



Landscape Character Assessment of Boston Borough

July 2009

*Prepared on behalf of
Boston Borough Council
by ECUS LTD*



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Introduction

ECUS was appointed by Boston Borough Council to undertake a landscape character assessment of the Borough's landscapes to provide a robust evidence base for the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). Due to funding restrictions, the study was carried out in two phases. The desk study phase of the landscape character assessment was carried out by ECUS in November 2007. In March 2008, ECUS were appointed to complete the study which included a field study and a stakeholder consultation.

The study was guided by the brief issued by Boston Borough Council and subsequent communications with the appointed project officers. The overall aims of the study were to provide a reliable assessment of the Borough's landscapes to:

- Inform the development of strategic policies of the Borough of Boston's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD).
- Inform both development control policies and settlement proposals DPDs.
- Provide a reliable resource for use in planning applications prior to adoption of the LDF.

The landscape character assessment was carried out in line with good practice including the Landscape Character Guidance for England and Scotland published by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency in 2002. The methodology for the study is described in detail in Appendix 2.

Consultation with stakeholders and the public was an important component of the assessment and included three workshops and distribution of a questionnaire. The information gathered from the consultation informed the subsequent assessments of the landscape character. A final consultation was made before the report was finalised.

This document provides background information on the broad planning context, the landscape context and the physical and cultural influences that have shaped today's landscape. The assessment subdivided the landscape of Boston Borough into nine discrete areas of similar character. For each of these areas, the report describes key characteristics, landscape character, landscape forces for change and the potential sensitivity to change of each area's landscape.

Planning Context

There is a raft of legislation and guidance which recognises the importance of and seeks to protect and enhance all landscapes. Those which are particularly pertinent to the purpose of this study are highlighted below.

International Planning Context

The European Landscape Convention (CETS No. 176).

The convention has now been ratified and is in force in the UK and sets out the basic premise that landscape should be considered as the central framework and basis for all strategic planning:

'As a reflection of European identity and diversity, the landscape is our living natural and cultural heritage, be it ordinary or outstanding, urban or rural, on land or in water.'

This legislation highlights that all landscapes are equally important for the all-encompassing influence they have in our everyday existence. As such landscapes should be recognised, protected and managed with the consideration and involvement of those who live, work in and use them.

National Planning Policy Context

Planning Policy Statements (PPS)

These set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of land use planning in England, and are gradually replacing Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).

PPS 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)

This statement sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning, at the heart of which is the fundamental idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. A key objective of Government for the planning system is:

'protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities..'

PPS 12 (Local Spatial Planning) June 2008

This document replaces PPS12 (Local Development Frameworks). It directs Local Planning Authorities in producing their suite of Local Development Documents (LDD) which will constitute their Local Development Frameworks and eventually replace existing Local Development Plans and Unitary Development Plans.

Particular direction is given to Core Strategies and Sustainability Appraisals both of which create a framework for the remainder of the suite of Local Development Documents. Together these will provide a Local Spatial Plan and Strategy along with locally referenced guidance on all aspects of the local planning system.

Paragraph 4.6 states that Core Strategies must be justifiable and that they:

'must be founded on a robust and credible evidence base'..... 'The evidence base should contain two elements:

- *Participation: evidence of the views of the local community and others who have a stake in the future of the area.*
- *Research / fact finding: evidence that the choices made by the plan are backed up by the background facts.'*

PPS 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)

This seeks to protect rural areas from inappropriate development, and highlights landscape character as an important consideration. It also talks about the importance of robust and comprehensive landscape assessments, which must firstly define the landscape resource, and secondly how it should be conserved and enhanced.

Planning Context

Regional Planning Context

The East Midlands Integrated Regional Strategy

The vision for the East Midlands Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) promotes the following:

'A rich, diverse and attractive natural and built environment and cultural heritage.'

'Regional and local policies that result from a thorough understanding of the evidence and where appropriate, effective participative forms of governance.'

One of the agreed priorities for the region is:

'To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the natural, cultural and built environmental and archaeological assets of the region'

Regional Environment Strategy, Part One - Objectives and Policies for the East Midlands Environment

The Regional Environmental Strategy, Part One includes a policy which is particularly relevant to landscape.

'Policy ENV2: To ensure that all important elements that underpin the concept of local distinctiveness are conserved and managed'

This policy recognises the different elements which combine to make up a landscape and create a sense of place. This reflects an important acknowledgement of how people relate to landscapes in general and in particular to their habitual and familiar landscapes, which are imbued with cultural and personal meaning.

East Midlands Regional Plan (2009 - 2026)

The East Midlands Regional Plan includes a policy which has particular relevance to landscape character assessment.

Policy 31 *'Priorities for the Management and Enhancement of the Region's Landscape Development Plans'* states that the region's natural and heritage landscapes should be protected and enhanced by:

'The promotion of the highest level of protection for the nationally designated landscapes of..... the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.'

'The establishment of criteria-based policies in Local Development Frameworks to ensure that development proposals respect intrinsic landscape character in rural and urban fringe areas, including, where appropriate, recognition of the value of tranquillity and dark skies.'

'The identification in Local Development Frameworks of landscape and biodiversity protection and enhancement objectives through the integration of Landscape Character Assessments with historic and ecological assessments.'

Planning Context

Local Planning Context

Boston Interim Local Plan (Non Statutory Development Control Policy February 2006).

The new Local Development Framework which will eventually replace the Local Plan is currently under development. The Local Plan will remain as the basis for planning decisions during this transitional period until the Local Development Framework is adopted.

The Local Plan has more specific and locally focused policies and guidance. These recognise the importance of considering the landscape character in devising strategic local plans and policies particularly with regard to the existing function and strong sense of identity within the Borough of Boston.

The Vision and Strategy for Boston Borough includes the following aims:

'Ensure a high degree of sustainability in development through rigorous use of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment techniques'..... and 'Retain and enhance the rural character of the countryside while encouraging sustainable development needed to support the rural economy.'

Policies G1, G6, G10 and G11 recognise important landscape features which make a strong contribution to the character of the Borough as a whole. These features include rivers, watercourses, wetlands, wildlife, trees, woodland and hedgerows, and historic elements.

'The Council will expect new development to respect the landscape character of the area and towards this end reference to landscape character assessment will be incorporated in future planning policy documents'.

In Chapter 11 'Development in the Countryside Framework and Strategy' the Council highlights that the existing character of the countryside is a product of it being a functioning and evolving intensively farmed landscape. It recognises how this contributes strongly to its perception and states:

'Farming essentially defines the landscape.'

It recognises that protection should be afforded to features of natural and historic value and that the visual quality of the countryside should be improved where possible.

The Fens Waterway Project

The Fens Waterways Project is in its early stages and will be the biggest waterway enhancement project in Europe. It will open up 240 km of waterway, 80km of new waterway and provide increased access to 160 km. The recently constructed Boston Lock Link at London Road represents the first stage of this ambitious project and links the Haven and the South Forty Foot Drain. It is anticipated that this investment will encourage more tourism and increase marine traffic. Ancillary development, such as marinas and walking and cycling improvements, may feature in the future.

Consultation

Community and Stakeholder Consultations

The Purpose of Consultation

An important part of the landscape character assessment was the consultation with those who live, work and visit Boston Borough, as well as with decision makers and other interested groups. Its purpose was to understand the perceptions, opinions and local knowledge of these individuals and groups, to assist in providing a robust document relevant to all those who will use it.

The information gained through this process provided an invaluable source of local knowledge which helped the assessors understand how the landscape has evolved and how it is presently perceived and valued. It indicated the importance of certain individual elements within a landscape and highlighted the inter-relationship of those elements. It also indicated issues which may have already or could affect future changes in the landscape character.

The Process of Consultation

The consultation included a questionnaire and three workshops. The questionnaire was made available for all to complete on the Council's website. Three workshops were held at the Council's offices; one for interested stakeholders from a list drawn up by the Council, another for Boston Borough Council Members and a third one for Parish Councillors and general members of the public. A further meeting with Boston Borough Council to present the draft assessment and invite comments was carried out in May 2009. The draft assessment was accessible on the Boston Borough Council website. Boston also arranged for a press release to advertise the availability of the draft assessment and invite comments. The consultation methods are described in detail in Appendix 2.

Twelve people responded by filling in questionnaires. This included eight residents of Boston Borough, two business owners, two farmers, one visitor and four recorded as 'other'. The three workshops were attended by seven Council Members, six Parish Councillors, six stakeholders and one member

of the public. The stakeholders included representatives from the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, Witham Fourth and Black Sluice Internal Drainage Boards, Lincolnshire Heritage, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, South Holland District Council, and Boston and District Archaeological Society. Five people provided a series of written comments on the draft assessment to represent comments from Natural England, Wash Estuary Strategy Group, Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, Boston and District Archaeological Society and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Summary of Responses

The consultees' responses included comments on valued aspects of the landscape and changes in the landscape which are summarised below.

Valued Aspects of the Landscape

The consultation demonstrated the great extent to which many people perceive and value the man-made, evolving and working landscapes as a product of past and present farming methods. In particular the soils of the 'silt bank' deposits are considered to be some of the most productive and therefore valuable soils in the country which are used for growing multiple crops of vegetables each year.

Another highly valued aspect of the Borough's landscapes is the important ecological status of the landscapes abutting The Wash which have a high level of international, national and local protection.

Features which were mentioned frequently as being highly appreciated and valued within Boston's landscapes include watercourses, sea banks, trees, heritage features, Bicker windfarm, and views and patterns within the landscape. The responses for each of these features are described in more detail below.

Watercourses were mentioned most often and were described as making an important contribution to the unique character within Boston's landscapes

Consultation

and particularly in creating a sense of place. They were valued for both their aesthetic and functional qualities, with people also appreciating their simplicity, their importance as a flood control system, and also as wildlife corridors. It was also noted that other elements in the landscape may change but that the very evident pattern that these watercourses make remains largely unaltered and are appreciated for their historical value.

Sea banks are a prominent feature of the landscape and add to the character of the Borough telling a story about the past reclamation of the land from the sea. They provide corridors for wildlife and a location for public footpaths with elevated views over the Borough, the coast and the sea which are enjoyed by many. People are also very aware of the important role of the sea banks in protecting their land and homes from inundation by the sea.

Trees in the landscape were mentioned frequently as being highly valued, but their context was also considered to be important. Opinions relating to the role of and placement of trees in the landscape were equivocal. Some consultees highlighted that trees could have a negative impact on the open character in fen areas where they were thought to be uncharacteristic and affect the open views in Boston's landscapes including those from sea banks. This concern included the positioning and nature of tree planting in the Boston Woods Project. Other consultees expressed a desire for more tree planting to provide shelter in the exposed parts of the fenlands. Many consultees were concerned with the loss of mature trees from towns and villages and the further loss of woodland, hedgerows and wild flowers on roadside verges. It was reported that a recent Council initiative was to supply twenty five new trees of choice to each parish to plant in and around their settlements.

The heritage evident in the landscape was considered to be important, in how it affects landscape character in broad terms. People mentioned how they like the many old villages in the Borough and their landscape setting with traditional features such as landmark churches emerging from

the settlements amongst many mature trees.

Other heritage features mentioned by consultees included saltern mounds, moated sites, the medieval Rochford Tower, the windmills around Wrangle, typical fen cottages, water towers, manor house sites, and 'Catslide' roofs where rear additions to traditional houses with extended roofs form a recognisable vernacular feature.

The different landscape patterns were highlighted as being synonymous with different areas. For example, the winding lanes with a few remaining old wide hedgerows in southern parts of the Borough and the predominantly linear patterns in northern areas. Contrasts in the patterns of landscape elements were also appreciated. For example where a straight watercourse is intersected by a more naturalistic, meandering one.

Consultee responses to the windfarm at Bicker in the west of the Borough were mixed. Many people viewed it as a positive landmark, some remained indifferent and a few did not appreciate its presence in the landscape. Some consultees mentioned that they would not want any more windfarms in the Borough which would be visible at the same time as Bicker windfarm.

Views in the landscape which were described as being highly appreciated included the following:

- Views of vast flocks of migrating birds in the autumn.
- Framed views of St Botolph's church in Boston, otherwise known as 'Boston Stump'.
- Views to boats along waterways, and entering and leaving Boston port.
- Open views with wide horizons and big skies, in particular over the fenlands and saltmarshes.

Consultation

- Views over the wild coastal strip which was valued for its vastness and wilderness qualities.
- Lack of light pollution allowing enjoyment of starry night skies.

Comments on Changes in the Landscape

There were several concerns expressed by consultees which related to the existing and changing landscapes of Boston Borough. Some respondents made suggestions to address these concerns. These are summarised as follows.

A common and major concern related to climate change and the dangers of flooding resulting from sea level rises. Although it was appreciated that this would have obvious implications for the character of the landscapes, of greater concern were the practical and functional implications of such an event. Of secondary concern were the visual changes that might result from the infrastructure put in place to protect the places where people live and work.

In relation to concerns about flooding, it was suggested that waterways were designed to maximise their potential as flood defences by making them wider and incorporating reed beds as part of an overall flood defence scheme. Another suggestion was that the medieval field patterns and the layout of the silt lands should be designated as a historic landscape. This statutory protection would help to initiate projects to defend these areas from sea level rises.

Many consultees expressed concern about the position of new housing affecting both the character and the context of existing settlements. Reference was made to what was considered to be the low quality of design of new development in rural areas and also to concerns about the quality and character of infill and new affordable housing within settlements. By way of example, one consultee expressed an opinion that three storey

housing was out of character in an area traditionally dominated by bungalows. Another example that was highlighted was the new housing infill which is merging the previously separate village of Wyberton with Boston town. This was clearly identified by the consultee as an undesirable change in the settlement character.

Another concern was the loss of people inhabiting the countryside in general, making it feel more remote. One consultee suggested that redundant or derelict rural dwellings should be replaced with new homes to help reduce further loss of habitation in the countryside. However, another consultee suggested that they should be preserved as part of the landscape and not replaced.

Other observations of recent changes in the landscape include further loss of pasture and hedgerows in the areas south west of Boston. It was suggested that a record of remaining hedgerows should be made as they are allegedly still being removed without the relevant permissions.

Other comments included the observation that there has been a loss of and deterioration of sea banks, by them being flattened for cultivation. Traffic problems in and around Boston were also mentioned and a suggestion made to build a relief road around Boston town. Some people expressed a dislike of the large scale pylons close to Bicker windfarm and also those radiating from Boston town. Other features that were disliked were large sheds and an untidy industrial area on London Road.

Finally several suggestions were made regarding improving access to the countryside for leisure and appreciation of landscapes by; the provision of more footpaths including circular routes and of more parking facilities near good viewing points.

Formative Influences

The following summary gives background information on the physical, cultural and natural factors influencing the landscape of Boston Borough. A draft Historic Landscape Characterisation of The Wash, along with the Boston Town Historic Baseline Study and the Boston Rural Baseline Study provide an in depth history of the Borough and should be referred to for more detailed historical information. The following summary is based on information in these documents along with the Boston Borough Local Development Plan, Wash Estuary Management Plan and information supplied by consultees during the Consultation Process. More detail of recent changes in the landscape are described within each Landscape Character Area description within the main body of the report. Figures 1 to 5 illustrate some of the landscape influences and patterns within Boston Borough.

