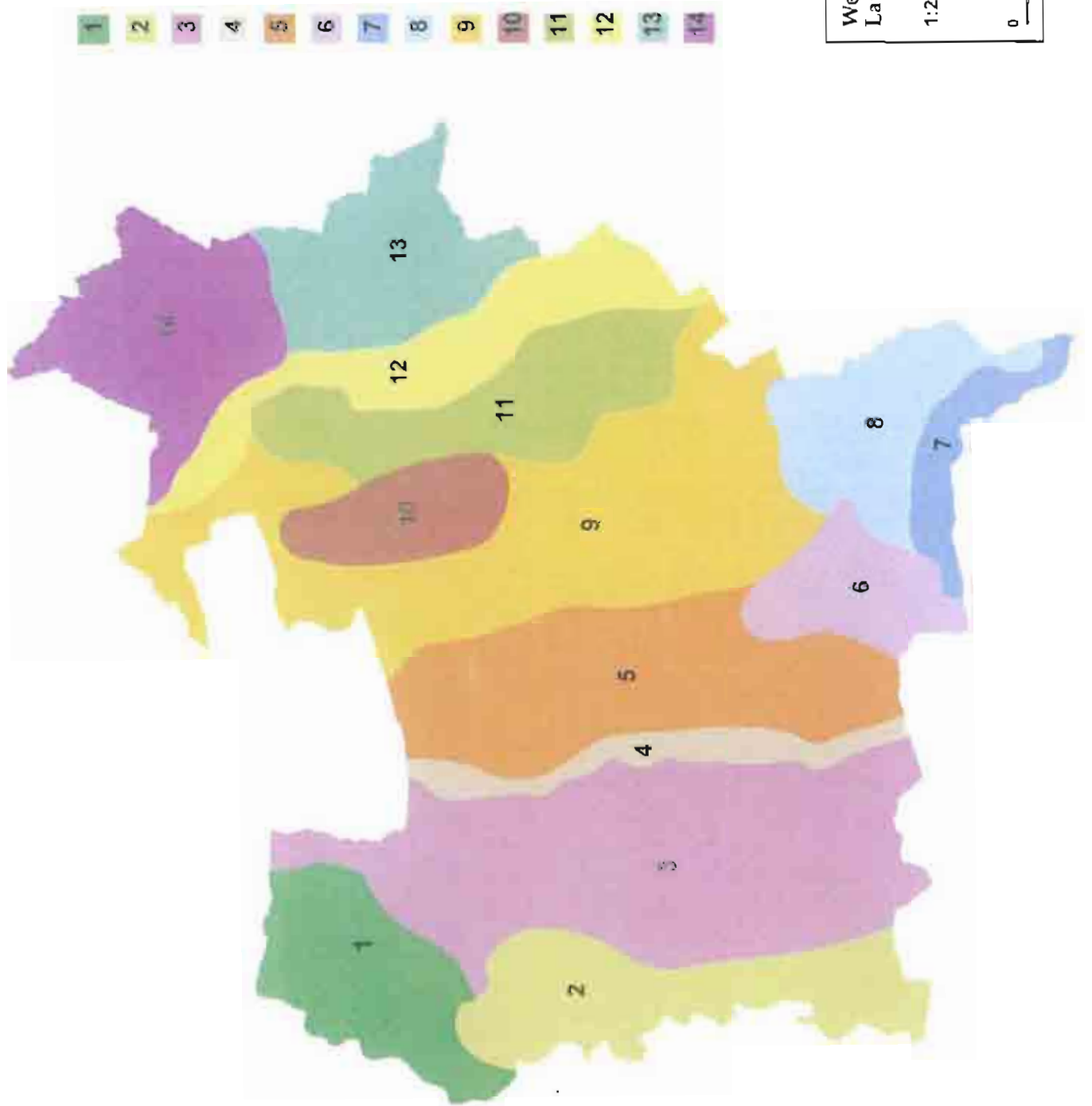


Figure 4 Landscape Character Areas



**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
AREAS**

**WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



1. *Laughton Woods*



2. *Trent Valley*



3. *The Till Vale*



4. *The Cliff*



5. *Limestone Dip Slope*



6. *Lincoln Fringe*



7. *Fenland*



8. *Lincolnshire Lime Woods*



9. *Lincolnshire Clay Vale*



10. *The Kelseys*



11. *Heathland Belt*



12. *North West Wolds Escarpment*



13. *Lincolnshire Wolds*

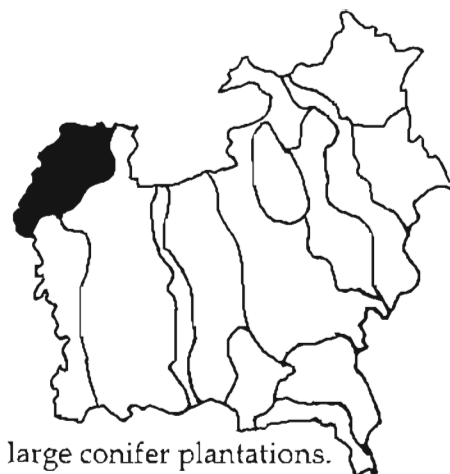


14. *Wolds' Estates*

positive influence and that it reinforces local landscape character, quality and diversity. Specific landscape guidelines are suggested for each *landscape Character Area*. They are of two types:

- *Principles for landscape management* - priorities for action to conserve and manage the landscape in a way which will reinforce its distinctive character. For instance by planting trees, laying and replanting hedgerows, repairing stone walls etc.
- *Principles for accommodating new development* - ways to integrate development into different types of landscape; where it should be restricted and how it can be accommodated as a positive influence. For instance through the careful siting and massing of buildings and the use of materials.

Advice on recognising and reinforcing the relationship between built form and landscape character is also available in the district's *Countryside Design Summary*.



Key Characteristics

- Flat, open agricultural landscape dominated by large conifer plantations.
- Large, smooth textured fields, with few hedgerow or boundary fences, subdivided by a grid of drainage ditches.
- Small blocks of deciduous woodland shelter belts and occasional individual oaks.
- Settlements are 'islands' of buildings and trees in the flat landscape; churches are landmarks.
- String of small settlements along the River Trent with few trees and no churches.
- Panoramic views and big skies.

