

Sherwood Landscape Policy Zone - 25 Birklands Wooded Estatelands

Policy: Conserve & Reinforce

This is a well-wooded landscape encompassing the historic Sherwood Forest set within the Sherwood Forest Country Park. The area is located to the northeast of Mansfield, and to the north and west of Edwinstowe. Market Warsop is located to the west. The River Maun valley lies along the southern edge of the area and the River Meden lies to the north west of the area. The rivers valleys and settlements are located outside the Landscape Policy Zone.

This well-wooded and, in places, industrialised landscape has a distinctively rolling and undulating landform. To the north and east, semi-natural woodland dominates the landscape. To the south and west, coniferous woodland is surrounded by an intensively farmed arable landscape. The arable farmland has a medium-sized geometric field pattern enclosed by hawthorn hedges. Further south, there are smaller fields of vegetable crops and pasture adjacent to the Maun Valley and Bradmer Hill. Thoresby Colliery is located to the east of the area.

To the east, the area is dominated by remnants of the historic Sherwood Forest. This semi-natural woodland consists of ancient stag headed Oaks, Birch and some Corsican Pine planted in blocks. The open canopy forest is closely associated with extensive mosaics of grass, bracken and heather heathland. The ancient stag-headed Oaks form a distinctive feature within the forest area. To the north and west, there are large coniferous plantations (Scots Pine) with deciduous woodland edges (Oak, Birch, Ash, Sweet Chestnut, Beech). These extensive plantations are gradually being converted to Oak wood pasture requiring the felling of Pine and Beech. This practice has allowed acidic grassland, bracken, gorse, broom and, in parts, heather under-storeys to establish along edges and rides.

The woodlands contain a comprehensive network of planned vistas and forest rides. Holly trees form the edges to the north / south broad grassy ride. This is a remnant of a historic landscape marking the neutral ground between the Thoresby and Welbeck Estates. Thoresby Colliery, spoil heaps are covered in more recently planted woodland.

The views within the area are varied and are either contained by close belts of woodland or by plantations at a greater distance. Roadside and field boundaries consist of low, well trimmed, hawthorn hedgerows with Oak and Ash trees. Hedgerows are generally well maintained but some are gappy in places. There has been some reinstatement of old hedge lines to restore historic parkland features.

There are a number of isolated farmsteads scattered throughout the area, a number of which have listed building status. There is a small area of residential settlement at Spion Kop and Bradmer Hill to the west. To the east Thoresby Colliery has obliterated the wooded and agricultural landscape pattern, to the west, earlier woodland such as Birklands have survived. The surrounding agricultural landscape is interspersed with other land uses such as Sherwood Forest Farm Park, a caravan park, a sewage works, a lorry park, several car parks and a cricket pitch to the north of Edwinstowe. Sherwood Forest Country Park and Visitor Centre to the Major Oak is located to the north of Edwinstowe.

A railway line runs north-west to south-east across the western side of the area. The A60 Mansfield road runs along the western edge of the area. The busy A6075 runs from east to west across the centre of the area linking Mansfield to Edwinstowe. The area has a comprehensive network of tracks, footpaths and bridleways. The Robin Hood Way runs from north to west along the western edge of the Sherwood Forest Country Park.

There are several SINC's within the area, including Birklands and Bilhaugh (i & ii), Clipstone Drive, Edwinstowe, New Lodge Plantation, Hanger Hill Drive Wood, Bradmer Hill Cutting and Warsop Sand Quarry. Bilhaugh West, Ollerton Corner and Birklands and Bilhaugh are SSSI's, the latter is also designated as a SAC (Special Area for Conservation). Sherwood Forest is a National Nature Reserve.

The change for the woodland around Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre is from coniferous timber production to oak wood pasture which is being driven by a nature conservation objective. The closure of the Thoresby Colliery could lead to further woodland or heathland creation. Hedgerows between arable fields tend to be in decline due to lack of management leading to the loss of the surrounding historic field pattern.