Geology and Geomorphology

Boston District is underlain by Jurassic clays. Periodic sea level changes resulted in layers of sediments being deposited. These post-glacial alluvium, freshwater clays and marine deposits were continually eroded during the Ice Ages and further deposited glacial moraine created a ridge of higher more undulating landform from Stickney and Stickford to Freiston and Wrangle.

Sea levels began to rise after the last Ice Age with the North Sea eventually flooding and cutting Britain off from the rest of Europe. Marine waters flowed into the present fenland through The Wash, gradually submerging the land and depositing sediments that had been eroded from coastlines further to the north. Coarser, silty sediments were deposited along the inner limits of The Wash entry which eventually formed a large arc shaped area of higher land that later became known as the Siltlands or Townlands. As it grew higher it gradually rose above the high tide lines of the fluctuating sea levels. The Townlands were not continuous but were made up of a string of islands cut into by marine water channels that flooded the fens at high tide and drained them at low tide. Thus the coastal area became a mosaic of channels and natural embankments consisting of inland water,

low islands, saltmarshes and open sea which made it difficult to define an actual coastline at this time. Later marine alluvium of sands, silts and clays further infilled the inland side of the Townlands. Then inland flood waters gradually altered from salt to brackish to fresh water as they were fed more by fresh river waters including those of the River Witham. The inland creeks silted up and the coastline receded and created the mostly level landform which we see today.

Settlement

There is archaeological evidence of settlement, farming, industry and communications in the Borough since Neolithic times. Other settlement patterns were based on changing coastlines with many existing settlements originally being used as ports which are no longer next to or well connected to the coast. Much of this evidence is buried underground, but some elements and patterns are more obvious and form the basis of the layout and some of the detail of the landscapes which we see and experience today.

In the Roman period when sea levels were relatively low, there were small settlements of farmsteads and groups of huts in the fens. By 375 AD, rising sea levels and bad weather forced inhabitants out of the fens and they were almost completely abandoned. There is no remaining visible evidence in the landscape of this settlement pattern today. The fens weren't settled again for another thousand years.

During Saxon times the settlements which form the current villages in the Borough began to develop. Settlement was largely determined by the topography of the fens, with the higher ground of the islands becoming settled rather than the lower-lying areas. It is thought that Boston town was originally settled in this period.

Significant changes in settlement occurred under Viking control when Danish settlers invaded English farms and villages, making them their own or founding new settlements alongside the existing ones. These can be seen in particular on the Townlands around Boston where several villages were

Formative Influences

founded with Scandinavian names including Skirbeck, Fishtoft, Wigtoft, Brothertoft, Kirton and Bicker.

It is these villages which create the framework for the pattern of settlement which we see today. They are often set within mature trees and each village has its own distinctive church tower or spire acting as a landmark from the surrounding flat and open landscapes.

Since the mid 1940s the villages within the Borough have increased in size with large post-war housing estates forming a common feature of villages, and around the outskirts of Boston town.

Boston Town

Boston town is the political, administrative and physical centre and focus of the Borough with all main roads and industrial and surrounding economic farming activity being centred on the town.

During the thirteenth century Boston was amongst the largest ports in the country where a widespread maritime trade was founded mostly due to the wool trade, exports of lead from Derbyshire and salt from the Lincolnshire coast. Boston continued to be the centre for all maritime trading, exporting more wool than any other English port until the end of the 13th century. St Botolph's Church with an 83 metre high octagonal tower known as 'Boston Stump' is a Borough wide landmark which was built during this period. It reflects the prosperity of the area which later temporarily declined when the canal linking Boston with the Midlands silted up stopping waterborne trade, and the Hundred Years War with France halting the wine trade. The underlying geology provided a good local resource for brick which has been in use around The Wash since the fourteenth century. Boston's fourteenth century Guildhall is one of the earliest brick built buildings in the country.

Boston's prosperity was revived in the later eighteenth century with the Industrial and Agricultural revolutions transforming the town's fortunes. In the 1760s Holland Fen to the west of Boston was drained, waterways

reinstated and a series of Acts of Parliament enclosed common land. This was to improve the agricultural quality of the land and resulted in a switch from predominantly pasture to arable crop farming. This change saw Boston's trade flourish once again with produce being sent by water both inland and along the coast. The arrival of the railway and the construction of the dock in the nineteenth century further improved fortunes. Incremental enlargement of Boston town has occurred over time with subsequent new industrial, commercial and residential developments on its outskirts merging with some satellite villages. Pilgrim Hospital is an example of one such development which has created a relatively recent landmark in the Borough's open and flat landscape. Today Boston still operates as a commercial port.

Road Network

The medieval road pattern consisting of north to south winding routes between settlements was characteristic of the area until the nineteenth century when the wider and straighter A17 and A47 roads were constructed. This resulted in ribbon developments along these new routes consisting of smallholdings, modern bungalows, large agricultural barns and food processing buildings. The A52 main trunk road running from Boston through Wrangle towards Skegness has many curves and sharp corners.

Later road and settlement patterns in the reclaimed and drained fens and coastal areas strongly reflect the artificial and geometric drainage patterns laid out between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. Most roads are raised above the surrounding arable fields, with the associated larger embankments forming prominent features in the landscape today.

Land use, Drainage and Reclamation

Before medieval times the fens were predominantly common land and often 'wild' lands used for fishing, wildfowling, hunting and grazing. Also the coastline would have been further inland than today and deeply indented with creeks and inlets. Some of these were used as ports and were settled. Associated industries such as salt extraction were based at or near these, for example at the ancient port of Bicker. Salt making continued throughout

Formative Influences

the Roman and medieval periods and remained an important industry in The Wash area due to heavy demand because of its preservative qualities. Many of the residual mounds known as 'salterns' can still be seen in the landscape today.

In the second half of the thirteenth century, almost three quarters of land use was arable with the rest made up by pasture and meadow. In many areas there are extensive tracts of land called 'Ings' which was a name given to low-lying meadow between settlements and the lower fens. During the medieval period there was a considerable reversion to pasture and by the seventeenth century there was more of an even split between arable and pasture. Agricultural methods during medieval and post-medieval periods were based on two or three open fields that surrounded settlements. Fields were split into strips or 'selions' which formed the typical ridge and furrow method. The low-lying nature of the Borough led to the establishment of 'dylings', which were wide strips of land separated by ditches to aid drainage.

Reclamation of land from the sea began in earnest in medieval times and has continued into the twentieth century, resulting in a series of parallel and perpendicular, active and relict earthen sea banks on the coastal side of the Townlands. The land here was reclaimed from saltmarsh that had accreted from depositions since the last glacial period. The nineteenth and twentieth century coastal reclamation and Enclosure resulted in the development of rectilinear fields with narrow wet dyke boundaries which are still characteristic of the coastal areas today.

The inland freshwater fens were originally exploited for their resources as described above. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, major drainage and Enclosure took place in these inland fens and new settlements were established. The natural courses of the rivers were straightened and enclosed within embankments which reopened inland navigable waterways. With the use of sluices and a hierarchical network of drains, dykes and ditches the fens were drained to create new improved agricultural land.

Later, artificial pumping by means of windmills and subsequently by steam, diesel and electric pumps were also used to maintain the lowered water levels. These levels needed to be continually and constantly managed and in 1930 The Land Drainage Act was passed setting up Catchment Boards and Internal Drainage Boards. Today along with the Environment Agency they work together to manage flooding inundation by both the sea and rivers.

The windpumps as well as most of the windmills used for corn milling have disappeared but some remains can still be found in areas of the Borough, such as the windmills around Wrangle. There is also a Victorian pumping station at Lade Bank and modern pumping stations can be found on all the main drains. Many bridges of various ages, materials and styles have become characteristic features of the landscape.

The productivity of the land benefited greatly from the intensive drainage and resulted in former pastoral areas being converted to Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land suitable for intensive arable, vegetable and horticultural production.

Changes in rural farmland areas due to the agricultural revolution and the mechanisation and intensification of farming practices resulted in the construction of new and larger scale farm buildings and also of large scale food packaging and processing plants. Another consequence of these changes has been the reduction in the numbers of people required to work the land and the subsequent redundancy of farm cottages and some farm field buildings which have declined and become derelict.

The productivity of the land benefited greatly from the intensive drainage and resulted in former pastoral areas being converted to Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land suitable for intensive arable, vegetable and horticultural production. Today the farmland in the Borough and particularly on the Townlands has some of the most productive soils in the country and is intensively farmed with an increasing emphasis on vegetables.

Formative Influences

At the outbreak of World War II several permanent shore batteries were built to defend against possible invasion along the Lincolnshire coast. Further inland, Boston and many of the villages established pillboxes as a defensive mechanism across the Borough, most of which are still present in the landscape today.

Hedgerows and Woodland

In the thirteenth century the western part of the Borough lay within the Royal Forest of Kesteven, that is land over which the King had hunting rights. Since the agricultural and industrial revolutions and particularly since the 1960s, with the government incentives for increasing production and high yields, many hedges and woodland have been cleared and fields amalgamated in the interests of large scale intensive farming.

Today there is very little semi-natural land or woodland left in the landscape. Small remaining blocks of scattered woodland within the farmland are used for cover for wildfowl and game birds which are commonly hunted. There are also some wooded bands along some of the relict sea banks. The majority of trees within the present landscape are found lining the roads and clustered in and around settlements. More recently there has been tree planting of ornamental conifers in the fen area to extend shelter belts.

Changing farming practices and government incentives in the form of Environmental Stewardship Schemes are continuing to change the appearance of the farmland. This includes some reinstatement of hedgerows with more trees and small woodlands also being reintroduced into the landscape.

There have also been small areas of amenity planting around the western outskirts of Boston town as part of the Boston Woods Project. This is a long term plan to increase the numbers of trees and reintroduce woodland as part of the Borough's landscape and environment for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Climate Change

Climate change is a strong potential 'Force for Change.' The possible effects of this could manifest themselves directly, for example as changes in sea level and flora and fauna, and also indirectly by consequential changes in landuse, sea and flood defences and infrastructure and settlement patterns thereby affecting cultural heritage in the longer term.

However all of these are just scenarios and it is not possible to predict the precise nature or potential for changes in landscapes in any detail at this stage. At present there is little visual evidence at the broad landscape character level but potentially such changes are an important consideration when planning future strategies and policies in relation to landscape character.

Landscape Context

Landscape Character Assessment – The National Context

In 1996, the Countryside Commission, English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage subdivided the whole country into one hundred and fifty nine distinct Joint Character Areas. This Character Map of England provides a consistent national framework for more detailed local landscape assessments.

Boston Borough is covered by a single Joint Character Area 'The Fens' which also runs into adjacent local authority areas. The following summary and the key characteristics are based on 'The Fens' Joint Character Area description.

'The Fens' Joint Character Area is a large area that follows an arc from Boston Borough to Ely and King's Lynn around The Wash, England's largest tidal estuary. The key landscape characteristics found within Boston Borough are as follows:

- *A flat and large scale landscape with wide open views to level horizons and huge skies.*
- *A hierarchy of rivers, drains and ditches which drain towards The Wash.*
- *Sparse woodland cover with shelter belts around farmsteads.*
- *Agricultural land use with horticultural glasshouses and field labourers prevalent at harvesting.*

The Fens can at first appear to be monotonous, but there are subtle differences between areas particularly the settlement history. The Character Map of England Study identified four broad variations within the Fens of which two are found within Boston Borough. These have been refined and sub-divided further as part of this assessment and are as follows.

1. *The 'Settled Fens' or 'Townlands' run in a broad arc inland from The Wash. This area has a historic and smaller scale landscape with an irregular field pattern, sinuous lanes and a higher density of settlements.*
2. *The 'Wash Marshes' consists of a band of land reclaimed from The Wash by the construction of a series of sea wall defences which started in the 17th century. There are extensive fields of vegetable crops on the reclaimed land and beyond the sea banks are saltmarshes and tidal mudflats that stretch out into The Wash.*

Landscape Character Assessment – The Local Context

A landscape character assessment has not previously been undertaken for Boston Borough. A Historic Landscape Characterisation was being prepared by others for the land adjacent to The Wash including parts of Boston Borough. The results of this were not issued at the time of the desk study, but a draft of the Historic Landscape Characterisation was viewed to ensure compatibility. Landscape character assessments have previously been carried out for two adjacent Districts within Lincolnshire and the results of these are briefly reviewed below.

East Lindsey District is located to the north of Boston Borough. The District comprises four Joint Character Areas which include the Fens in the most southern part which sits adjacent to Boston Borough. The East Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment (July 2009) has four local landscape areas which lie adjacent to Boston Borough and are described as follows:

- *Wainfleet Wash Saltmarsh* which occupies the coastal fringe of The Wash adjacent to the north east boundary of Boston Borough.

Landscape Context

- *Wainfleet Reclaimed Saltmarsh* located to the north east of Boston's reclaimed coastal strip adjacent to the Borough boundary.
- *Wainfleet All Saints to Friskney Settled Fen* along the A52 road adjacent to the north eastern boundary of Boston Borough
- *Stickney to Sibsey Reclaimed Fen* along the main A16 road adjacent to the northern boundary of Boston Borough.

South Holland District is located to the south of Boston Borough. As for Boston Borough, South Holland is covered by the single Joint Character, 'The Fens'. The local assessment carried out in 2003 subdivided the District into three landscape character types:

- *Wash Marshes* which sit on the coastal fringe of The Wash.
- *Settled Fens* which cover the area immediately inland from The Wash.
- *Peaty Fens* in the far west and south of the District.

Nature Conservation

The Wash is of international, national and local wildlife importance. It is internationally designated as a Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar site. National designations include Sites of Special Scientific Interest and in part, a National Nature Reserve. The Wash is a highly productive complex of interdependent habitats which make a significant contribution to the conservation of water birds, supports a notable seal population and a diverse range of invertebrates, and is an important fish spawning and nursery ground. There are several publicly accessible nature reserves within Boston including Frampton Marsh and Freiston Shore.

[Note: All text in italics in the introductory sections are quoted from other publications].

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Within Boston Borough a wide range of physical and cultural influences have shaped the landscape over time. The landscape character assessment has subdivided the Borough into areas of similar character as shown on the map below and in Figure 6. The assessment identified four Landscape Character Types.

The following definitions of Landscape Types and Areas are taken from the Landscape Character Guidance for England and Scotland 2002, published by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency.

Landscape Character Types are areas with broadly similar character:

‘These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern.’