Landscape Description

This area is dominated by the dark conifer plantation of Laughton Woods. It is located on the broad flat floodplain of the River Trent north of Gainsborough. The River Trent, with its high flood defence bund, forms the western boundary, and the Brigg to Gainsborough railway forms part of the visual boundary to the south east. The land is very flat except for a shallow ridge running north south from Hardwick Hill, formed by the more resistant Hydraulic Limestone, in this otherwise broad alluvial valley. This higher land is flanked by deposits of coversands resulting in the development of acid, sandy heaths that have now been extensively forested. In places the coversands form 'dunes', such as Tuetoes Hills, although the shifting fine, sandy soils have been partially stabilised by afforestation.

This is a predominantly agricultural landscape with smooth textured arable fields. There are wide panoramic views across this flat landscape and a strong perception of big skies. The fields are very large and open with few hedgerows or boundary fences; they are subdivided by a grid of drainage ditches and sometimes by bracken-covered hedgebanks. Field sizes are slightly smaller near to settlements. The landscape is structured by large blocks of conifers, which form definitive visual edges and a dark backdrop to views. Within plantations such as Laughton Woods, the trees are planted quite densely up to the road edge with few clearings. This gives a strong sense of enclosure and allows little variation to the view or visual penetration

into the woods from the road. In addition to the large plantations there are a few smaller blocks of mixed deciduous and coniferous woodlands which form islands of vegetation in the otherwise open fields. Isolated individual oaks and small shelter belts are also important local landscape features. There are pockets of birch-fringed heathland within and on the margins of the plantations, including the nature reserve of Scotton Common.

The main route through this area is the A159 which runs north south, linking Scunthorpe and Gainsborough. The two main settlements, Blyton and Scotter are located on slightly higher ground along this route. There are a number of smaller, nucleated settlements such as Loughton and Scotton, linked by minor roads on the lower lying land. These settlements appear as 'islands' of trees and buildings in an otherwise flat open landscape. There are long, expansive views to the villages and the towers of their limestone churches are important landmarks.

A minor north-south route runs along the western boundary of this area, linking a string of small linear settlements along the River Trent. These settlements are different in character to the nucleated villages further east. They are very small hamlets which consist of clustered farms, with some newer housing, and no churches. They have developed at ferry crossing points on the River Trent. However, the settlements are now somewhat divorced from their river setting, as the flood defence bund forms a strong visual barrier along the edge of the Trent, and so there are no views in this direction, but extensive views across the flat landscape to the east. Although there are some trees and hedgerows associated with these hamlets, the built form is the dominant feature in the landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity

This wide open landscape, backed by stands of dense woodland, is very sensitive to change. Panoramic views to woodland and important heathland habitat merit conservation.

The area is considered to be one of the most valuable heathland habitats in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire Trust are working with the Forestry Commission to undertake heathland restoration within woodland clearings. The woodlands currently have about 10% heathland, although this is only part of the network of open space. The long term aim of the management plans is to improve the structural and biological diversity of the woodland, with a higher proportion of native species. Strategic forest clearance on the fringes of the heathland nature reserve at Scotton Common is assisting the restoration of a rich wet heath habitat with a valuable range of flora and fauna.

The most sensitive parts of the landscape are:

- *heathland habitat* - Scotton Common;
- *areas of inland dunes*;
- *woodland edges* - which structure views and form a setting for villages;

- *views to village churches;*
- *remaining individual hedgerow trees - now rare features.*

Principles for Landscape Management

- Encourage and develop the existing pattern of smaller fields near to settlements; boundaries planted with hedgerows and trees will provide shelter and intimacy. Some isolated individual oak trees are reaching maturity (or have been damaged by agricultural machinery) and should be a priority for replacement.
- Planting deciduous trees (oak, rowan, ash) on the fringes of conifer plantations may help to integrate these harsh dark edges with the colours of the rest of the landscape, while also promoting ecological diversity.
- Within the conifer plantations, there is scope to vary roadside woodland edges by planting deciduous species and creating clearings to allow some views into the forest interior. There may also be opportunities for woodland views at points where roads or footpaths cross the outer margins of the woodlands.
- Planting small shelterbelts within open farmland areas will help retain a varied landscape, with bold variations in scale. It will also improve the nature conservation value of the countryside, particularly if shelterbelts are designed to link existing areas of woodland and outlying hedgerows.
- Planting groups of deciduous trees adjacent to prominent farm buildings will help to integrate these features within the wider landscape.
- Ongoing heathland restoration will improve the visual diversity as well as the nature conservation value of the landscape.
- Afforestation has prevented the shifting of the sandy soils and the 'dunes' are now showing signs of erosion. Where possible, farmers could be encouraged to leave areas of arable land fallow to allow some drifting of the sandy soils.
- Some of the more open settlements along the River Trent would benefit from tree and hedgerow planting; this could contribute a stronger sense of local identity, while framing key riverside views.

Principles for Accommodating New Development

- Any new development on the fringes of settlements should be accompanied by significant tree and hedgerow planting to integrate buildings within the surrounding landscape pattern.

- The irregular, small-scale field pattern on settlement fringes can be conserved by developing only part of large peripheral fields and retaining the remainder as grassland.
- Small groups of new buildings should have a relatively high density, with trees forming key focal elements within the layout.
- Churches are important local landmarks throughout this landscape and the characteristic views to church towers on the approaches to villages should be a key consideration in the siting and design of any new development.
- The villages of Scotter, Laughton, Scotton, and Blyton have a clustered form, with a complex network of back lanes and loop roads which has developed around central greens and common land; the layout of new development should take a similar form, avoiding linear or cul-de-sac layouts.
- Any expansion of the small settlements along the River Trent would be quite visible in this open river corridor landscape; the villages are relatively close together and there is a risk that further ribbon development might lead to coalescence.



Key Characteristics

- Low-lying, gently undulating landform with higher terrain to east and south of Gainsborough.
- Significant blocks of deciduous woodland, good hedgerows and hedgerow trees create a relatively enclosed landscape.
- River Trent and its adjacent washlands are enclosed by steep flood embankments.
- Historic parkland landscapes including a medieval deer park, and landmarks such as the ruins of Torksey Castle.
- Main roads are significant features in the landscape; recent development concentrated along the main roads, bypassing original village centres.
- Views towards the west are dominated by the power stations along the River Trent.

Landscape Description

The *Trent Valley* character area stretches from Gainsborough and its suburbs to the southern District Boundary near Newton on Trent. The River Trent forms a definite western boundary with its flood defence bund, but the eastern boundary is a more subtle transition between this area and the *Till Vale*.

The landform is gently undulating and quite low lying, although the higher terrain to the east and south east of Gainsborough extends as far south as Marton. This relatively elevated land is formed by local outcrops of resistant gypsum within the rock strata. There are significant blocks of predominantly deciduous woodland to the south and east of Gainsborough, some of which are remnant semi-natural ancient woodland, and good hedgerow boundaries throughout the area. These are generally hawthorn, but there are also taller mixed species hedgerows and hedgerow trees, particularly adjacent to roads.