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PHOTOGRAPH



CONTEXT

NCC Landscape Type: Wooded Estatelands

Landscape Policy Zone: S LPZ 25

Land Cover Parcel: S23, S24, S25

Condition

Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
Moderate	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
Poor			
	Low	Moderate	High
	Sensitivity		

CHARACTERISTIC VISUAL FEATURES

- Undulating topography
- Frequent views of wooded skylines
- Geometric pattern of medium to large-scale arable fields
- Trimmed hawthorn hedges
- Large coniferous plantations
- Scrubby semi-natural woodland and heaths with ancient-stag headed Oaks
- Strong heathy character (heather, bracken, gorse and broom species)

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Landscape Condition

The Landscape Condition is defined as **good**.

This large area has a generally **coherent** pattern of elements with **some** detracting features. Thoresby Colliery and its associated spoil heaps are located to the east of the area. The busy A6075 cuts from east to west across the centre of the area linking Mansfield to Edwinstowe. Other land uses include a lorry park at Bradmer Hill, a sewage works as well as numerous masts and pylons. Tourist attractions such as Sherwood Forest Farm Park also tend to detract from the landscape unity of the area. Overall the visual unity is **coherent**.

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This area has a number of large coniferous and broadleaved woodlands set within an intensively farmed arable landscape. Sherwood Forest Ancient Woodland located to the north of Edwinstowe contains remnants of historic oak and birch woodland. The open canopy forest contains extensive mosaics of grass, bracken and heather heathland. The ecological integrity is **strong** within this area.

Roadsides and arable land are enclosed by generally well maintained, trimmed hawthorn hedgerows with some oak and ash trees. The woodland, hedgerows and heathland provide a strong network of wildlife corridors and there is moderate tree coverage with a diverse age structure. There has been recent planting at the Thoresby Colliery and Blakeley Lane, whereas the semi-natural woodland areas are over-mature and in decline. Overall the cultural integrity is **variable** giving a **strong** functional integrity.

Landscape Sensitivity

Features which give the area local distinctiveness are **characteristic** of the Sherwood region and the continuity is **historic** although ancient in parts which gives a **moderate** sense of place.

A number of trees and woodland are shown on the Sanderson Plan of 1835. The field pattern is mainly intact, to the west the field pattern has been lost to modern arable farming practices and coniferous plantations and to the far east by Thoresby Colliery and associated development. Tree cover varies throughout the area with blocks of woodland particularly to the east and more open areas of arable fields to the west. Overall the extent of tree cover is intermittent.

The views within the area are varied and are either contained by close belts of woodland or by plantations at a greater distance. A **moderate** sense of place combined with **moderate** visibility gives a **moderate** landscape sensitivity overall.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition

Good

Pattern of Elements: Coherent

Detracting Features: Some

Visual Unity: Coherent

Ecological Integrity: Strong

Cultural Integrity: Variable

Functional Integrity: Strong

Sensitivity

Moderate

Distinctiveness: Characteristic

Continuity: Historic

Sense of Place: Moderate

Landform: Apparent

Extent of Tree Cover: Intermittent

Visibility: Moderate

ACTIONS - Conserve and Reinforce

Landscape Features

- **Conserve** and **reinforce** the ecological diversity and distinctive character of heathland and semi-natural woodland habitats.
- **Conserve** and **reinforce** existing hedgerows and seek opportunities to restore the historic field pattern with new hedgerow planting with some hedgerow trees, where appropriate.
- **Restore** areas of arable land to semi-natural oak woodland and heathland.
- **Conserve** all existing heathland sites.
- **Reinforce** the existing level of tree cover and use oak and birch along woodland edges and rides.

Built Features

- **Conserve** the historic character and setting of village settlements. New development should respect the scale, design and materials used traditionally.
- **Conserve** the integrity and remote rural character of the landscape by concentrating new development around existing settlements of Market Worksop and Mansfield Woodhouse.
- **Promote** sensitive design and siting of new agricultural buildings.
- **Promote** measures for reinforcing the traditional character of farm buildings using vernacular building styles.