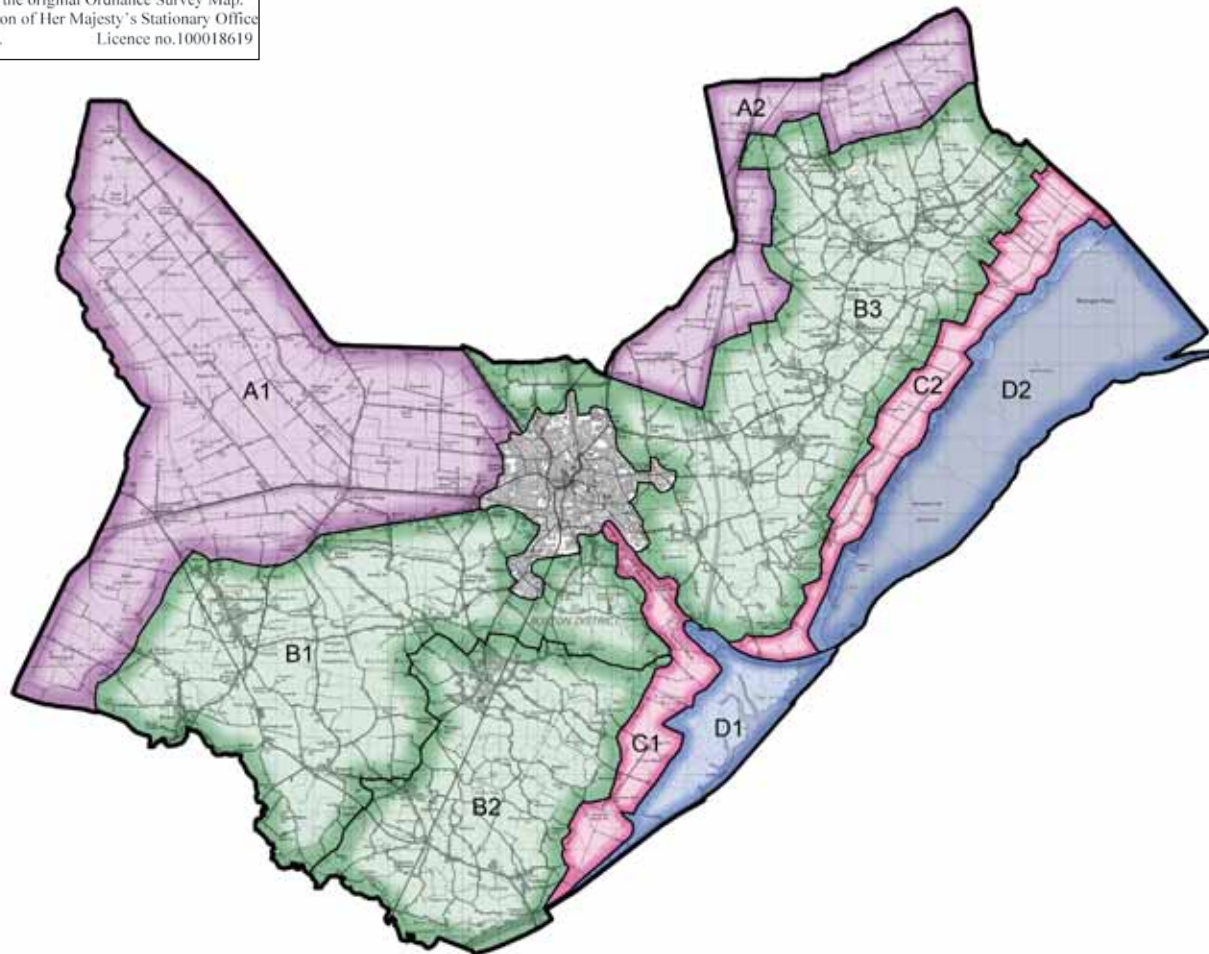
These Types have been further subdivided into nine Landscape Character Areas. Landscape Character Areas are:

‘..single unique areas and are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.’

The following section describes each Landscape Character Type and Area in turn by describing key features and characteristics, followed by descriptions of how these interact to create the landscape. Landscape forces for change that are evident in the landscape or perceived by consultees are noted followed by a judgement about the potential sensitivity to change of the landscape of that area. Finally, there are broad guidelines as to how any development should be designed and located to achieve the best fit with the landscape.

Landscape Character Assessments

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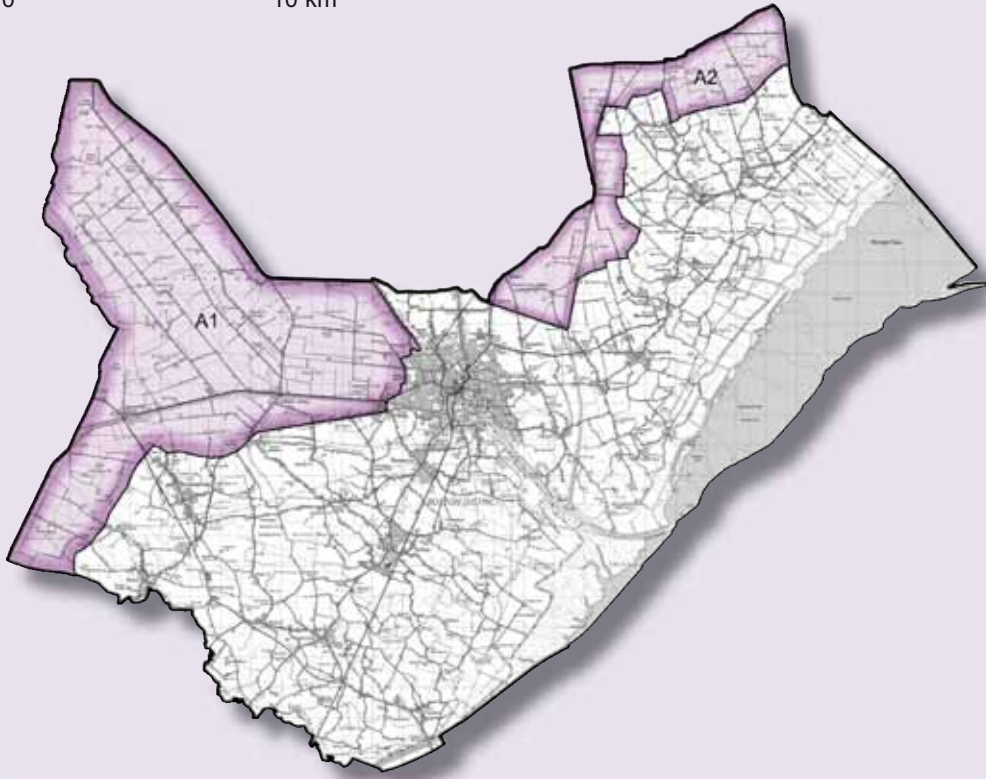
LEGEND

- A1** HOLLAND RECLAIMED FEN
- A2** WRANGLE COMMON TO FREISTON INGS RECLAIMED FEN
- B1** BICKER TO WYBERTON SETTLED FEN
- B2** FRAMPTON TO FOSDYKE SETTLED FEN
- B3** WRANGLE TO COWBRIDGE SETTLED FEN
- C1** WELLAND TO HAVEN RECLAIMED SALTMARSH
- C2** GLEBE FARM RECLAIMED SALTMARSH
- D1** WELLAND TO HAVEN WASH SALTMARSH
- D2** FREISTON LOW TO WRANGLE FLATS WASH SALTMARSH

A Reclaimed Fen Landscape Character Type

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0 10 km



Landscape Character Type Description

The *Reclaimed Fen* Landscape Character Type is located inland from the *Settled Fen* and lies to the south of the Borough boundary with East Lindsey and north of the *Settled Fen* character type.

The area is flat and mostly underlain by Jurassic clays. These are overlain by the Barroway Drove Beds of older marine and saltmarsh deposits which in turn are overlain by the fertile soils of pelo-alluvial gleys.

It is an open landscape with big skies and long distance views to the Lincolnshire Wolds in East Lindsey District to the north. These views are sometimes foreshortened by large flood embankments alongside major drains and canalised watercourses. This landscape is evidently man-made with the regular, geometric pattern and grain defined by the large water filled drains, dykes, and canalised rivers that cut across the character areas.

This is an intensively farmed arable landscape with a hierarchy of drains, dykes and ditches draining the largely open and predominantly arable fields. There are occasional large scale processing plants, poultry units, horticultural glasshouses, packing plants and a caravan park, which are all mainly towards the boundaries of the areas.

Tree cover is sparse with occasional small mixed woodland blocks, a few recently planted roadside trees and hedgerows. Most other mature trees are found as shelterbelts in and around the hamlets, farmsteads and dwellings.

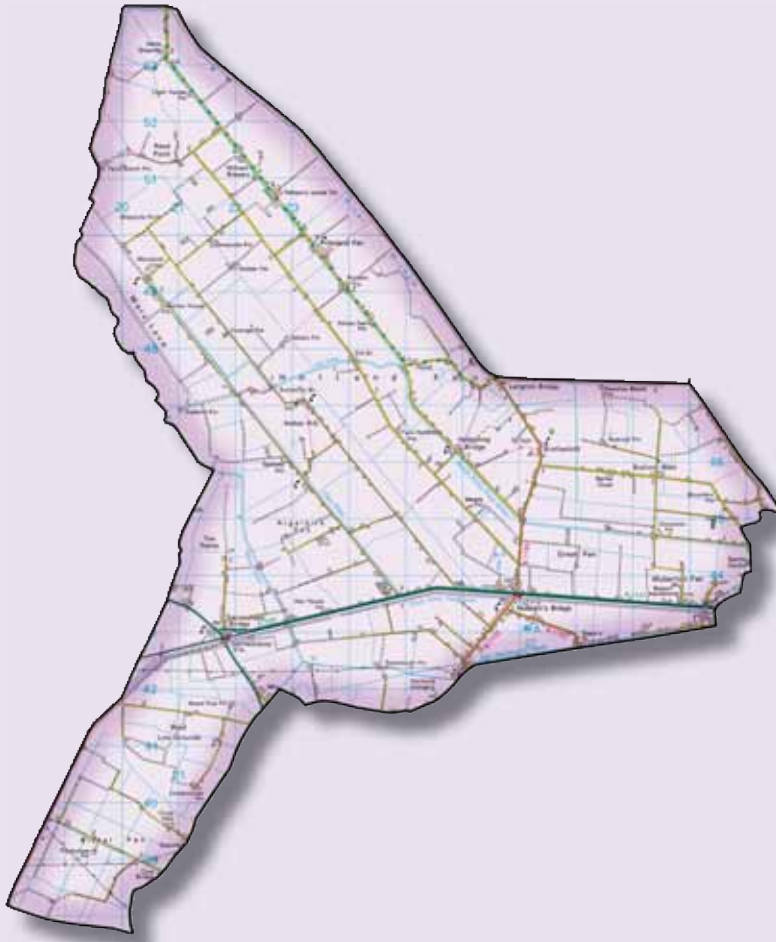
The area is sparsely populated with widely dispersed farmsteads, occasional rows of former workers' cottages, hamlets and a few roadside dwellings scattered throughout alongside a grid of roads and tracks. A railway line runs across the area. There are a few long footpaths along embankments and shorter local links across fields.

It has a fairly remote feel in parts due to the partial enclosure and separation from the surrounding more settled areas by the large straight embankments, the sparse settlement pattern and the lack of through traffic.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen

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0 5 km



Key Characteristics

- Flat and low-lying reclaimed fenland.
- Open and expansive views with big skies and dark night skies with some views semi-enclosed at ground level by large embankments.
- More distant views to Boston Stump and to the Lincolnshire Wolds in East Lindsey District to the north.
- A man-made intensive arable landscape laid out in a regular, geometric pattern with narrow roads and trackways alongside drains, dykes and ditches.
- The large North Forty Foot Drain and South Forty Foot Drain are key dominating features of the area.
- Field boundaries are typically open with wet ditches, dykes and drains and the occasional hedgerow.
- Occasional large scale horticultural glasshouses, and packing or processing plants occur near the southern boundary of the area.
- Sparsely populated with occasional small hamlets, scattered farmsteads, and occasional rows of former workers' cottages.
- Occasional derelict farm cottages and field buildings.
- Sparse tree cover confined to shelterbelts, with occasional hedgerows and small blocks of mixed woodland with shrubby edges.
- Bicker windfarm and large scale pylons on the south western tip are modern landmark features.
- A semi-remote, tranquil and intact working agricultural landscape.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Landscape Character Description

Holland Reclaimed Fen forms part of the agricultural fenland that surrounds The Wash. It includes Algarkirk Fen, Great Fen, Holland Fen, Maryland, Pelham's Lands, Hart's Grounds, Amber Hill, Bicker Fen and Wyberton Fen. The area is bounded to the north by the canalised River Witham and the East Lindsey District boundary, to the south by New Hammond Beck and *Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen*, and to the west by North Kesteven District boundary. Boston town lies to the east.

The area is mostly underlain by Jurassic clays and overlain with the Barroway Drove Beds of older marine and saltmarsh deposits which has produced the fertile pelo-alluvial gley soils.

The landform is flat and low-lying and views are simple and semi-remote. There are expansive and peaceful panoramas across seas of cereal crops, and big skies. These views are sometimes foreshortened by large drain embankments. Longer views include those to Boston Stump to the east, and views to the rising edge of the Wolds in East Lindsey to the north. The windfarm near Bicker in the south west corner of this area creates a distinctive landmark on the Borough boundary with North Kesteven.

This area was artificially drained and apportioned to landowners to enable food production during the agricultural and industrial revolutions and is still an extremely productive landscape today. A hierarchical grid layout of straight, open, deep drains is crossed by frequent bridges which allow access to the adjacent dwellings and farmsteads. Drain and dyke banks are well maintained in most parts with limited riparian vegetation. The mown flood defence embankments alongside the River Witham, South and North Forty Foot Drains are prominent in the landscape. Gill Syke is the one remaining more natural, meandering watercourse which contrasts with the dominant geometric pattern in the landscape.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Agriculture is almost exclusively arable with crops such as wheat, and brassicas. These medium to large scale fields of crops fit with the strong geometric pattern of drains, dykes and ditches. Some small fields of pasture with grazing cattle and horses are still found around hamlets such as Amber Hill. There are occasional large scale processing plants, poultry units, horticultural glasshouses, packing plants and also a caravan park which are located mainly towards the boundaries of the area.

Occasional small blocks of woodland are edged with shrubs to provide cover for game birds and there are occasional tree clumps in some field corners near road junctions. Otherwise tree cover is sparse and confined to mature tree shelterbelts around settlements, farmsteads and dwellings. Very few remnant hedgerows remain along with occasional avenues of trees along farm entrance tracks. There has been some more recent shelter planting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees alongside some exposed raised roads.

After the area was reclaimed it was laid out in a large scale and regular pattern, with each farm being allotted a certain amount of reclaimed fen. This has resulted in the widely dispersed pattern of farmsteads and dwellings which we see today. There are also occasional rows of workers' cottages, hamlets, and occasional dwellings scattered throughout. Most are found immediately adjacent to the grid network of drainage, raised roads and tracks. They have a mix of architectural styles and ages, and the materials used for their construction are also mixed with the most traditional being red brick with pantile roofs.

The main A1121 road links Boston to the A17 and Sleaford. The road alongside the North Forty Foot Drain is the other road running through the area to Coningsby in the District of East Lindsey. This road is also part of the National Cycle Route, which at this location is described as being free from traffic and alludes to the relatively tranquillity of this area. Other minor roads and tracks form a discrete network just linking locations within the character area. This separates the area from its surroundings and adds to the sense of remoteness. A public right of way runs along the top of the River Witham embankment into Boston town, but otherwise there are a very few public footpaths. The Boston to Sleaford rail link runs along the top of the South Forty Foot Drain embankment.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Heritage features include the drainage system itself which is frequently crossed by bridges of varying styles and ages including an iron bridge at Langrick. Rows of leaning small scale telegraph poles allude to the softness of the ground beneath. There are also a few listed buildings and some derelict field and farm buildings, which are a reminder of past times when they were used to house the greater number of people needed to work the land and animals grazing before the intensive mechanised methods of farming in use today.

Some urban influences are evident in the south east corner of the area towards the outskirts of Boston. These include views to some new unscreened housing developments, the Pilgrim Hospital and Boston Stump. Other developments in this area include Bicker windfarm to the south western boundary, commercial sheds, small industrial sites, Boston Sports Arena and other small scale leisure complexes including fishing ponds.