The combination of tree cover and an undulating landform provides a sense of enclosure; long views are generally contained, particularly to the east of the A156 and A1133 spine roads. However, there are some views down onto this area from the high ground around Gainsborough and along the higher ground along the eastern boundary near Marton. Further south, views to the

west are dominated by the power stations along the River Trent and the major transmission lines leading to them.

The River Trent and its sequence of washlands is enclosed by steep flood embankments and is relatively inconspicuous in the wider landscape.

Gainsborough, the major settlement in this area, is located at one of the few crossing points of the River Trent. A number of main roads pass through Gainsborough and are dominant features within this character area. The A156 runs north south and the A631 east west into Gainsborough. Railways also approach Gainsborough from the north and south. South of Gainsborough, the A156 passes through a string of small settlements; Knaith, Marton and Fenton. Towards the south, the A156 branches into the A1133 where it crosses the Fossdyke at Torksey Lock. The A1133 then passes through the settlements of Laughterton and Newton on Trent. The Fossdyke is a man-made canal linking the navigable river Witham with the Trent, giving access to the Midland river system from the Wash. Today it is used primarily for recreational boating and there are some limited visitor facilities at Torksey Lock.

The area has some important historic parkland landscapes at Knaith, Gate Burton and Kettlethorpe, and the remnants of a medieval deer park to the south east of Gainsborough. There are also a number of historic landmarks in addition to those in Gainsborough itself. These are the ruins of Torksey Castle and a hall and pavilion at Gate Burton, all of which are highly visible from the A156.

This landscape accommodates a variety of land uses and features including, settlements, golf courses, transmission lines, roads, a railway and the Fossdyke.

Landscape Sensitivity

Views are generally contained by tall hedgerows, woodlands and tree groups, giving the landscape some capacity to accommodate change. The area has some important historic parkland landscapes and some of the woodlands on the fringes of Gainsborough are valuable ancient woodlands.

The River Trent washlands are also important for nature conservation and the Lea Marshes are renowned as a habitat for breeding waders. The Marshes are flooded regularly and there are pockets of valuable wet meadow habitat, including a small central meadow, which is a designated SSSI.

The most sensitive parts of the landscape are:

- the *higher land to the south and east of Gainsborough*, which extends as far south as Marton;
- the *historic parklands* of Kettlethorpe, Knaith, Gate Burton and Gainsborough, together with their associated boundary earthworks;

- ancient woodlands, such as Thurlby Wood, Houghton Wood and Wharton Wood;
- *River Trent washlands*, such as the Lea Marshes;
- *village entrances* which are frequently marred by linear development along adjacent main roads;
- *low-lying land along the River Trent* (to the west of the A156/ A1133);
- *the Fossdyke* -a low lying meadow landscape with potential for recreation;
- *Torksey Castle*, a historic landmark with an important landscape setting;

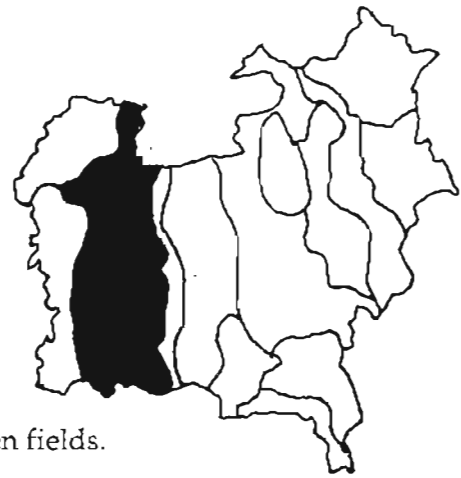
Principles for Landscape Management

- Sustainable management of existing woodlands by thinning, coppicing and/or replanting will ensure that these important local landscape features are conserved and enhanced; they should remain a viable landscape screen and a valuable wildlife habitat.
- Priority should be given to new woodland, shelterbelt or hedgerow planting which is designed to link existing woodlands, particularly those with semi-natural or ancient woodland status. Appropriate local species include field maple, hawthorn, ash and oak.
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be managed to retain the existing landscape pattern, screen settlements and contribute to local identity.
- There is scope to improve the setting of the Fossdyke as a recreational landscape. For instance, tree planting might be designed to draw attention to the position of the lock and there may also be opportunities for more informal tree groups along the edge of the river corridor.
- Any schemes for the management of local water tables which allow the extension of existing areas of marshland to create relatively large-scale areas of wetland would have significant visual and nature conservation value. For instance, there may be opportunities to re-create riverine woodlands on low riverside banks (left-over belts of land).
- Roads are visually dominant in this area; their influence could be improved by a landscape strategy designed to incorporate tree planting, hedgerow management and signage. This should take account of key views and the entrances to settlements which would often benefit from distinctive planting schemes.
- The landscape setting of historic parklands and built features requires careful consideration, backed by research.

Principles for Accommodating New Development

- New development can be accommodated on the higher ridges to the south and east of Gainsborough, provided it is associated with new tree and hedgerow planting which is designed to integrate with local field patterns.

- Further linear development along the principal roads in the area would be detrimental to local landscape character.
- Entrances to settlements, abrupt road bends and junctions are particularly sensitive sites; they are the focus for local views and can easily be marred by nondescript development. New development at such locations should be designed to provide 'one-off', distinctive buildings, which reflect local building types and materials.
- Many settlements are by-passed by major roads and there is a risk that views to the village centre will be obscured by peripheral development; such key views should be identified and conserved.
- Local building materials are red brick and buildings traditionally have pantile roofs. Village buildings are of varied architectural styles but all are designed to form a distinct frontage onto the road. New buildings should be designed to follow this model, with driveways and parking behind or to the side of buildings and brick walls which integrate the plot with the streetscape.
- New development on the periphery of settlements should always be bounded by new or existing hedgerows and native hedgerow trees so that the buildings are visually 'anchored' within the wider landscape pattern.
- Development on the low-lying land to the west of the A156/A1133 would be prominent and cannot easily be accommodated without detracting from the gentle transition to the open, flat farmland on the banks of the River Trent.
- New development should not impinge on views to the many important designed parkland landscapes in the area.