Overall this character area can be described as an intact, large scale, semi-remote and intensively farmed landscape.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Forces for Change

- Bicker windfarm and large scale pylons are modern and large scale additions to the landscape.
- Agricultural intensification has led to the amalgamation of fields for the large scale production of arable crops.
- Some recreational developments have been introduced such as Boston Sports Arena, some small scale fishing ponds and holiday parks.
- Expansion and modernisation of the infrastructure associated with intensive agriculture.
- Recent commercial, housing and recreational developments on the outskirts of Boston.
- Recent roadside planting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes, affecting the appearance of buffer strips around arable field edges and dyke vegetation, through changed farming and management practices.
- The Fens Waterways Project, as described in more detail in the Planning Context section, is likely to enhance the area around the South Forty Foot Drain in the future. It is anticipated that it will increase marine traffic and encourage more tourism in the area.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Landscape Sensitivity

Holland Reclaimed Fen is a very distinctive, homogenous, intact and rural landscape with few detractors. The aspect is largely open and flat and so the small number of tree shelterbelts and occasional hedgerows and hedgerow trees provide only a very limited degree of enclosure. Views towards any new developments would be difficult to restrict from the small number of sensitive viewers within the landscape. There is some potential for reducing landscape and visual impacts as described below.

The design and location of any new development should take into account the homogenous nature, geometric pattern, scale and rural characteristics of the area including the sense of remoteness, scarcity of built elements, the linear format of the landscape and the importance of the drainage network. Any new developments should be positioned carefully to use existing and new screening without impacting upon the open character. Location of future developments should be limited and concentrated around existing developments and settlements whilst still retaining the existing dispersed pattern of farmsteads, dwellings, rows of workers' cottages and hamlets. Further development on the edge of Boston would result in an encroachment of urban character within the area thereby reducing its size.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Holland Reclaimed Fen* is considered to be **moderate to high**.

A2 Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen

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0 5 km



Key Characteristics

- Flat and low-lying reclaimed fenland.
- Open views are semi-enclosed at a low level by large drain embankments.
- Views to *Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen* to the south, to the Pilgrim Hospital on the outskirts of Boston, and distant views to the Lincolnshire Wolds in East Lindsey to the north.
- A man-made, intensively farmed arable landscape laid out with a strong geometric pattern of narrow roads and tracks alongside drains, dykes and ditches.
- Cowbridge and Hobhole Drain embankments and a small reservoir contained by embankments are prominent features of the area.
- Tree cover is sparse and is mostly confined to tree shelterbelts around farmsteads, dwellings and settlements on the edge of the character area. There are very few remnant hedgerows and an occasional small block of deciduous woodland.
- Sparsely populated with scattered farmsteads, former workers' cottages and occasional derelict farm cottages and field buildings.
- Occasional large scale processing plants.
- Large and small scale pylons across the whole area.
- Lade Bridge Pump house is a working heritage feature.
- Limited access with few roads and tracks and very occasional short dead end public rights of way.
- A relatively remote, tranquil and intact working agricultural landscape.

A2 Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen



Landscape Character Description

Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen forms part of the agricultural fenland that surrounds The Wash. The area is bounded to the south by the Cowbridge Drain, Hobhole Drain and Wrangle Bank, and to the west, north and east by the East Lindsey District boundary.

This area is mostly underlain by Jurassic clays and overlain with the Barroway Drove Beds of older marine and saltmarsh deposits which have produced the fertile pelo-alluvial gley soils and is typical of the fenland that surrounds The Wash.

The landscape is flat and low lying except for the flood embankments, a reservoir contained by embankments and the raised roads. Views are generally open, but in some parts are foreshortened by the flood embankments. They include views to *Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen*, Boston Stump, and Pilgrim Hospital in the south west and more distant views to the rising edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds in East Lindsey to the north. There are also elevated views across the character area and adjacent areas from the minor road running along the top of the Hobhole Drain embankment.

This area was artificially drained to enable food production during the agricultural and industrial revolutions and is still an extremely productive landscape. A small grid network of drains, dykes, ditches and narrow raised roads is infilled with medium to large scale arable fields creating a consistent pattern and scale to the landscape. Agriculture is almost exclusively arable with crops including wheat, brassicas. There are also occasional large scale food processing plants.

Tree cover is sparse and is mainly composed of shelterbelts of tall conifers and mixed ornamental trees, occasional hedgerows and field boundary trees, and infrequent small blocks of mixed woodland.

A2 Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen



This area is sparsely populated and has with relatively few built elements. Settlement comprises occasional widely dispersed farmsteads, former workers' cottages, hamlets and a few roadside dwellings. There are some new houses on the edges of Wrangle Bank hamlet which straddle the boundary of this character area with *Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen*. Buildings are a mixture of architectural styles and ages with the traditional ones being constructed of red brick and red pantiles.

This relatively small character area is separated by drains and embankments from much of the surrounding areas. It has little through traffic and is distinctive in its simplicity and relative remoteness. Access is limited to very minor roads and tracks, although the A16 road just clips the far south western corner of the area. The minor roads are often single lane bumpy tracks which are slightly elevated above the surrounding land and are bordered by drains, dykes and ditches. They are also often lined with rows of small scale leaning telegraph poles which indicate the soft nature of the ground beneath. There is limited public access on foot with only a few short dead end public rights of way. The Boston to Skegness rail link cuts through the north western corner of the area.

Heritage features include the drainage system itself which maps out the reclamation of the land from the open fen. Lade Bridge pumping station was built on the historic Hobhole Fen. There are a few Listed Buildings and derelict farm building and cottages which used to house the larger workforce that was required to work the land in the past before widespread mechanisation and intensified farming methods.

Large scale pylons march through the whole area and are a contrasting modern influence in an otherwise rural landscape. Overall this area can be described as an intact, remote and tranquil, working agricultural landscape.

A2 Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen



Forces for Change

- Agricultural intensification has led to the loss of hedgerows and the amalgamation of fields for the large scale production of arable crops.
- New housing developments on the boundary with *Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen* at Wrangle Bank.
- Occasional abandoned and derelict traditional farm and field buildings and dwellings.
- Expansion and modernisation of the infrastructure associated with intensive agriculture, including a very large processing plant.
- Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes, affecting the appearance of buffer strips around arable fields edges and dyke vegetation, through changed farming and management practices.

A2 Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen



Landscape Sensitivity

Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen is a distinctive but relatively small intact rural landscape with few detractors. The aspect is largely open and flat and a small number of tree shelterbelts and hedgerows provide only a very limited degree of enclosure. Views towards new developments would be difficult to restrict from the small number of sensitive viewers within the landscape and especially those viewing it from roads elevated on embankments. There is some potential for reducing landscape and visual impacts as described below.

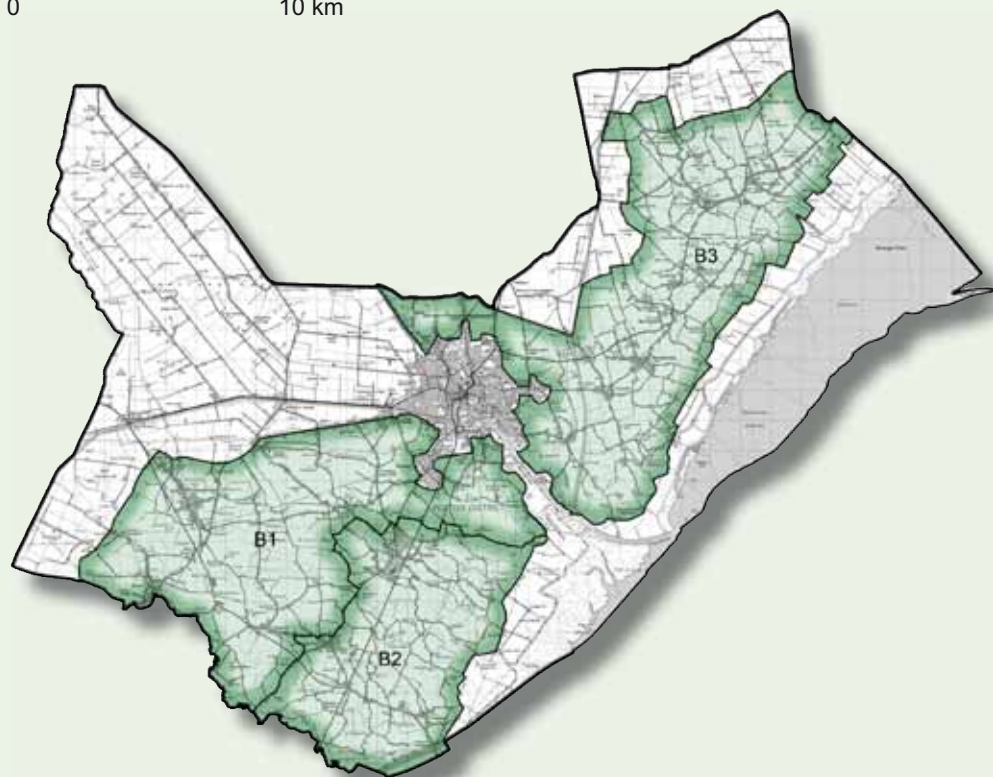
Any development should take into account the geometric pattern, scale and rural characteristics of the area including the sense of remoteness, scarcity of built elements, the linear format of the landscape and the importance of the drainage network. Any new developments should be positioned carefully to use existing and new screening, without impacting upon the existing open character. The number of future developments should be limited and concentrated around existing settlement or developments whilst still retaining the existing dispersed pattern of farmsteads, dwellings, rows of former workers' cottages and hamlets.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen* is considered to be **moderate to high**.

B Settled Fen Landscape Character Type

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0 10 km



Landscape Character Type - Description

The *Settled Fen* Landscape Character Type lies between the *Reclaimed Saltmarsh* towards the coast and the *Reclaimed Fen* which is inland from this character type.

The area is underlain by Jurassic clays which in turn are overlain by Terrington beds of marine deposits and tidal creek and river deposits. They are covered by a mix of fertile calcareous and typical alluvial gley and pelo-alluvial gley soils. There are some small areas of man-made salterns. This area which is known locally as the Siltlands or Townlands sits on a very slightly elevated arc set back from The Wash. Some of these surface deposits were laid down recently when sea inlets extended to many of the settlements in the area.

The generally flat landscape allows long distance views interrupted only by settlements and associated shelterbelts and trees. Other vertical elements such as traditional windmills, church towers and spires, and poplar trees stand out in these views.

The land use is predominantly arable farming with some horticulture and associated glasshouses, large packing sheds and food processing plants. Occasional fields of pasture remain. Overall the landscape has an irregular, organic pattern formed by winding roads and watercourses which is older than the more regular, geometric pattern found in the *Reclaimed Fen* character type. The scale and arrangement of these patterns distinguishes between the different character areas within this type. Where the pattern is larger scale the fields tends to be geometric whereas in the smaller scale areas they remain more irregular and organic. Some areas are more mixed having both of these patterns.

Trees are confined to settlements and shelterbelts, occasional hedgerows and small blocks of mixed woodland. The frequent small historic settlements are often found on marginally raised areas with farmsteads and other dwellings scattered between along the roadsides throughout. This early settled landscape has many heritage features scattered throughout and is a distinctive working agricultural landscape which is evidently continuing to evolve.

B1 Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen

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0 5 km



Key Characteristics

- A largely flat landform slightly elevated above the adjacent drained fenland.
- Open views with big skies.
- Views to landmark water towers, and church towers and spires set amongst mature trees in historic villages. Other visible landmarks include the windfarm at Bicker and Boston Stump.
- An intact working rural landscape.
- Settlement pattern of widely spread villages, often medieval in origin, with farmsteads and dwellings scattered in between.
- Scattered agricultural buildings, horticultural glasshouses, packing sheds, poultry sheds, food processing plants and distribution centres which are of a mix of styles and ages.
- A relatively large scale organic network of winding roads is infilled by a geometric field pattern of predominantly arable fields.
- Generally tree cover is sparse with occasional hedgerows and hedgerow trees and infrequent blocks of mixed woodland.
- A scattering of visible heritage features with archaeological earthworks including medieval moated sites and saltern mounds, Listed Buildings and some designated Conservation Areas within historic villages.
- Towards the outskirts of Boston there are more modern influences including converging rows of large scale pylons and new recreational sites.
- A distinctive, cohesive and legibly evolving agricultural landscape, which is peaceful in parts but not particularly remote.

B1 Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen



Landscape Character Description

Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen is located to the west of Boston town. It is bounded by *Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen* to the south east and east, South Holland District boundary to the south west and New Hammond Beck and *Holland Reclaimed Fen* to the north. At its eastern tip it abuts the outskirts of Boston town.

This area is underlain by Jurassic clays which are overlain by Terrington Beds of marine deposits, and tidal creek and river deposits. These are in turn overlain by a mix of fertile calcareous and typical alluvial gley soils with one small isolated area of stagnogley soils near Kirton Holme. It forms part of the fertile and subtly raised arc of Siltlands or Townlands just inland from The Wash.

The area is generally flat but with some localised undulations created by saltern mounds, such as those found to the south and east of Bicker. Views are generally open with big skies and wide horizons. However settlements and their associated trees and shelterbelts provide some localised visual enclosure. Landmark views include those to Bicker windfarm (outside the area), Boston Stump, and to church towers and spires within the area.

This is clearly a continually evolving working agricultural landscape. This is evident with the mix of styles and ages of farm dwellings, buildings, sheds and associated horticultural glasshouses, packing sheds and food processing plants found scattered across the area. There are also some new recreational sites which include the golf course at Kirton Holme and a small leisure complex with fishing ponds on the outskirts of Boston town.

There is a strong pattern of relatively large scale, winding roads infilled by a geometric field pattern of predominantly arable fields. The diverse mix of crops grown here include wheat, beet, brassicas, potatoes and maize. In addition there are occasional fields grazed by sheep.

B1 Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen



Generally tree cover is sparse with occasional isolated deciduous trees on field boundaries and a limited number of hedgerows. Short rows of poplar and coniferous shelter belts are a repeated element within the landscape around dwellings and farmsteads. Many settlements are set within mature plantings of mixed ornamental trees. Small areas on the outskirts of Boston have been planted with young trees as amenity woodland forming part of the Boston Woods Project.

The settlement pattern consists of widely spread villages with farmsteads and dwellings scattered in between. There are also occasional field buildings and infrequent scattered ruins of traditional farm cottages which are likely to have been originally built for farm workers. There has been settlement in this area since before medieval times. Villages such as Bicker were originally harbours on sea inlets which have since silted up.

Generally the style and age of buildings are mixed throughout the area. This is also reflected within and on the outskirts of and within villages with incremental housing developments contributing to the ongoing evolution of the character of many villages. Notable amongst these are the Swedish style timber houses reportedly built in the nineteen forties and fifties in Bicker and the colourful homes which have been built more recently on the expanding outskirts of the village.

The area is rich in visible heritage features which include scattered Listed Buildings, Wyberton Park, the remains of the nearby Swineshead Abbey with its earthworks and dyings, and the saltern mounds around Bicker. There are also medieval moated earthworks at Manwarings and at Wybert's Castle just outside Boston town. There are also several designated village Conservation Areas.

A relatively large scale organic network of winding minor roads and tracks is bisected by two busy A roads, the A16(T) and A52, which radiate out from Boston town. These A roads are linked by the A17 which runs west from King's Lynn towards Newark. Many commercial developments such as motels, car sales and retail parks, can be found alongside these major

B1 Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen



roads, especially towards the outskirts of Boston town. There are very few public rights of way and those which do exist only form localised links around villages and between small settlements.

The predominantly rural character of this area is more influenced by urban features on the south eastern outskirts of Boston with a scattering of industrial units which straddle the character area boundary with Boston town. There are also views to a landfill site in *Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh* and to tall cranes working in Boston port on the Haven. In addition, there are several rows of large scale pylons which converge on the town. The remaining urban edge of Boston is mostly well defined by residential housing developments that back onto arable agricultural land. The village of Wyberton also extends out into intact farmland and due to infill housing developments appears to be merging with Boston town. These urban influences are limited to this locality and overall this character area can be described as an intact working rural landscape which is peaceful in parts but not particularly remote.

B1 Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen



Forces for Change

- Expansion and modernisation of the infrastructure associated with intensive agriculture.
- New sustainable housing on the edge of Bicker village.
- Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes, are affecting the appearance of buffer strips around arable fields edges and dyke vegetation, through changed farming and management practices.
- Boston Woods Project with small areas of newly planted amenity woodland.
- Views to Bicker windfarm outside the character area.
- Urban expansion on the outskirts Boston town including leisure, residential, industrial and commercial developments which could in future merge with outlying settlements.
- Housing development over the last decade expanding villages such as Swineshead.

B1 Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen



Landscape Sensitivity

Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen is a fairly distinctive and intact working landscape with some detractors. The open and flat landscape with shelterbelts and settlements provides a low level of visual enclosure over much of the area. These are unlikely to help to screen future changes to the landscape to the moderate number of sensitive viewers in the area. There is a higher than average potential for reducing landscape and visual impacts in this area as described below.

Any development should be designed to fit the existing pattern, scale and component elements of this agricultural landscape to fit with its evolving character. Location of future developments should also take advantage of the few existing screening elements and not further visually clutter the landscape. Location of future developments should be concentrated around existing settlements or developments near to the main roads to prevent any further loss of the rural landscape. At the same time developments should be designed to avoid the reduction of the openness of views by merging developments or the planting of large screening belts. Further merging of settlements with Boston town would result in further loss of the rural landscape.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen* is considered to be **moderate**. There may be less sensitive areas on the immediate outskirts of Boston due to the urban influences, but site specific assessments would be required to confirm this.

B2 Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen

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0 5 km



Key Characteristics

- A largely flat farmed landscape with a patchwork of predominantly arable fields with some pasture.
- Open views with big skies.
- Views to landmark church towers and spires set amongst mature trees in historic villages. Other visible landmarks include Boston Stump and the windfarm at Bicker.
- Tree cover is generally sparse with occasional hedgerows and trees and infrequent blocks of mixed woodland.
- Some areas under Environmental Stewardship Schemes have more rangy hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- A small scale landscape pattern of winding narrow roads enclosing small irregularly shaped fields bounded by dykes and ditches.
- Some agricultural buildings, horticultural glasshouses, packing sheds and food processing plants which are of a mix of styles and ages.
- A marina at Fosdyke.
- Scattered heritage features of archaeological earthworks, Listed Buildings and designated Conservation Areas within historic villages.
- Limited large scale modern influences include rows of pylons and views to working cranes at Boston port.
- An intact, fairly remote and evolving working rural landscape.

B2 Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen



Landscape Character Description

Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen is located to the south west of *Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen*, east of South Holland District and north west of the relict sea bank, which forms the boundary with *Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh* to the south east.

This area is underlain by Jurassic clays which are overlain by Terrington Beds of marine deposits, and tidal creek and river deposits. These are overlain by a mix of fertile calcareous and typical alluvial gley soils. It forms part of the subtly raised arc of Siltlands or Townlands just inland from The Wash.

This area is generally flat with open views and big skies. There is a some visual enclosure provided by tree shelterbelts around farmsteads and dwellings, and mature ornamental trees around and within villages.

It is a working agricultural landscape which is continuing to evolve. Evidence of this is found in the mix of style and age of farm dwellings, buildings, sheds and associated scattered horticultural glasshouses, packing sheds and food processing plants. A marina can also be found at Fosdyke on the River Welland.

This area has a distinctive small scale landscape pattern which is created by narrow winding roads, ditches and dykes which enclose the small, irregularly shaped fields. The landuse is predominantly arable farming which produces a diverse mix of crops including wheat, beet, brassicas, potatoes, and maize. However there are some pastoral fields with grazing cows, sheep and horses.

Tree cover is generally sparse with short rows of poplars and coniferous shelter belts being a repeated element within the landscape, enclosing dwellings and farmsteads. Kirton in particular has a high level of tree cover within and around it. In addition there are occasional small blocks of deciduous woodland.

B2 Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen



South of Kirton is an area which reflects localised and relatively recent changes in farming practices where Environmental Stewardship Schemes have supported widespread, ongoing hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting along with a greater proportion of pasture than in other areas. This combined with the small scale irregular fields and winding roads, has resulted in increased visual enclosure and created a localised more intimate landscape.

The early settlement pattern consisted of widely spread villages with farmsteads and roadside dwellings scattered in between. There has been settlement in this area since before medieval times. Consequently, it is rich in heritage features and designations which include Algarkirk Park, a small area of parkland with a shrunken medieval village, sea banks, a scattering of Listed Buildings, some village Conservation Areas, and medieval moated sites at Sandholme and in the vicinity of Frampton. The disused water tower in Sutterton is also a heritage feature which stands opposite to and contrasts with a thatched mud and stud village building. In addition there is a scattering of derelict farm cottages and field buildings, which are no longer in use due to changing farming practices.

Minor urban influences include the busy A16(T) road and the A17 which link to the A52. These main roads have some larger scale commercial developments associated with them and there is a marina at Fosdyke Bridge.

Overall these urban influences are very limited, and away from the roads this area can be described as an intact, relatively remote and tranquil working rural landscape.

B2 Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen



Forces for Change

- Changing farm practices associated with Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes. These are affecting the vegetation and appearance of field edges and dyke vegetation. In particular the higher level schemes in this area are affecting character through new tree and hedgerow planting.
- The marina at Fosdyke Bridge.
- Expansion and modernisation of the infrastructure associated with intensive agriculture.
- Views to Bicker windfarm outside of the character area.
- Housing development over the last decade expanding villages such as Kirton and Sutterton.
- Construction of a major storage and distribution park near Kirton and industrial estates such as the one at Sutterton.

B2 Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen



Landscape Sensitivity

Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen is a distinctive very intact working agricultural landscape with few detractors. The landscape is generally open and flat with some hedgerows, shelterbelts and settlements providing intermittent enclosure over much of the area. Other localised areas have more visual enclosure due to recent tree and hedgerow planting which may help to screen future changes to the landscape to the small numbers of sensitive viewers in the area. There is some potential for reducing landscape and visual impacts as described below.

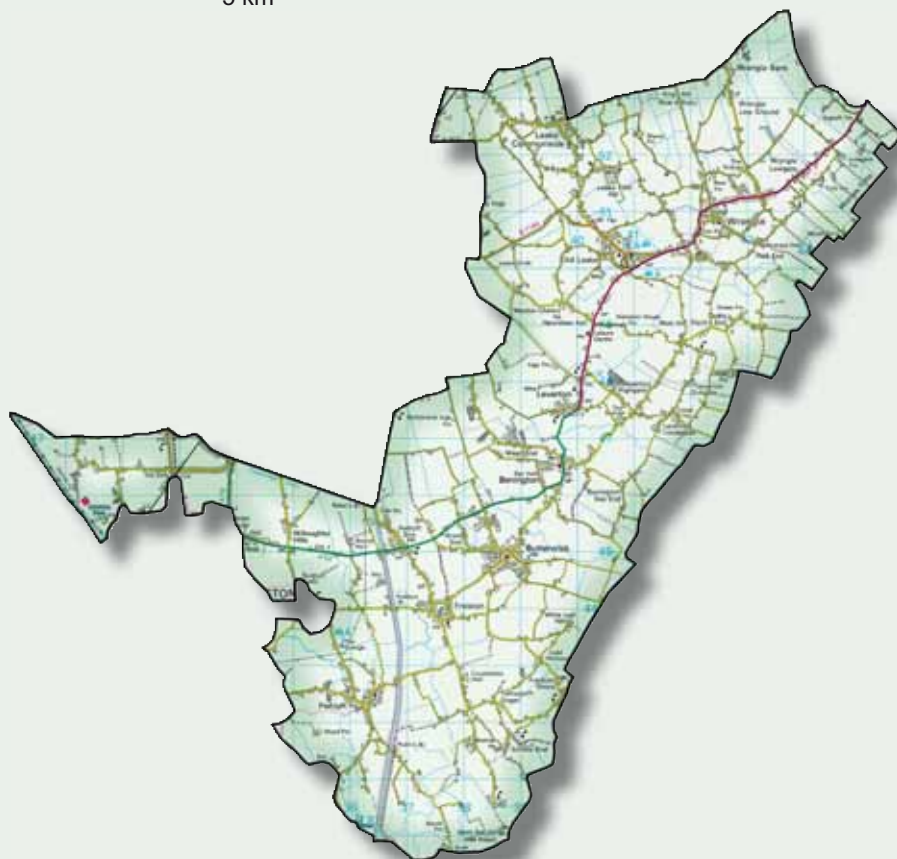
Any development should be designed to fit the organic pattern, intimate scale, and component elements of the landscape in order to fit with its distinctive character. The positioning of future developments should also take advantage of the existing screening elements already and should not visually clutter the landscape. The location of any new development should be concentrated around existing settlements and developments to prevent any further loss of the rural landscape.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen* is considered to be **moderate to high**.

B3 Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen

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Key Characteristics

- Largely flat, but slightly elevated above the drained fenland to the west and the reclaimed coastal marsh to the east.
- Some open views with big skies and others foreshortened by settlements within groups of trees.
- Views to windmills, water towers, and church towers and spires set amongst mature trees in villages. Also to Boston Pilgrim Hospital and Boston Stump.
- A small to medium scale pattern of winding roads, ditches and dykes infilled with a mix of both geometric and irregularly shaped arable fields.
- An evolving intensively farmed landscape with associated large scale infrastructure of glasshouses, packing sheds and food processing plants.
- Fertile soils with multiple croppings per year.
- A distinctive line of historic villages along the busy and winding A52 road, with a string of many smaller settlements and dwellings in between.
- Scattered hamlets, farmsteads and dwellings alongside minor roads in the rest of the area.
- A scattering of visible heritage features including archaeological earthworks, Listed Buildings and designated Conservation Areas in villages.
- Visible references to WWII with gun emplacements and pillboxes alongside sea banks, bridges and along the Hobhole Drain.
- Relatively tranquil away from the A52 but not remote with the frequent traffic of farm workers, farm and goods vehicles.

B3 Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen



Landscape Character Description

Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen is located to the north and east of Boston town. It is enclosed by the sea banks which form the boundary with *Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh* to the south east and *Wrangle Bank* which forms the boundary with *Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen* to the north.

This area is underlain by Jurassic clays which are overlain by Terrington Beds of older marine deposits, and tidal creek and river deposits. There is a significant strip of older storm beach deposits, silt and very fine grained sand which forms the very fertile and subtly raised silt ridge known as the Townlands. Localised medieval saltern mounds known locally as the Tofts are found here. Soils are a particularly fertile mix of calcareous and typical alluvial gley soils which support multiple crops per year.

It is a largely flat, open landscape with views to big skies. Some enclosure is provided by scattered settlements, farmsteads and dwellings which are set within the shelter of tree groups and belts. These contain conifers, poplars and other ornamental trees. There are views to windmills, water towers, and church towers and spires also set amongst mature trees in frequent historic villages. There are also long distance views to the Lincolnshire Wolds in East Lindsey to the north.

This is a continually evolving working agricultural landscape, which is apparent by the evident mix of ages, condition and styles of farm dwellings, buildings, sheds. Also there are large scale horticultural glasshouses, packing sheds, and food processing plants, many of which are active twenty four hours a day.

There is a distinctive small to medium scale pattern of winding roads, ditches and dykes which are infilled with a mix of both geometric and irregularly shaped arable fields. This pattern varies, being smaller scale and more sinuous around the villages in the south, and more rectilinear and slightly larger scale

B3 Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen



towards the north. There is a localised area of narrow rectilinear fields in the north east of the character area adjacent to *Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh* area known as Wrangle Tofts which were medieval salterns. There is also a transitional area between this character area and *Wrangle Common to Freiston Ings Reclaimed Fen* where the scale and pattern of fields and roads is gradually changes between the two character areas.

The land is intensively farmed producing multiple crops of brassicas in some fields and a mix of other crops including wheat, beet, potatoes and maize in other areas. There are also occasional fields of pasture and horse paddocks.

Tree cover is generally sparse with occasional isolated deciduous trees on field boundaries and few hedgerows. Short rows of poplar and coniferous shelter belts are a repeated element within the landscape, screening dwellings and farmsteads. Tree sheltered settlements are scattered throughout and contribute strongly to the overall landscape character. A nature reserve at Hobhole Bank has large areas of scrub which provide a refuge for a variety of birds including many passerines.

This early settled landscape forms part of the subtly elevated arc of Siltlands or Townlands. The settlements consist of a line of historic villages along the A52 road which are virtually linked by an almost continuous string of smaller settlements and dwellings. Farmsteads and dwellings are frequently distributed alongside the network of minor roads to either side of the A52.

There has been settlement in this area since before medieval times and it is rich in heritage features which include a scattering of Listed Buildings and several designated village Conservation Areas. One historic landmark feature is the medieval Rochford Tower to the east of Boston town. Windmills are a more frequent feature of this area and can be found at Leake, Wrangle Tofts and Freiston Shore. There are also reminders of WWII with defensive structures including gun emplacements and pillboxes located alongside the large drains and near strategic bridges.

B3 Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen



Minor urban influences include the winding, busy A52 with its associated visual clutter of signage, lighting, large scale sheds and commercial developments. The interface between Boston and this character area is well defined with fingers of residential housing developments, including some new ones, extending out into the intact agricultural fields. Other urban influences include a small industrial site on the southern edges of Boston, the North Sea Camp Prison and a sewage works alongside the Haven and outside but adjacent to this area. A golf course and country park are found on the northern outskirts of Boston town.

These urban influences are confined to the landscape around Boston and along the A52. Overall the area can be described as an intact, intensively farmed working landscape, with the frequent associated traffic of farm workers, farm machinery and goods transport vehicles.

B3 Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen



Forces for Change

- Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes, are affecting the appearance of buffer strips around arable field edges and dyke vegetation, through changed farming and management practices.
- Expansion and modernisation of the infrastructure associated with intensive agriculture.
- Boston Woods project areas of new and planned amenity woodland around the edges of Boston town.
- Urban expansion on the outskirts Boston town including leisure, residential, industrial and commercial developments which could in future merge with outlying settlements.
- Housing development over the last decade expanding villages such as Butterwick and Old Leake.

B3 Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen



Landscape Sensitivity

Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen is a distinctive and very intact worked landscape with some detractors. The open and flat landscape, shelterbelts and settlements provide some enclosure over much of the area which may help to screen future changes to the landscape to the moderate number of sensitive viewers in the area. There is some potential for reducing landscape and visual impacts as described below.