Key Characteristics

- Agricultural landscape with large, flat open fields.
- Some fields have low hawthorn hedgerows, with few hedgerow trees.
- Small blocks of mixed woodland and shelterbelts.
- Extensive network of rivers, dykes and ditches, which have little visual presence in the landscape.
- String of small nucleated settlements on higher undulating ground along a minor north south route; sequence of views to landmark churches.
- Large farm buildings and individual farmhouses on flatter land to the east.
- Ancient enclosure roads with characteristic wide verges and hedgerow boundaries, particularly in the east.
- Long westward views to the power stations on the River Trent, and eastward views to the scarp face of the Lincoln 'Cliff'.

Landscape Description

The *Till Vale* is located east of Gainsborough and the *Trent Valley*, and to the west of the scarp known as the *Lincoln 'Cliff'*. This is an agricultural landscape with large, flat, open fields and a strong rural character. The hedgerow boundaries to the fields are predominantly hawthorn; they are kept low and have few hedgerow trees. The landform becomes rolling and the landscape more enclosed by hedgerows and trees towards the west; it becomes more open with a flatter landform towards the east. Small geometric blocks of woodland, predominantly conifers, are prominent and provide a sense of scale in this expansive farmland landscape. The River Till and its tributaries flow across this area into the Fossdyke. The extensive network of rivers, dykes and ditches have little visual presence in the landscape as they are contained by high floodbanks and lack significant riparian vegetation.

The area is crossed by three east-west main roads; the A631 to Gainsborough in the north, the A1500 Roman road near Sturton by Stow and the A57 alongside the Fossdyke in the south. There is also an important north-south route, the B1241, which links a number of settlements, including Saxilby, Sturton by Stow and Stow. It continues northwards as a minor road, linking a

further string of small nucleated settlements, such as Upton, Springthorpe and Corringham. The settlements are generally small and scattered along this north-south line, often on slightly higher ground within the gently undulating landscape. Fields tend to be smaller near to the settlements and there are more hedgerows and trees. The villages have a broad landscape setting, but the sequence of views to village churches from the B1241 and other smaller lanes is particularly important. A number of windmills, some without sails, are similar landmarks in the landscape. Lines of trees such as horse chestnuts sometimes mark the driveways to larger farm houses forming distinctive landscape features.

Some of the villages in the far north of the area, such as Pilham and Aisby, are very small, although archaeological evidence suggests they may once have been larger. By contrast, the larger villages of Saxilby and Sturton by Stow have expanded rapidly as a result of their proximity to Lincoln. There is also some warehouse and light industrial development in this southern area, between the A57 and the railway, and a major transmission line crosses the landscape. To the east, on the flatter land, there are some individual farmhouses and other large farm buildings, often with associated tree planting. Here there are some other interesting features, such as nodding donkeys at the oil well near Glentworth, and a number of above-ground reservoirs. The minor roads that lead across this flatter area to the *Lincoln `Cliff`* exhibit the typical form of ancient enclosure roads; they are generally straight, with wide verges, a ditch and hedgerow.

This is a landscape of long views. To the west, the power stations on the River Trent are visible, and to the east, the scarp face of the Lincoln `Cliff` is a prominent feature. There are distant views of Lincoln Cathedral set high on the `Cliff` throughout the southern part of the area.

Landscape Sensitivity

This agricultural landscape is sensitive to changes in European Commission agricultural policy and its influence on farming practice. Some villages retain evidence of medieval settlement (earthworks and cropmarks) and may once have been considerably larger.

There is pressure for built development in villages within commuting distance of Lincoln and for the development of above-ground reservoirs within the open farmland.

The most sensitive parts of the landscape are:

- *rural roads and minor farm tracks* bordered by wide verges and hedgerows;
- *edges of villages* which show evidence of medieval settlement;
- *the sequence of views* to village churches along the B1241;
- *avenues and lines of trees* on the approaches to farms;
- *views to Lincoln Cathedral*;
- *small woodlands* - their edges are vulnerable to the impact of agricultural machinery;

- *minor streams* and their associated riparian vegetation.

Principles for Landscape Management

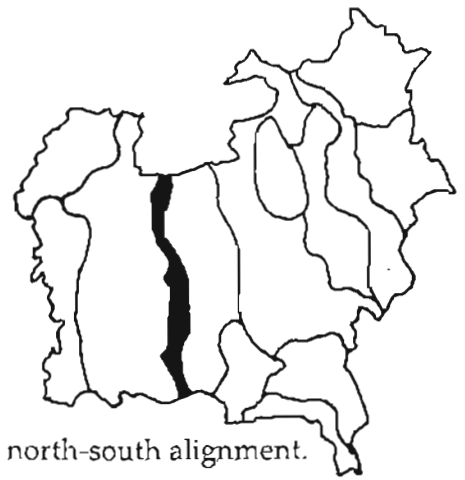
- The retention of buffer zones along rivers and streams will reduce the risk of fertiliser/pesticide runoff from arable land and will enhance their nature conservation value.
- There may be scope for new tree/scrub planting (goat willow, hawthorn, alder and alder buckthorn) along rivers, streams and ditches to increase their visual presence in the landscape.
- The nature conservation value of ditches may be enhanced by cutting shallow ledges into side slopes to provide habitats for aquatic plants.
- The existing small farm woodlands and shelterbelts would benefit from management, including thinning, replanting and the development of robust, well structured edges.
- The creation of buffer zones on the fringes of the woodland blocks will help to protect the existing woodland edges from damage by agricultural machinery; subsequent woodland encroachment onto farmland can be controlled by careful tree surgery and on-going woodland management. The aim should be to conserve (or in some cases create) a diverse age structure and an intact woodland edge.
- Trees and hedgerows make an important contribution to the landscape setting of villages and their management should be a priority in these areas, as well as along rural roads.
- Heavy vehicles can erode the character of rural roads, particularly where hedgerows are removed to improve sight-lines at junctions. Hedgerows should be reinstated to accommodate the new sight-lines.
- New tree planting along approaches to villages and farms could improve the identity of the local landscape. Lines of trees are characteristic in such locations. Tree planting should be confined to hedgerows (*i.e.* not on verges) on all historic enclosure roads.

Principles for Accommodating New Development

- Development on the fringes of villages should be accompanied by new tree and hedgerow planting to integrate with surrounding field patterns. New planting should be of native species and designed to frame (not screen) views from the surrounding, expansive farmland landscape.
- The balance between clustered villages and their adjacent, outlying farmsteads is an important characteristic; new development should be sited and designed to conserve this pattern by encouraging relatively dense

development in villages and conserving key tracts of open farmland between villages and adjacent outlying farms.