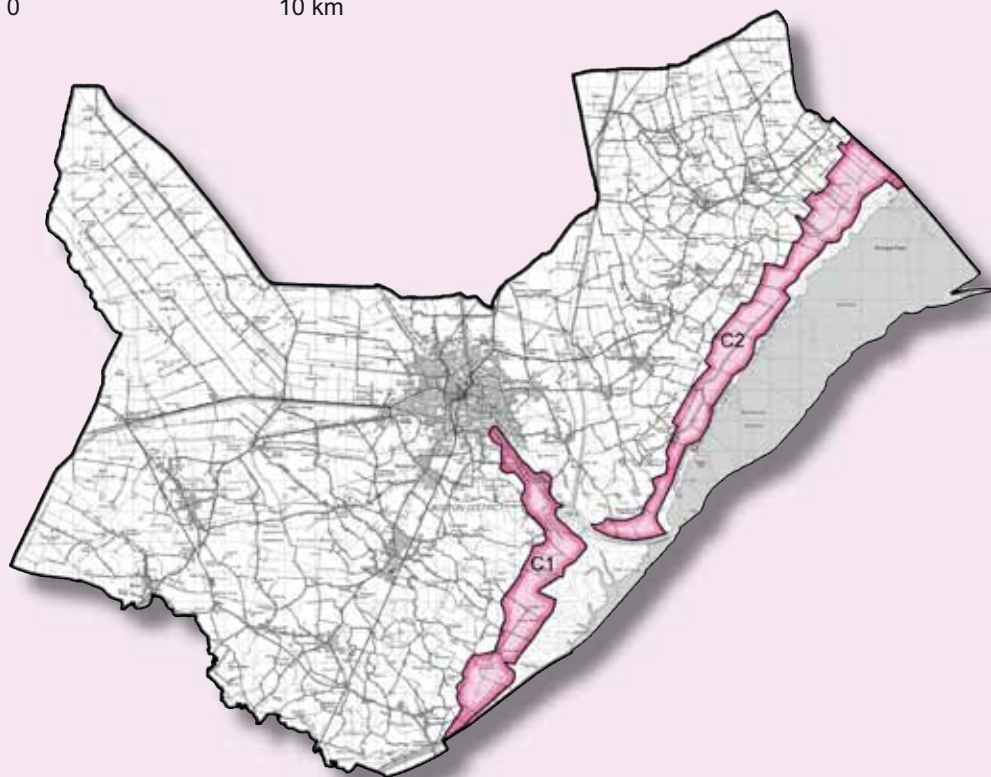
Any development should be designed to fit the mixed pattern, scale and character of the existing agricultural landscape and its component elements. The location of future developments should take advantage of the screening elements already existing in the landscape and be concentrated around existing settlements or developments, particularly along the A52 road to prevent any further loss of the rural landscape. However, it is recommended that further cluttering of the landscape around the A52, a reduction in the openness of views by planting large screening belts or the merging of villages along this road in particular should be avoided. Areas where a historic pattern and character remain, such as Wrangle Tofts, should be conserved and retained.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen* is considered to be **moderate to high**.

C Reclaimed Saltmarsh Landscape Character Type

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Landscape Character Type - Description

The *Reclaimed Saltmarsh* Landscape Character Type lies between the *Settled Fen* and the coastal *Wash Saltmarsh* character types.

This area has been reclaimed from the sea and is surrounded by a series of sea banks. It is underlain by the intertidal and sub tidal saltmarsh deposits of The Wash. The resultant fertile soils are classified as calcareous alluvial gley soils.

The area is flat with raised sea banks around the edges which run parallel to the coastline. These sea banks were created to reclaim land from the sea for agriculture and their construction began possibly before medieval times and has continued into the twentieth century. Views within the area are foreshortened by the sea banks especially by those which have tree and hedgerow cover. However, there are still some long distance views from the top of the sea banks across The Wash and the flat areas of land to the north.

The land is now mostly used for arable farming with large geometric fields bounded by drains, dykes and ditches. Cattle are frequently grazed on the sea banks. There are only a few buildings within the area which consist of infrequent farmsteads. The Boston Wash Banks project has created new sites which combine flood alleviation and nature conservation within this area.

Farm tracks run perpendicular to the sea banks and there are infrequent straight minor roads. Public rights of way along the top of sea banks provide linear routes along boundaries of and in some cases across the character areas. Trees in the landscape are found in shelterbelts around farmsteads and along the tops and sides of some sea banks.

C1 Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh

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Key Characteristics

- A fairly remote man-made, flat landscape of reclaimed saltmarsh which is surrounded and enclosed by sea banks of varying ages.
- Views to big skies within the area are contained at ground level by grassed and hedged sea banks.
- Longer views from the tops of the sea banks extend towards The Wash and the Norfolk coast.
- The inner part of the Haven is a major estuarine inlet and shipping channel leading to Boston port and is contained by large embankments.
- A predominantly geometric pattern of medium to large scale fields bordered by open ditches and dykes.
- Land use is a mix of pasture and intensive arable and pasture for cattle, and also small areas for the outdoor rearing of pigs.
- Tree and hedgerow cover is mostly confined to the inland relict sea bank and also shelter belts around farmsteads and dwellings.
- Sparsely populated with occasional farmsteads and dwellings.
- Limited access via a very small number of minor roads and farm tracks.
- A long distance footpath, the Macmillan Way, runs along the top of the coastal sea bank.
- A newly constructed extension to Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve.
- The area includes the Havenside Country Park, landfill site and sewage works alongside the Haven downstream from Boston town.

C1 Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh



Landscape Character Description

Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh is a small area of reclaimed land surrounded and enclosed by sea banks. It extends from the southern extremity of Boston town and includes areas along both sides of the Haven to the east of Fosdyke Bridge where the River Welland opens out onto the *Wash Saltmarsh*. It lies between the inland *Frampton to Fosdyke* and *Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fens*, and the coastal *Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh*.

This area has been reclaimed from the sea and is underlain by the intertidal and sub tidal saltmarsh deposits of The Wash. The resultant fertile soils are classified as calcareous alluvial gley soils.

This low lying man-made landscape is bordered by raised sea banks of varying ages. The area is characterised by its relative remoteness with big skies and peaceful panoramas across seas of cereal and strips of brassica crops with tranquil views to cattle grazing on the sea banks. Views within the area are foreshortened by the sea banks at lower levels. Longer views from the tops of the sea banks extend towards the more populated *Settled Fens*, Boston Stump, The Wash, the Norfolk coast and also along the Haven shipping inlet to Boston port.

The inland line of relict sea banks are grassed and partially covered by hedges and trees including some rows of poplars. The seaward sea bank is grassed and grazed by cattle. The enclosed area in between the sea banks is infilled with a geometric pattern of medium to large to scale fields bordered by ditches and dykes. These fields are mainly used for crops such as brassicas and wheat, but there are also occasional fields of pasture. A few fields are used for the outdoor rearing of pigs. Other landuses include the landfill site, sewage works, and Havenside Country Park which is also a nature reserve alongside the Haven on the outskirts of Boston town.

C1 Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh



A recent change in the land use of a small part of this area has been the extension of Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve in *Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh* into this area by rewetting formerly reclaimed and cultivated fields. This area has been designed and constructed as a combined nature reserve and flood alleviation scheme. It is a new and evolving landscape which has a mix of man-made straight and meandering watercourses, scrapes, lakes and access paths, with natural vegetation cover colonising the area. The new vegetation types have not yet matured but will eventually provide a range of habitats for a variety of wildlife and in particular for waterfowl and waders.

Tree and hedgerow cover is mostly confined to the inland relict sea bank and shelter belts around farmsteads and dwellings. There are occasional small blocks of woodland and also an area of new screen tree planting around the landfill site on the outskirts of Boston town.

Settlement is sparse and takes the form of occasional farmsteads and dwellings of mixed styles and ages. Large farm sheds are found alongside many of the farms.

A series of minor raised roads and tracks run perpendicularly across the relict sea bank from *Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen* towards the coast. Occasional footpaths lead to coastal sea banks linked by the Macmillan Way, a long distance footpath which runs along the top of the coastal sea bank.

Heritage features include the sea banks which are a record of past changes in landuse and the historical practice of controlling and reclaiming land from the sea.

There are some modern influences which include large scale pylons striding across the area towards Boston town, the landfill site and the sewage works on the outskirts of Boston town alongside the Haven.

C1 Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh



Forces for Change

- Grazing of the coastal sea banks.
- The extension of Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve changing the land use from agriculture to nature conservation and flood alleviation.
- New screen tree planting around Boston landfill site.
- Extension of urban influences on the outskirts of Boston town.
- Further intensification of farming methods.
- New tree and hedgerow planting.
- Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes, affecting the vegetation and appearance of field edges and dykes, particularly the buffer strips around field edges through changed farming management and practices.

C1 Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh



Landscape Sensitivity

Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh is a relatively distinctive and intact rural landscape with some urban influences in the vicinity of the Haven and the outskirts of Boston. A small part of it has already undergone recent changes in land use highlighted above. The landform is flat and partially enclosed in places by the sea banks and associated trees and hedgerows, which restricts views to the adjacent landscape character areas. Views towards new developments will be difficult to restrict from the several sensitive viewers who live and drive along the few narrow elevated roads, those walking along the Macmillan Way, other public rights of way and those visiting Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve. There is some potential for reducing landscape and visual impacts as described below.

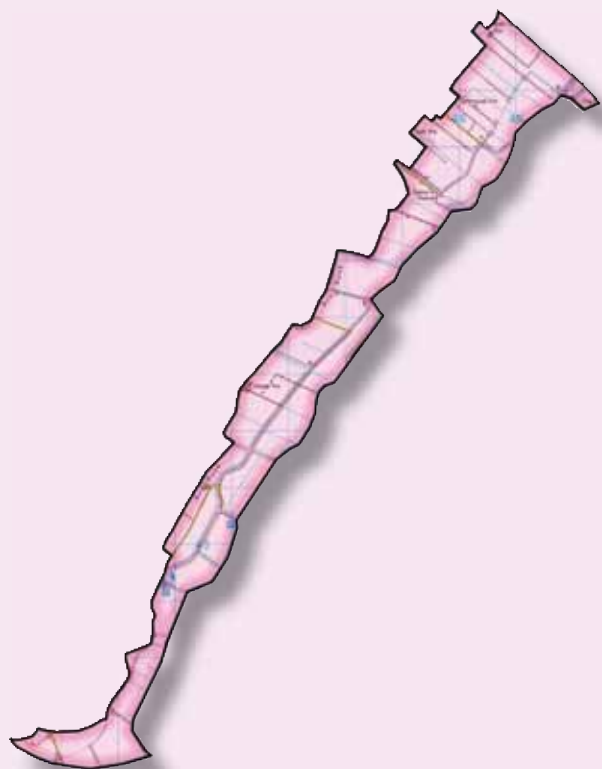
Any development should take into account the pattern, scale and rural characteristics of the area including the scarcity of built elements. Positioning of new developments should carefully consider designs for screening that are in keeping with the existing character. The location of future developments should be concentrated around existing settlements or developments on the outskirts of Boston town to prevent any further fragmentation or loss of the rural landscape. Existing characteristic landscape features which provide screening such as the sea banks should be protected and retained.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh* is considered to be **moderate**. The landscape may be less sensitive on the immediate outskirts of Boston due to the urban influences described above.

C2 Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh

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Key Characteristics

- A fairly remote man-made flat landscape of reclaimed saltmarsh surrounded and enclosed by a series of sea banks of varying ages.
- Open views with big skies within the area are enclosed in the mid-distance at ground level by grassed and hedged sea banks.
- Longer views from the tops of the sea banks extend towards Boston, The Wash, the Norfolk coast and the offshore windfarm near Skegness.
- A geometric pattern of medium to large scale fields containing crops such as wheat and brassicas bordered by open ditches and dykes.
- Grazing cattle on the sea banks.
- Tree and hedgerow cover is mostly confined to the inland relict sea bank and also shelterbelts around farmsteads and dwellings.
- Sparsely populated with occasional farmsteads and dwellings.
- The recently created Freiston Shore Nature Reserve has returned a reclaimed area to coastal saltmarshes with lagoons and wet grassland.
- Visible references to WWII in the form of strategic gun emplacements and pillboxes along sea banks.
- Access is limited with very occasional minor roads and several farm tracks perpendicular to sea banks with elevated footpaths.

C2 Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh



Landscape Character Description

Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh is a narrow strip of reclaimed saltmarsh which runs parallel to and in between the inland *Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen* and the coastal *Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh*. It extends from the District boundary with East Lindsey in the north to the entrance to the Haven in the south.

This area has been reclaimed from the sea and is surrounded by sea banks. It is underlain by the intertidal and subtidal saltmarsh deposits of The Wash. The resultant fertile soils are classified as calcareous alluvial gley soils.

This low lying man-made landscape is enclosed and crossed by a series of sea banks of varying ages. The area is characterised by its relative remoteness with big skies and wide open views across open fields. Views within the area are foreshortened by sea banks. Other elevated views from the public footpaths running along many of the tops of the sea banks extend to Boston Stump, Boston Pilgrim Hospital, and *Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen*. They also extend along the embankments of the Haven shipping inlet to Boston port, to the Norfolk coast and the offshore windfarm near Skegness.

The line of relict sea banks on the inland side of the character area are grassed and partially covered by hedges with some deciduous trees including poplars. The seaward sea bank is grassed and grazed by cattle. The enclosed area within the sea banks is divided into a predominantly geometric pattern of medium to large scale fields which are bordered by drains, dykes and ditches. These fields are mainly used for arable crops such as brassicas and wheat.

A recent change in land use in a small part of this area is the extension of Freiston Shore Nature Reserve in *Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh* into this previously drained area which had been reclaimed from the sea. This has been achieved by the removal of sections of protective coastal sea banks allowing the sea to wash in and this area revert back to saltmarsh with a series of lagoons. However, the geometric field pattern has not yet been entirely extinguished and the landform and landcover of this area is still in flux.

C2 Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh



Settlement is sparse and takes the form of occasional farms and dwellings of mixed styles and ages. Limited screening is provided by trees and hedgerows within the character area, which are mainly confined to the sea embankments bounding and crossing the area.

Access is limited, with a series of slightly elevated minor roads and farm tracks bordered by dykes and several public footpaths which run across the lines of sea banks which link *Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen* to the coast. Most of the other sea banks also have elevated public footpaths running along their tops.

The clear presence and arrangement of the sea banks in this character area tells the story of the reclamation of the land from the sea and its subsequent cultivation. Several pillboxes sunk into the embankments, are a strong reminder of WWII.

Overall this area can be described as a fairly remote, distinctive, mainly farmed landscape, with some recent change in landuse as highlighted above.

C2 Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh



Forces for change

- Grazing of the coastal sea banks.
- The extension of Freiston Shore Nature Reserve changing the land use from agriculture to nature conservation and flood alleviation.
- Intensification of farming methods.
- Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes, affecting the vegetation and appearance of field edges and dykes, particularly the buffer strips around field edges through changed farming management and practices.

C2 Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh



Landscape Sensitivity

Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh is a fairly distinctive and relatively intact rural landscape with some urban influences present within views beyond its boundaries. It has undergone recent changes returning a part of it to a more naturalistic landscape governed in part by natural processes rather than the existing managed agricultural one. The landform is flat and it is partially visually enclosed by the sea banks and associated trees and hedgerows in places. These restrict views within the area and beyond to the adjacent landscape character areas. Views towards new developments would be difficult to restrict from the several sensitive viewers walking along the sea bank footpaths including those visiting Freiston Shore Nature Reserve. There is some potential for reducing landscape and visual impacts as described below.