- Linear development should be avoided, particularly on the approaches to villages, as it will lead to the erosion of the landscape setting and the distinctive sequence of views from one village church to the next.
- Entrances and approaches to villages are particularly sensitive sites, which require special attention. There may be opportunities for new buildings in such locations, provided they are carefully designed to reflect the small scale and dense massing of traditional village buildings and provided they are associated with groups and lines of native trees.
- The introduction of protected zones between close adjacent settlements, such as Stow and Sturton by Stow, will prevent coalescence and ensure that individual landscape settings are conserved.



Key Characteristics

- Straight, limestone capped scarp slope, with a due north-south alignment.
- Diverse pattern of mixed pasture and arable land with good hedgerow boundaries.
- Springline villages at the foot of the scarp with historic character and many trees.
- Historic halls and associated parkland landscapes.
- Ponds and lakes along the springline.

Landscape Description

The *Lincoln Cliff* is a straight and prominent, limestone capped, scarp slope extending north-south across the centre of the district. It is the narrowest part of an extensive band of resistant limestone which stretches from the Humber to the South Kesteven Uplands. The scarp has a diverse pattern of mixed pasture, arable fields, woodland and hedgerows and is a backdrop for views across the *Till Vale*. Isolated storm-damaged ash trees, which often have grotesque shapes, are characteristic features of the scarp slope.

There are a number of small springline villages along the foot of the scarp, sited at the junction between the limestone and the underlying clay of the *Till Vale*. These villages seem quiet and secluded. They are generally accessed by steep minor lanes which descend the scarp from the ridge-top route of the B1398. There is little direct linkage by road between the villages at the lower level, except for where the B1398 dips down to the bottom of the scarp towards the south, linking villages such as Ingham, Cammeringham and Scampton.

The springline villages have attractive settings at the bottom of the scarp, with many trees and smaller fields with robust hedgerow boundaries. This narrow landscape band contrasts with the wider, open landscape to the west. Some of the limestone churches are important landmarks, particularly when approached from the west, although they may be partially hidden by trees and other village buildings. There are long views from many points along the ridge-top road. For instance, the junction of the A1500 Roman Road and the B1398 offers extensive views across the scarp and over the *Till Vale*. From

here the villages of Scampton and Aisthorpe can be clearly seen nestling in trees at the bottom of the slope.

The villages are small and compact. Limestone is the favoured building material, with brick detailing and pantile roofs. Boundary walls are generally also constructed from the local limestone. The village of Ingham has grown larger than the others, with the introduction of newer brick houses, many of which are bungalows. Despite this, the centre has retained its integrity and identity, with buildings placed around an attractive village green.

There are a number of historic halls and associated parkland landscapes in this area. They include Blyborough Hall and the halls at Brattleby and Burton. There is a large landscaped lake at Fillingham, linked to the parkland landscape of Fillingham Castle at the top of the scarp. Many of the parklands include ponds and minor streams along the springline.

Landscape Sensitivity

A relatively small, but distinctive limestone scarp with a diverse landscape pattern; there is a transition from trees and woodlands enclosing a string of historic springline villages at the foot of the slope to a mix of pastures and arable fields on the steep slopes. The scarp is visible from much of the *Till Vale* and there are long views from the ridge-top road.

The villages have a range of important historic and archaeological sites and many are associated with wooded parkland landscapes.

The most sensitive parts of this landscape are:

- *diverse landscape pattern* on scarp slope;
- *wetlands* - ponds and lakes at the springline;
- *trees and woodlands* - at the foot of the escarpment;
- *village entrances* - narrow, secluded contrast to the ridge-top road along the skyline (Middle Street);
- *historic buildings and parkland* eg Glentworth,
- *village greens, mature trees, limestone walls and churches*;
- *pastures* on western fringes of villages - provide contrast to surrounding arable land.

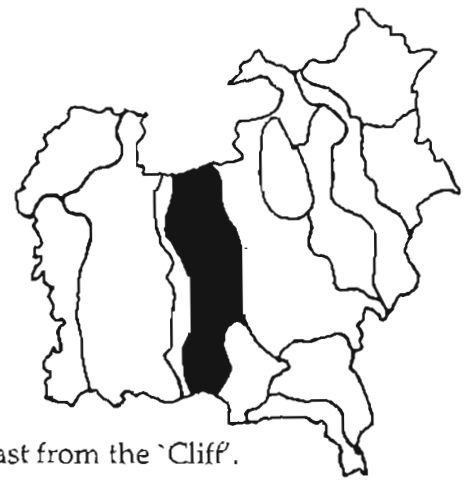
Principles for Landscape Management

- Woodland management - including thinning, possibly coppicing, replanting and tree surgery to mature trees - to ensure these valuable landscape features are retained.
- The management of hedgerows (and hedgerow trees) on the margins of villages and particularly at their entrances will help to retain the characteristic sense of enclosure.

- There may be scope for new hedgerow planting on the western edges of villages to reinforce the contrast in character between the 'Cliff' landscape and that of the open arable farmland to the west. Any new planting should be designed to frame rather than obscure views to village churches and other buildings. Appropriate local tree species include field maple, beech, ash, oak and wych elm; hedgerow species include hawthorn, hazel, dog rose, blackthorn, and privet.
- This narrow landscape band has a wealth of archaeological and historical interest. All proposals to alter land uses and/or the landscape pattern should take account of the findings of historical research. Tree planting or other landscape management schemes may be designed to frame key views and enhance the setting of landscape features with historic interest.
- Wherever possible, the reversion of arable land to grazing pastures should be encouraged to conserve the diverse landscape pattern on the scarp and the striking contrast with the surrounding arable farmland. Priority should be given to the retention of existing permanent pasture.

Principles for Accommodating New Development

- There is relatively little scope for new development in these historic and sensitive villages; only small-scale development of individual sites and the conversion of existing buildings will be appropriate.
- The 'Cliff' villages have a secluded landscape setting, surrounded by pasture and trees; new development should not encroach on the existing small pastures on the fringes of the village and should be associated with new tree planting designed to complement the existing diverse pattern of trees.
- New development and tree planting should be carefully sited and designed to avoid compromising the views associated with the designed historic parkland landscapes which are characteristic of many of these villages.
- There is a risk that further development on the 'Cliff' villages may lead to coalescence and loss of identity.
- Entrances to the villages are particularly vulnerable to change; there may be scope for development which can enhance the existing approach, but it should be carefully sited and designed to complement the existing buildings and form a clear entrance statement.



Key Characteristics

- Limestone dip slope falling gently to the east from the 'Cliff'.
- Exposed, open landscape with redundant airfields in the west.
- Straight roads and trackways; many are ancient enclosure roads with characteristic wide verges backed by hedgerows.
- Important views to Lincoln Cathedral particularly from Ermine Street - very straight Roman road.
- Sparse settlement in the west. Line of small nucleated settlements on slightly elevated more undulating land in the east.
- Individual trees and lines of trees are important landscape features.
- Historic halls and parkland landscapes.

Landscape Description

The *Limestone Dip Slope* falls gently to the east from the 'Cliff'. This is a large scale arable landscape, crossed by a number of straight roads and trackways. Many have the wide verges and enclosing hedgerows typical of the ancient enclosure roads. The Roman road, Ermine Street (A15) is the most prominent route and runs due north-south across the area, linking Lincoln with the Humber crossing to the north. Lincoln Cathedral is centred on the line of Ermine Street, and there is an impressive sequence of views to the cathedral when travelling south along this road.

The landscape feels very exposed and open, particularly in the west. The large redundant air bases in the area contribute to the large scale pattern and featureless character of the landscape. For instance the bases at Hemswell Cliff and Scampton are both in visually prominent positions. Other large scale sites include an agricultural showground between the A1500 and Ermine Street and a large grain store and warehouse style antiques centre at Hemswell Cliff.

Settlements are generally sparse to the west of the character area. Here the landform is smooth and gently rolling and views are generally contained by the roadside hedgerows, but there are extensive panoramic views towards the

Wolds to the east wherever hedges have been removed. Individual trees and lines of trees, particularly ash and oak, are important landscape features.

The land becomes slightly more undulating to the east, where small blocks of deciduous woodland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees provide a stronger sense of enclosure. A line of small nucleated villages including Waddingham, Snitterby and Bishop Norton, are situated in elevated positions on a shallow ridge just to the east of the spring line. Some of the roads in this area have distinctive sharp, right-angled bends. The combination of these bends, the slightly undulating topography and increase in vegetation, often provides a diverse sequence of views on the approach to villages. They may be hidden for a time and then revealed at close quarters. The field pattern on the fringes of settlements is generally smaller in scale and the many hedges and hedgerow trees in these areas provide a sense of enclosure and intimacy. The higher incidence of pasture also contributes to the domestic character of the villages' landscape setting. There are important, attractive, local views to some village churches in prominent positions, such as Waddingham, Snitterby and Bishop Norton. At Glenthams, however, the setting of the church has been degraded by insensitively designed development.

Some of the villages have distinctive landscape elements which contribute to their special identity. For example, a group of willows form a 'gateway' into Normanby by Spital, a line of cherry trees marks the entrance to Owmbly by Spital from the north and a line of ash trees from the south. Spridlington is characterised by a 'gateway' of mature willows and a line of horsechestnuts along the road into the village. There are generally a large number of mature trees within the villages and the dip-slope streams are often attractive features, particularly in Waddingham.

Some of the villages have an enclosed character, with buildings, walls and hedges fronting directly onto the street. The many right-angled turns in village roads and relatively dense built form also helps to curtail views. This is particularly evident in the village of Bishop Norton. Generally the materials used within the villages are limestone and brick, with pantile and brown concrete tile roofs. The presence of mature trees within villages such as Spridlington helps to assimilate a variety of architectural styles, and gives the village a lush green character.

There are some historic halls and parkland landscapes, for example at Norton Place, Hackthorn and Riseholme. Riseholme now houses the agricultural school of De Montfort University.

Landscape Sensitivity

Open arable farmland with long views, although hedged enclosure roads and clustered villages provide enclosure and contrasts in scale.

The potential redevelopment of redundant air bases on prominent ridgetop sites will be a significant landscape issue.

The most sensitive parts of this landscape are:

- *narrow winding lanes* with abrupt turns and junctions - vulnerable to 'improvement';
- *hedgerows and wide verges* on enclosure roads;
- *local landscape features* at entrances to villages along undulating north-south roads;
- *limestone walls*;
- *dip-slope streams*, particularly in villages where they are attractive features;
- *lines of trees* and individual specimen trees (oak and ash);
- *pockets of limestone grassland* on roadside verges and in minor dry valleys.

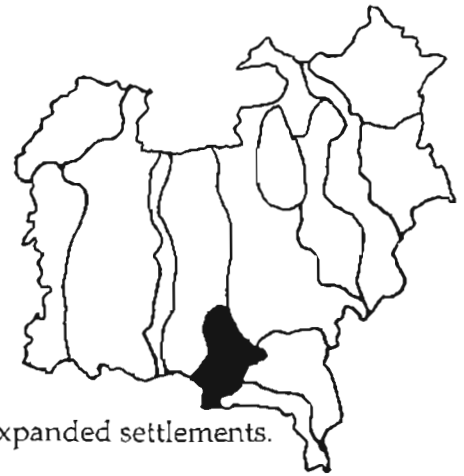
Principles for Landscape Management

- Limestone walls are a special characteristic feature which should be retained and restored.
- Management of hedgerows and verges along enclosure roads will ensure that these distinctive landscape features are retained.
- New tree planting along enclosure roads should be positioned within hedgerows rather than on verges; planting should be designed to retain and enhance the historic sense of enclosure. Appropriate local tree species include field maple, beech, ash, oak and wych elm; hedgerow species include hawthorn, hazel, dog rose and blackthorn.
- The edges of the area's small woodlands are vulnerable to the impact of agricultural machinery; damage can be prevented by maintaining a buffer zone around them and by careful tree surgery to control woodland encroachment. Woodland management should aim to conserve (or in some cases create) a diverse age structure and an intact woodland edge.
- The minor dry valley landforms on the dip slope are often obscured as they rarely coincide with field boundaries. Soils and therefore crop performance are affected by the valley landform and there may be scope for farmers to recognise these subtle topographic variations when planning their crops so that variations in cropping patterns reflect and emphasise the valley landform.
- Many of the dip slope streams dry up during periods of drought, a situation which is exacerbated by the withdrawal of ground water by local farmers. The streams could be kept flowing for longer if the Environment Agency gave priority to the purchase of the historic abstraction licences whenever possible.
- Some enclosure road verges and the slopes of some dry valleys have rare limestone grassland flora. These grasslands require a relatively planned, frequent mowing regime and should be a priority for conservation.

- There is scope to develop a new landscape strategy for Ermine Street, reflecting the unity of its ridgetop setting, the characteristic long views and the long history of this famous route.
- Tree planting and some earth modelling may improve the integration of above ground reservoirs.

Principles for Accommodating New Development

- The development of redundant air bases will require extensive landscape planting. This must be designed to screen and shelter new buildings and to create a sense of local identity. There is a need to introduce a stronger landscape structure at a smaller scale (compatible with the surrounding landscape) within these sites. There may be opportunities to retain the runways and key airbase buildings (traffic control towers, hangers) as focal points in the new development to conserve links with the history of the site.
- Wherever possible, new development in villages should incorporate limestone walls, providing a frontage onto local roads and contributing to the characteristic sense of enclosure.
- Views to churches on the north-south approaches to villages should be conserved when considering the siting and design of new development. The height and massing of buildings are particularly important in this respect and simple photomontage techniques can be used to ensure that building forms complement key views.
- Existing trees and hedgerows on the fringes of villages provide a diverse, relatively soft edge. Any new development should be associated with new planting which is designed to frame rather than screen views from the surrounding farmland.
- The existing mature trees within most of these villages helps to assimilate a variety of architectural styles and to provide a distinctive sense of enclosure. New developments should be designed to incorporate trees of stature (ash, horse chestnut, oak) as focal points *within* the overall layout, as well as on its boundary.



Key Characteristics

- Flat agricultural landscape with a number of expanded settlements.
- Medium sized fields with low hawthorn hedge boundaries and few hedgerow trees.
- Approaches to settlements generally dominated by the built form.
- Views to Lincoln Cathedral.

Landscape Description

The *Lincoln Fringe* is a small area to the north east of Lincoln. It is traversed by the A46, A158 and the railway, which converge towards the city centre. There are significant views of Lincoln Cathedral, particularly along the Roman Road (A158).

This is a relatively flat, agricultural landscape, similar in character to the *limestone dip slope*, although influenced by suburban development on the fringes of settlements and petrol stations. Fields are medium-sized, with low hawthorn hedgerow field boundaries and a few ash and oak hedgerow trees.

Settlements within the area include Welton, Dunholme and Nettleham. While most have retained their distinctive historic core, with village greens, limestone buildings and churches, they have expanded to include some extensive residential areas, many of which are dominated by brick bungalows. All the villages are within easy commuting distance to Lincoln and this has been the catalyst for expansion. The new developments generally have a more open structure, with wide roads and properties set back from the road with front gardens. This has resulted in a lack of enclosure and loss of special identity.

The approaches to the settlements are generally dominated by buildings, which often form a hard edge against the arable fields. There is little integration with the surrounding landscape patterns. The flat agricultural landscape is characterised by long, relatively open views. There are generally few trees, although the oil well at Sudbrooke Park and the housing area nearby are generally well hidden by blocks of mixed woodland and boundary tree planting.

The landscape on the immediate edges of Lincoln is strongly influenced by the perception of the urban area nearby; there is evidence of fly-tipping and a profusion of pylons, road junctions and signs.

Landscape Sensitivity

A relatively flat agricultural landscape with expanded villages and long open views.

There are ongoing pressures for built development in this area, together with associated urban fringe pressures for roads/petrol stations *etc.*

The most sensitive parts of the landscape are:

- *views to Lincoln Cathedral;*
- *the historic village cores* with village greens, churches, mature trees, stone walls *etc.*
- *enclosure roads;*
- *remaining tracts of open countryside between settlements* which often have a relatively nondescript character;
- *trees and hedgerows*, particularly on the fringes of settlements.

Principles for Landscape Management

- There is scope to restore and manage the hedgerows and wide verges of historic enclosure roads, particularly at the entrances to villages.
- This relatively open, large-scale landscape would benefit from a strategy for extensive hedgerow and tree planting. This should be designed to strengthen local landscape character and create a more robust setting for recent (and future) new development. Suitable tree species include oak, ash, crab apple and field maple; hedgerow species include hawthorn, dog rose, dogwood, hazel and blackthorn.
- Control of fly-tipping on the fringes of Lincoln will remove the precedent for rubbish dumping and improve the visual quality of the local landscape.
- More extensive planting will be required to integrate larger structures (schools, petrol stations, commercial buildings) within the rural landscape.
- There are opportunities for new 'greenways' integrating habitat creation schemes with public access (footpaths, cycleways and bridleways) along green corridors which link these outlying villages with central Lincoln.

Principles for Accommodating New Development

- There is scope for a more varied range of buildings (in term of height, scale and style) on the fringes of villages. Buildings can be accommodated

provided they are accompanied by sensitively designed tree and woodland planting.

- The entrances to villages are particularly sensitive and demand special attention. New development in these locations should be designed to create a positive gateway to the village. Buildings must complement the materials and style of those within the historic village core and should be accompanied by stone walls and a distinctive, appropriate planting scheme.
- New village developments should continue the historic development pattern, with new greens, tree groups and other local landmarks to create a distinctive identity, sense of place and community. The existing village greens should form a model for designing new public open spaces which contribute to the hierarchy of spaces, footpaths and cycleways within the village. Trees should be incorporated as part of an overall landscape strategy within the development, as well as along its boundaries.
- The edges of developments on the outer fringes of settlements are often prominent and would benefit from tree and hedgerow planting. New planting should be designed to integrate the development with the surrounding field patterns and to soften and partially screen views from the surrounding farmland. Wherever possible, small fields should be created or retained as part of the land-take of new developments to provide a robust, distinctive landscape setting and a contrast to the surrounding arable fields.
- The relationship between buildings and roads is an important design consideration.



Key Characteristics

- Low-lying, flat fen-like landscape alongside the River Witham.
- Large agricultural fields; some boundaries marked by clumps of shrubby vegetation.
- Some lines of ash and willow trees indicating the wetland nature of the landscape.
- The River Witham flood defence bund is a prominent landscape feature; generally there is little riparian planting along rivers, dykes and ditches.
- Large scale agricultural buildings with little associated planting.

Landscape Description

This narrow band of low lying landscape extends from the *Lincoln Fringe* along the edge of the River Witham to Southrey. The landscape is very flat, with dark soils and a large-scale pattern which resembles the fenlands to the south of the county. Field boundaries are typically open, but there are a few remnant clumps of shrubby hawthorn, field maple and willows, as well as a few lines of ash and willow trees. These remnant boundaries are the few landscape features remaining; they provide some degree of screening and boundary demarcation and indicate the low-lying, wetland character of the landscape.

The grassed flood defence bund of the River Witham is an unrelieved feature in this flat landscape. The area is also crossed by Barlings Eau and a number of dykes and ditches, but they are not visually prominent as they have little associated riparian vegetation.

The only three settlements within this area are Fiskerton, Bardney and Southrey. The concentration of hedgerows and trees in the fields close by helps to integrate the built form with the landscape. The settlements contain a mix of architectural styles, but most buildings are of brick. Fiskerton and Bardney have attractive limestone churches with towers which are distinctive landmarks. There are archaeological remains of an abbey at Bardney, on the route of the Viking Way, which crosses the area near Fiskerton and then follows the line of the River Witham towards Lincoln.

A number of large scale agricultural buildings, including barns, chicken sheds and the sugar factory at Bardney, are dominant structures in the landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity

This is a very flat, open, fen like agricultural landscape, with occasional large structures, rivers, dykes and ditches and few other landscape features. Relatively high levels of visibility render most areas sensitive to change.

The most sensitive parts of the landscape are:

- *remaining trees and shrubby vegetation* - vertical elements in this otherwise flat landscape; they provide some screening and boundary demarcation;
- *riparian vegetation* - gives watercourses a visual presence, while also providing wetland habitats.
- *extensive views* across wide open flat fields which are sensitive to the proliferation of large scale agricultural buildings, and other built development.

Principles for Landscape Management

- Consider planting more riparian vegetation along rivers, dykes and ditches to mark their presence in the landscape and provide opportunities for habitat creation.
- Tree planting, particularly along roads and some field boundaries near to settlements, would help to balance the areas of settlement and large scale agricultural buildings by introducing vertical landscape elements within the flat open landscape. Woodland may be appropriate in random blocks to screen agricultural buildings, but should be designed with the local character in mind.
- The introduction of buffer strips, beetle banks and linear wetland features in drainage channels (such as ledges which can be colonised by aquatic plants) should be encouraged.
- There may be opportunities to identify areas for the re-creation and restoration of wetland habitats identified as a priority habitat in the *Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)*.
- The introduction of carefully designed new tree and shrub planting associated with the River Witham flood defence bund, could help to integrate this significant feature with the surrounding landscape pattern.
- Any new planting should use native species typical to this area, such as willow, alder, ash, poplars, hawthorn and field maple.

Principles for Accommodating New Development

- Strategically placed lines of trees and shelter belt planting, using native species, should be considered as a means for integrating new development with the existing landscape pattern.
- The setting of large scale agricultural or industrial buildings may be improved by the introduction of large scale planting; it is important that such planting is of sufficient scale to balance the visual impact of prominent structures.
- Painting large scale agricultural or industrial buildings pale grey/sky colour would reduce their visual dominance, particularly if they are visible against a strong horizon line.
- Views to the churches and central historic centres of Bardney and Fiskerton are a key aspect of the landscape setting of these settlements; any new development should be designed so that these views (from local approach roads) are conserved and framed rather than obscured by new buildings.
- Most domestic buildings in this area are built from brick and have slate roofs; many are rendered white.



Key Characteristics

- Diverse, undulating landscape crossed by many rivers and streams.
- Ancient lime woodland caps shallow hills and forms contrast to surrounding arable fields.
- Medium sized fields, with good hedgerow boundaries and some hedgerow trees.
- Tiny dispersed settlements and individual farms, linked by an extensive network of minor roads and lanes.
- Desertion and shrinkage of some settlements.

Landscape Description

The *Lincolnshire Lime Woods* are found in the south east of the district, on an area underlain by heavy boulder clays deposited and compressed by glaciers at the end of the Ice Age. This is an undulating landscape, crossed by many rivers and streams, including the Barlings Eau and Sambre Beck.

The large deciduous woodlands which cap a series of low hills, contribute to the area's distinctive character. Most form isolated, rounded blocks in a predominantly arable landscape. These lime-dominated woodlands are valuable ancient woodlands, which collectively provide the most important examples of small-leaved lime woodlands in Britain. The area is recognised by English Nature as a Prime Biodiversity Area.

The settlement pattern consists of tiny, dispersed settlements and individual farms, linked by an extensive network of minor roads and lanes. Red brick farms and their out-buildings and local manor houses are attractive features. Archaeological evidence suggests that there has been some desertion and shrinkage of settlements in the area. There are some good hedgerow field boundaries and hedgerow trees, which combine with the woodlands and undulating landform to give the landscape a balanced, quite enclosed character. However, hedgerow gaps and the fragmentation of some woodlands allow occasional longer views towards the Wolds.

The Viking Way passes through the southern part of this area, on the route between Bardney and Fiskerton.

Landscape Sensitivity

The undulating landform, large deciduous woodlands and hedgerows give the landscape some capacity to accommodate change. However, the lime woods are of national importance for nature conservation and are extremely sensitive to any form of change which might effect their ecological status.

The most sensitive parts of the landscape are:

- *the ancient lime woods* - valuable ancient woodlands of nature conservation value which also provide a distinctive visual landscape structure;
- existing *hedgerows and hedgerow trees*;
- any remaining *meadows* - which contribute to the diversity of the landscape, as well as it's nature conservation value;
- the *small-scale, dispersed settlement pattern* of - tiny settlements and individual farms;
- *historic and archaeological sites*, including the grounds of Bardney Abbey and the sites of deserted medieval settlements such as Goltho.

Principles for Landscape Management

- The Limewoods are the subject of a detailed *Forestry Commission Design Plan*, with specific objectives to retain and enhance the unique biodiversity of these woodlands, recently declared a National Nature Reserve (NNR). Any form of landscape management within the NNR conforms to strategies set out in this plan which has been agreed by a range of organisations.
- New woodland planting should be carefully designed as extensions to and links between existing woodlands. It should mimic existing woodland patterns and forms.
- Priority should be given to the retention of existing meadow and thereafter to the reversion of arable to pasture land on the fringes of woodlands. This would increase the valuable woodland edge/meadow habitat and provide a buffer zone to protect the existing woodland edge from damage by agricultural machinery.
- New hedgerow planting could provide crucial links between existing ancient woodlands in places where woodland planting is not possible.
- Native species and natural regeneration from existing stock should be used wherever possible. Local species include oak, ash, field maple, hawthorn, crab apple, dogwood, hazel and blackthorn.
- Planting trees and shrubs (of suitable riparian species) along rivers and streams would enhance the diversity of the landscape, while also introducing new habitats.

Principles for Accommodating New Development

- Large-scale developments would be inappropriate in this landscape, where there is an existing patterns of small, dispersed settlements. Any new development should be of no more than 5-6 buildings and should be closely related to existing settlement, as part of the settlement, but not necessarily contiguous with the existing built fabric.
- New woodland, hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting (of appropriate species native to the area) would help to integrate new development within the existing landscape pattern.
- This is a relatively diverse landscape. Key considerations when siting new development include the sequence of views along roads, views from other properties and the effect of the undulating landform and vegetation.
- The area has many historic deserted settlement sites, which date from medieval times. Historic records should be carefully consulted to ensure that new development does not take place on such sites, which are often found close to existing farms and settlements.