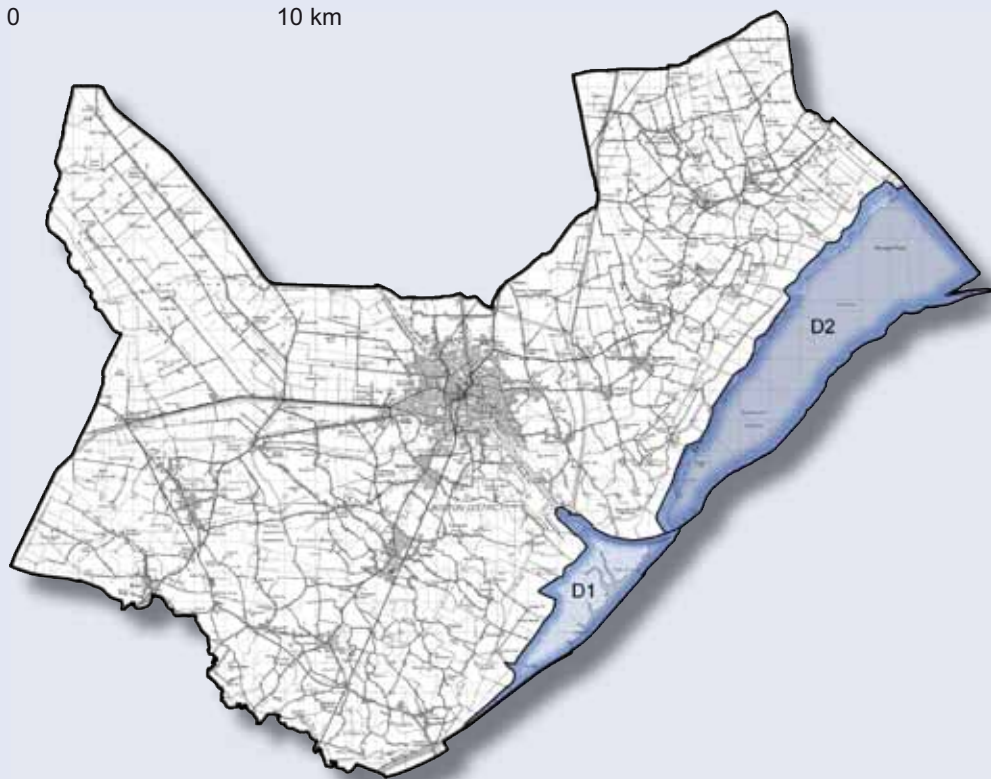
Any development should take into account the pattern, scale and rural characteristics of the area including the scarcity of built elements. Positioning of new developments should carefully consider ways of screening in keeping with the existing but changing character of the area. The location of future developments should be concentrated around existing settlements to prevent any further fragmentation or loss of the rural landscape. Existing characteristic landscape features which provide screening such as the sea banks should be protected and retained.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh* is considered to be **moderate to high**.

D Wash Saltmarsh Landscape Character Type

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Landscape Character Type - Description

The *Wash Saltmarsh* Landscape Character Type is located on the expansive tidal flats where Boston Borough meets The Wash. The area is enclosed by sea banks to the north west which form the boundary with the *Reclaimed Saltmarsh* Landscape Character Type. There are open seas to the south east.

This is a tidal area which regularly changes from landscape to seascape with the ebb and flow of the tide. It is underlain by the intertidal and subtidal muds, sands and saltmarsh deposits of The Wash.

It is a simple, wild landscape which consists of large expanses of flat, open tidal saltmarshes, sand and mudflats, with virtually no man-made structures.

Views are restricted towards the mainland by sea banks, on the boundary of the character areas and within the adjacent landscape character areas. The views to the east are open and expansive and extend out to sea, to the Norfolk coast and to the offshore windfarm near Skegness.

Within the area there is an absence of built development, man-made features, farmland, roads and trees. However, cattle graze on the saltmarshes and the adjacent sea banks.

The area is of international and national importance for nature conservation and is particularly important for resident and migrating wildfowl, and wader birds. It also serves as a resource for recreation and traditional saltmarsh activities.

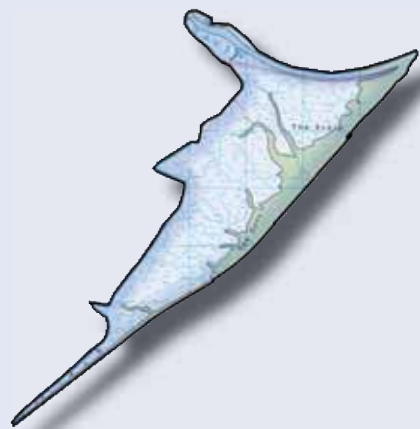
Access is extremely limited with one public footpath along the top of the Haven Bank extending into one area. Footpaths extend along the tops of the sea banks on the character area boundaries overlook the character areas.

This is a very distinctive and unspoilt coastal landscape.

D1 Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh

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Key Characteristics

- An extensive area of open saltmarsh and intertidal winding mud and sand flats, and mud creeks.
- Tidal areas which regularly change from landscape to seascape with the tides. Occasional flooding by the sea in other areas.
- Includes the estuarine entrances contained by the large flood embankments to the River Welland and the Haven with the shipping channel leading to Boston port.
- A largely inaccessible, remote and wild landscape.
- Views with big skies and wide horizons across The Wash to Norfolk are influenced by the changing tides, light and weather conditions.
- A rich carpet mosaic of saltmarsh vegetation, provides grazing for saltmarsh beef cattle and habitat for wildlife.
- Open sand and mudflats provide further valuable habitats for wildfowl and wading birds.
- Protected by many international and national nature conservation designations.
- Built structures are virtually absent and there are no roads, and only one track.
- Occasional reminders of WWII with pillboxes and gun emplacements on embankments alongside the Haven.
- A very distinctive and unspoilt coastal landscape.

D1 Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh



Landscape Character Description

Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh is an intertidal zone which lies off of the coast between the estuaries of the River Welland and the Haven. It extends approximately two kilometres out to sea and includes areas known as the Scalp and the Cots.

The tidal parts of this area regularly change from landscape to seascape with the ebb and flow of the tide and the other areas are also occasionally inundated by the sea. It is underlain by the intertidal and subtidal muds, sands and saltmarsh deposits of The Wash.

This is a flat, open and simple landscape with expansive views across The Wash to the Norfolk coast. Views to the west are mostly foreshortened by the sea embankment which separates this area from *Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh*. A large man-made embankment controlling the course of the Haven forms a spur which extends out into the area. There are extensive views across this and the adjacent landscape character areas from the public footpath which runs along its length.

The tidal landscape has a dendritic pattern of narrow creeks which is more apparent from higher elevations on top of the sea banks both on the boundary of and within the landscape character area. It comprises a one kilometre wide band of saltmarsh with mud and sand flats extending beyond these sea banks out to sea.

This type of coast is a very productive ecosystem which is particularly important for supporting many resident and migrating wildfowl and wading birds. It is protected by many national and international nature conservation designations and is a National Nature Reserve, a Site of Specific Scientific Interest, a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area, and a Ramsar site. The saltmarsh also provides good grazing for saltmarsh beef cattle which have recently been reintroduced and help to create an attractive pastoral scene.

D1 Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh



Built structures including roads and tracks are virtually absent. There are a few WWII defensive structures including gun emplacements along the sea banks and river entrances.

Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh is remote and largely inaccessible. It is a very distinctive and dramatic landscape, with big skies and wide horizons often with large flocks of birds sweeping over and settling on the flats. This dynamic landscape is strongly influenced by the changing tides, light and weather conditions.

D1 Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh



Forces for Change

- The return of saltmarsh beef grazing cattle to the marshes
- Conservation designations and management plans which aim to protect the rich wildlife.

Landscape Sensitivity

Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh is a strongly represented natural landscape with no detractors and a high concentration of conservation designations. The open and flat aspect of this landscape provides little opportunity for screening. Any development will therefore be highly visible in the landscape to the several sensitive viewers using the Macmillan Way long distance trail. In general terms development would not be considered appropriate in this area. Landscape and visual impacts could not be easily mitigated for.

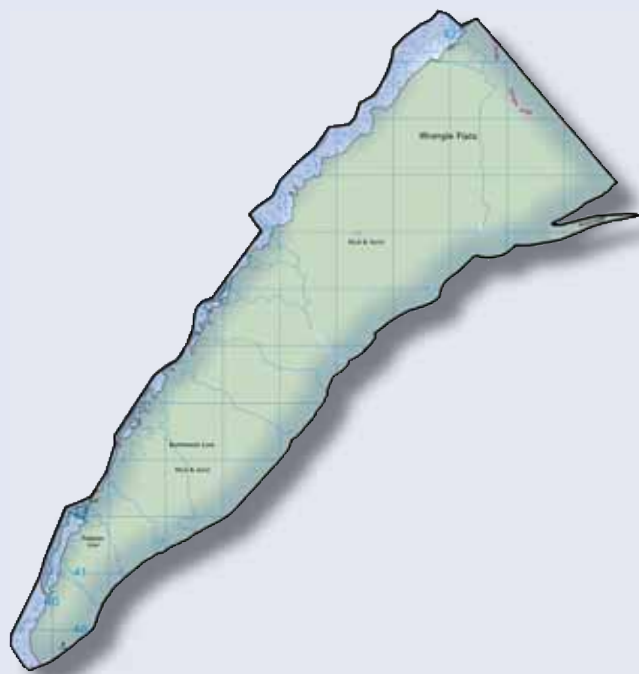
If development is deemed to be essential then it should be designed so that it does not detract from the key characteristics and elements of this landscape described above, and in particular the naturalistic patterns created by the winding creeks. It should also be very sensitive to the habitats and vegetation types that are unique to the Landscape Character Area.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh* is considered to be **high**.

D2 Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh

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0 5 km



Key Characteristics

- A narrow strip of open saltmarsh and intertidal winding mud creeks with wider areas of tidal sand and mud flats.
- Tidal areas which regularly change from landscape to seascape with the tides. Regular flooding by the sea in other areas.
- A largely inaccessible, expansive, remote and wild landscape.
- Views out to sea with big skies and ships on wide horizons are influenced by the changing tides, light and weather conditions.
- Views to the windfarm offshore from Skegness.
- A rich blanket mosaic of saltmarsh vegetation provides grazing for saltmarsh beef cattle.
- Open sand and mud flats provide further valuable habitats for wildfowl and wading birds.
- Protected by many international and national nature conservation designations.
- There is no built development including roads and tracks.
- A very distinctive, wild and exposed coastal landscape.

D2 Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh



Landscape Character Description

Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh is a narrow strip off the east coast which stretches from East Lindsey District in the north to the Haven in the south. It is bordered to the west by a sea bank which forms the boundary with *Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh*.

The tidal areas regularly change from landscape to seascape with the ebb and flow of the tide and the other areas are also frequently inundated by the sea. It is underlain by the intertidal and subtidal muds, sands and saltmarsh deposits of The Wash.

It is a low lying and extensive, flat open landscape. Views inland are foreshortened by the sea bank which forms the boundary between this area and *Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh*. The tops of lines of trees are visible beyond this. Views extend offshore to shipping lanes, the offshore windfarm by Skegness and to the north Norfolk coast to the south-east.

The coastline here forms an almost straight line and is made up of a few simple elements; the tidal saltmarsh and associated mosaic pattern of saltmarsh vegetation, mud flats and sands. A dendritic pattern of narrow creeks is apparent from higher elevations on top of the sea banks.

Saltmarsh beef cattle graze on the sea banks and the narrow strip of saltmarsh. This is a very productive ecosystem providing food for many resident and migrating wildfowl and wading birds. It is protected by many national and international nature conservation designations and is a Site of Specific Scientific Interest, a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area, and a Ramsar site. There is no built development in this character area.

Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh is a remote and largely inaccessible landscape, with no roads or public footpaths within the character area. It is very distinctive and dramatic with big skies and wide open sea horizons. This dynamic landscape is influenced by the changing tides, light and weather conditions and the large flocks of birds sweeping over and settling on the flats.

D2 Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh



Forces for Change

- The return of saltmarsh beef grazing cattle to the marshes.
- Conservation designations and management plans which aim to protect the rich wildlife.

Landscape Sensitivity

Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh is a strongly represented natural landscape with no detractors and a high concentration of conservation designations. The open and flat aspect of this landscape provides little opportunity for screening. Any development will therefore be highly visible in the landscape to the several sensitive viewers using the public footpaths along the sea banks. In general terms development would not be in keeping with the landscape character, and would not be considered to be appropriate for this area. Landscape and visual impacts could not be easily mitigated for.

However, if development were deemed to be essential it should be designed so that it would not detract from the key characteristics and elements of this landscape described above and in particular the naturalistic patterns, created by the winding creeks. It should also be very sensitive to the habitats and vegetation types that are unique to the Landscape Character Type.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh* is considered to be **high**.

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LEGEND

- Boston Borough Council Boundary
- - - Mean Low Tide Level

Data Source:
Lincolnshire County Council

*Boston Borough Landscape
Character Assessment*

Figure 1. Aerial Photograph

January 2007

ECUS Ref:
DW/612/01

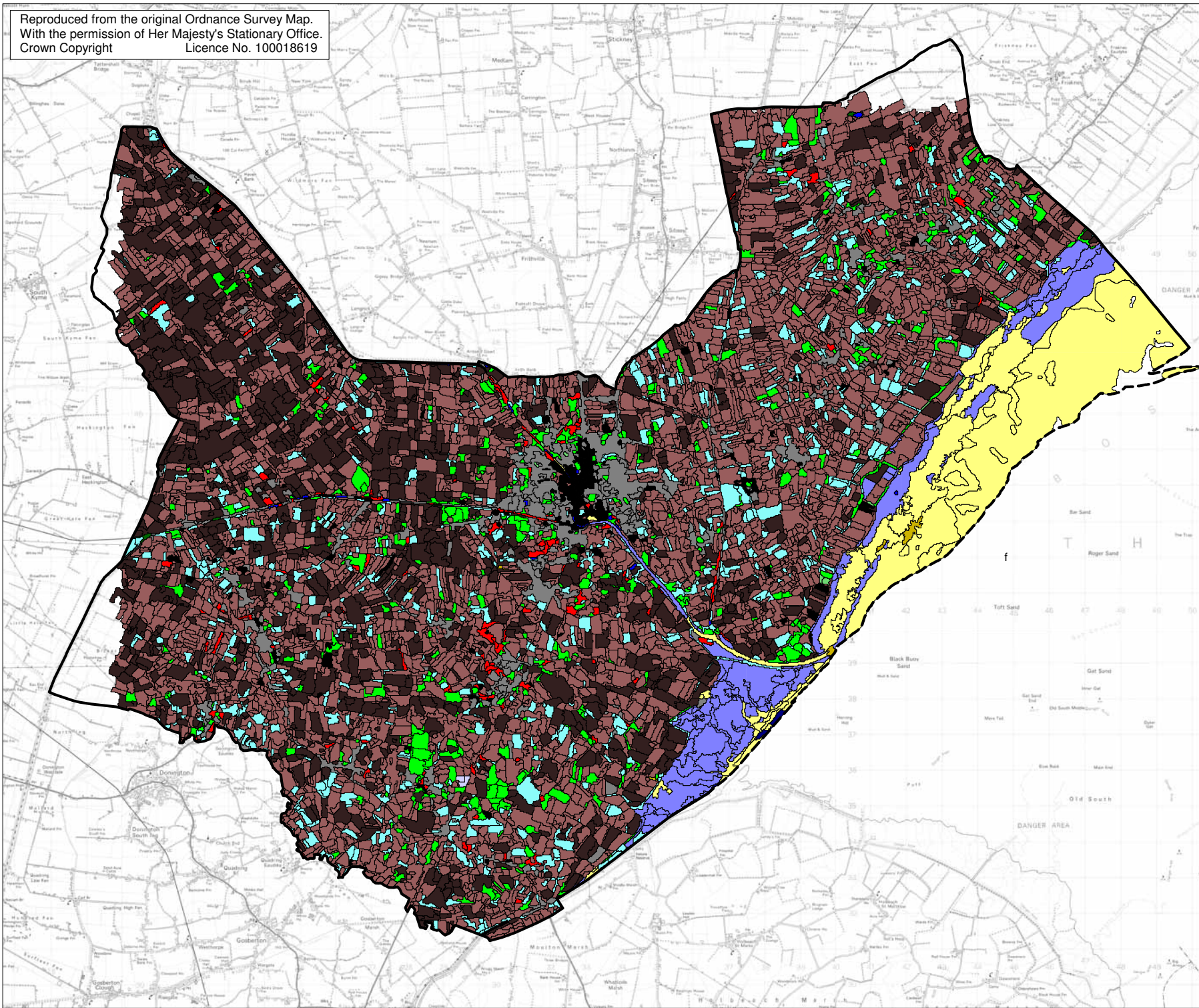
Scale:

1:100000 at A3



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- LEGEND**
- Boston Borough Council Bounda
 - Mean Low Tide Level
- Land Cover Data**
- Broad-leafwood (1.1)
 - Coniferous woodland (2.1)
 - Arable & horticulture (4.1)
 - Arable & horticulture (4.2)
 - Improved grassland (5.1)
 - Neutral (6.1)
 - Calcareous (7.1)
 - Standing water (13.1)
 - Inland rock (16.1)
 - Built up areas, gardens (17.1)
 - Continuous urban (17.2)
 - Supra-littoral sediment (19.1)
 - Littoral sediment (21.1)
 - Saltmarsh (21.2)
 - Sea & estuary (22.1)

NOTE
 Numbers in brackets refer to
 Land Cover Map 2000
 Broad Habitat Codes
 (Read in conjunction with:
[www.ceh.ac.uk/sections/seo/
 documents/leaflet3.pdf](http://www.ceh.ac.uk/sections/seo/documents/leaflet3.pdf))

Data Source:
 Land Cover Map 2000 Data

**Boston Borough Landscape
 Character Assessment**

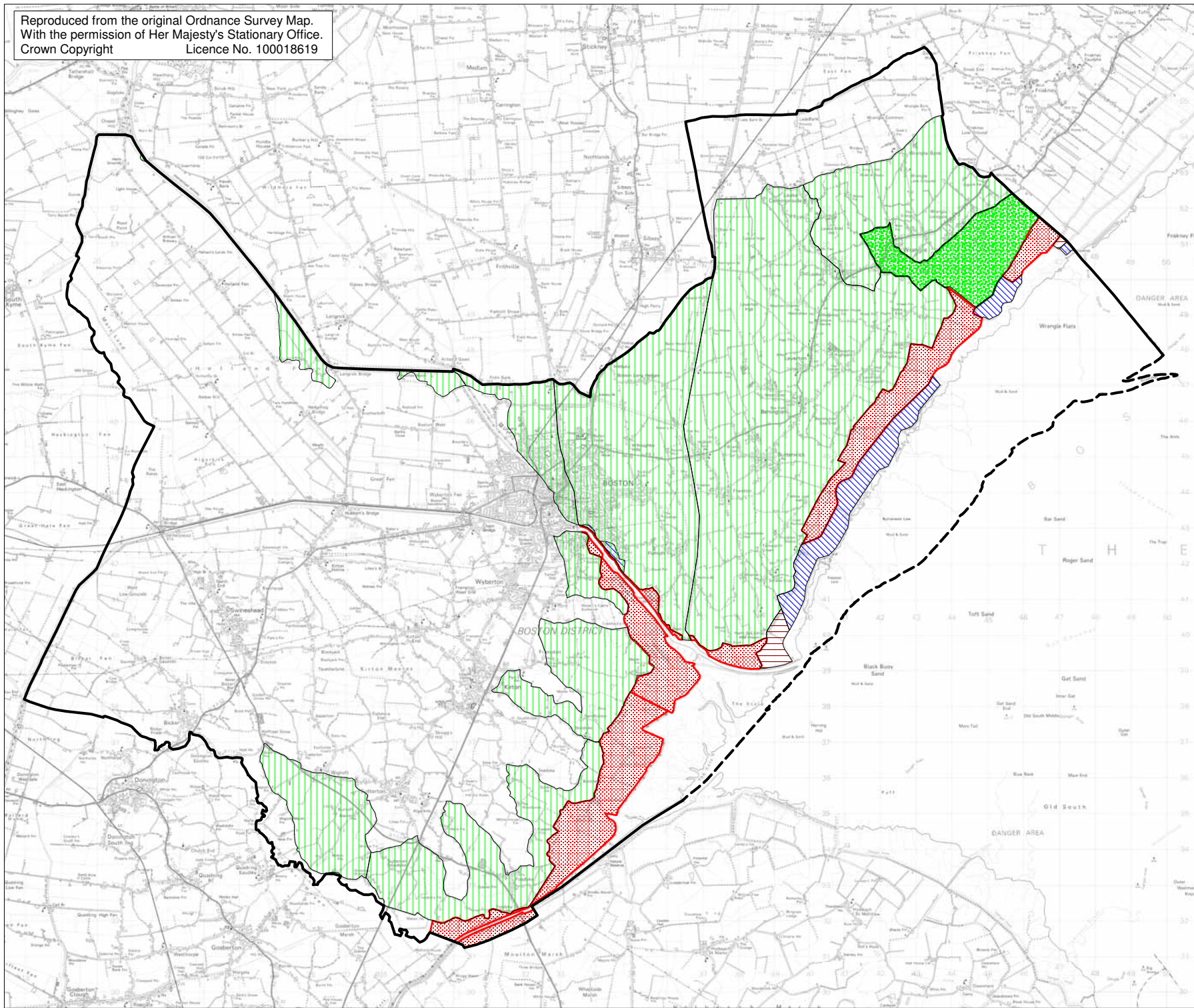
Figure 2. Land Cover

January 2007	ECUS Ref: DW/612/02
Scale:	1:100000 at A3



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LEGEND

- Boston Borough Council Boundary
- Mean Low Tide Level

Reclamation

- Saxon Drainage (probably)
- 1307 to 1700 Reclamation
- 1800 to 1900 Reclamation
- 1900 to 1949 Reclamation
- 1950 to 1983 Reclamation

Data Source:
 Boston Borough Council

**Boston Borough Landscape
 Character Assessment**

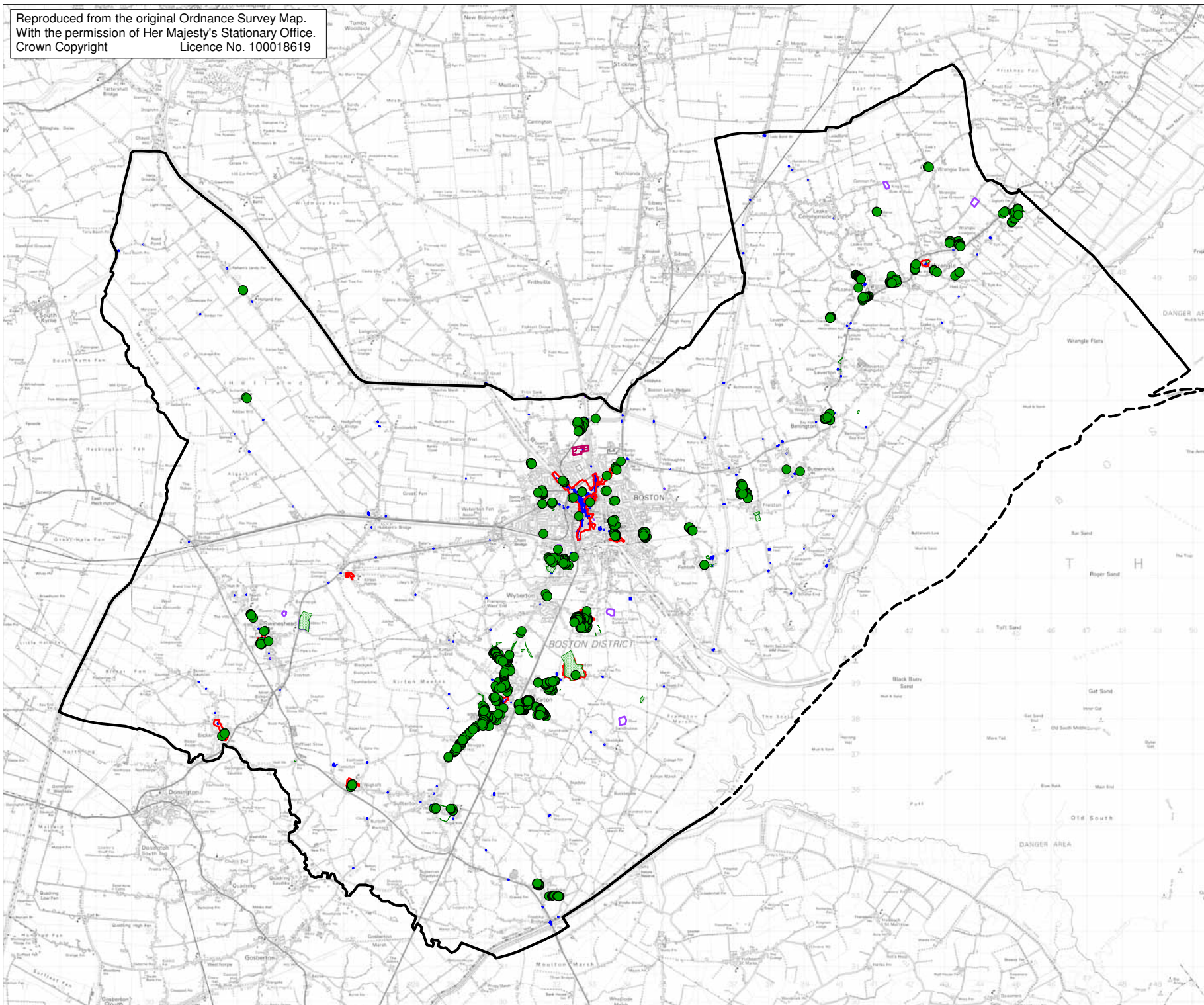
Figure 3. Land Reclamation

January 2007	ECUS Ref: DW/612/03
Scale:	1:100 000 at A3



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LEGEND

- Boston Borough Council Bound
- Mean Low Tide Level
- Cultural Designations Data**
- Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Listed Buildings
- Parks of Special Historic Interest
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Tree Preservation Orders

Data Source:
 Boston Borough Council

**Boston Borough Landscape
 Character Assessment**

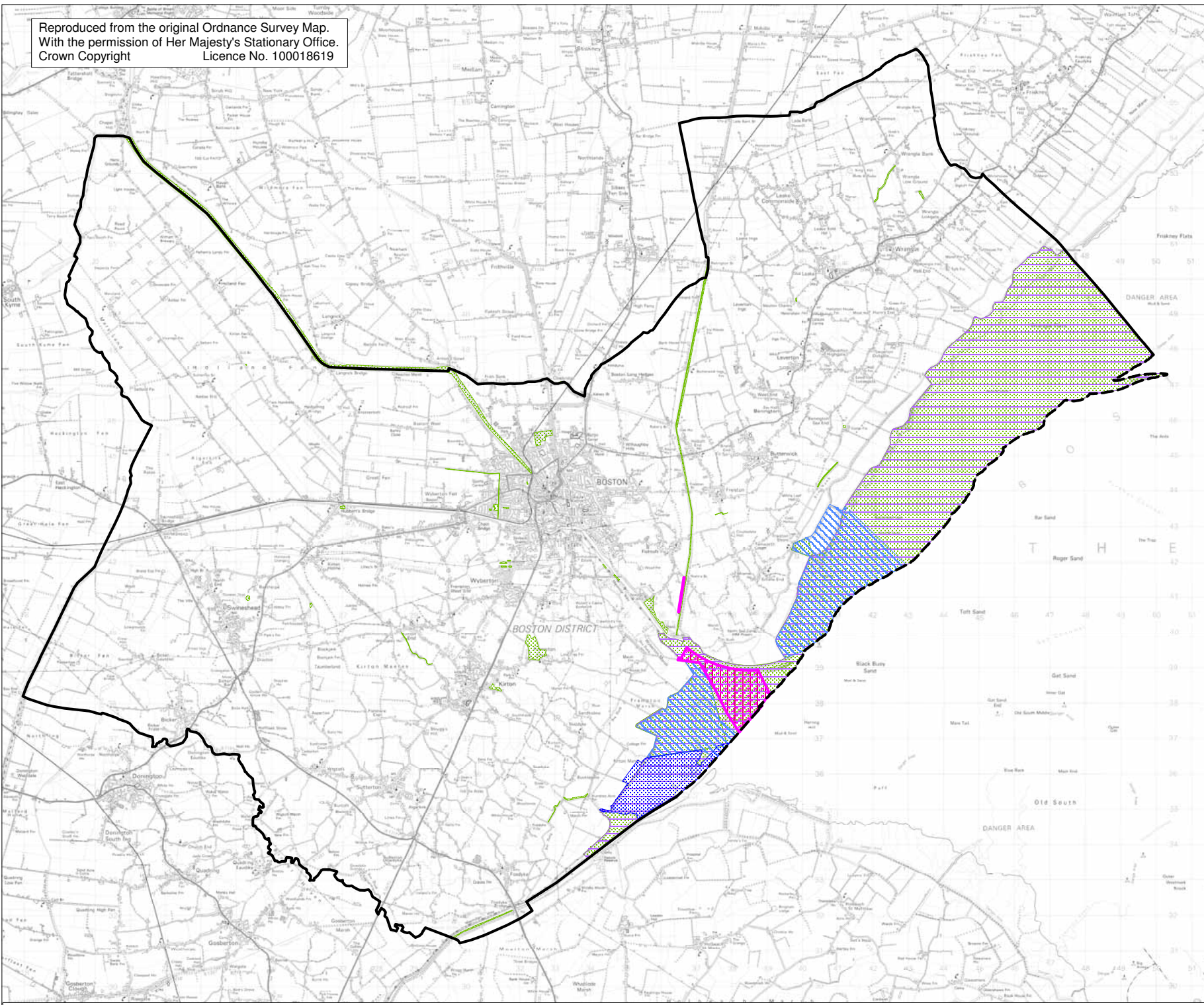
Fig 4. Cultural Designations

January 2007	ECUS Ref: DW/612/04
Scale:	1:100000 at A3



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LEGEND

-  Boston Borough Council Boundary
-  Mean Low Tide Level
-  Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves
-  Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
-  RSPB_SITES
-  Ramsar Sites
 SSSI Sites
 Special Protection Areas
 Special Conservation Areas
-  The Wash National Nature Reserve Boundary
 Natural England data OS licence number 100046223

Boston Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Fig 5. Nature Conservation Designations

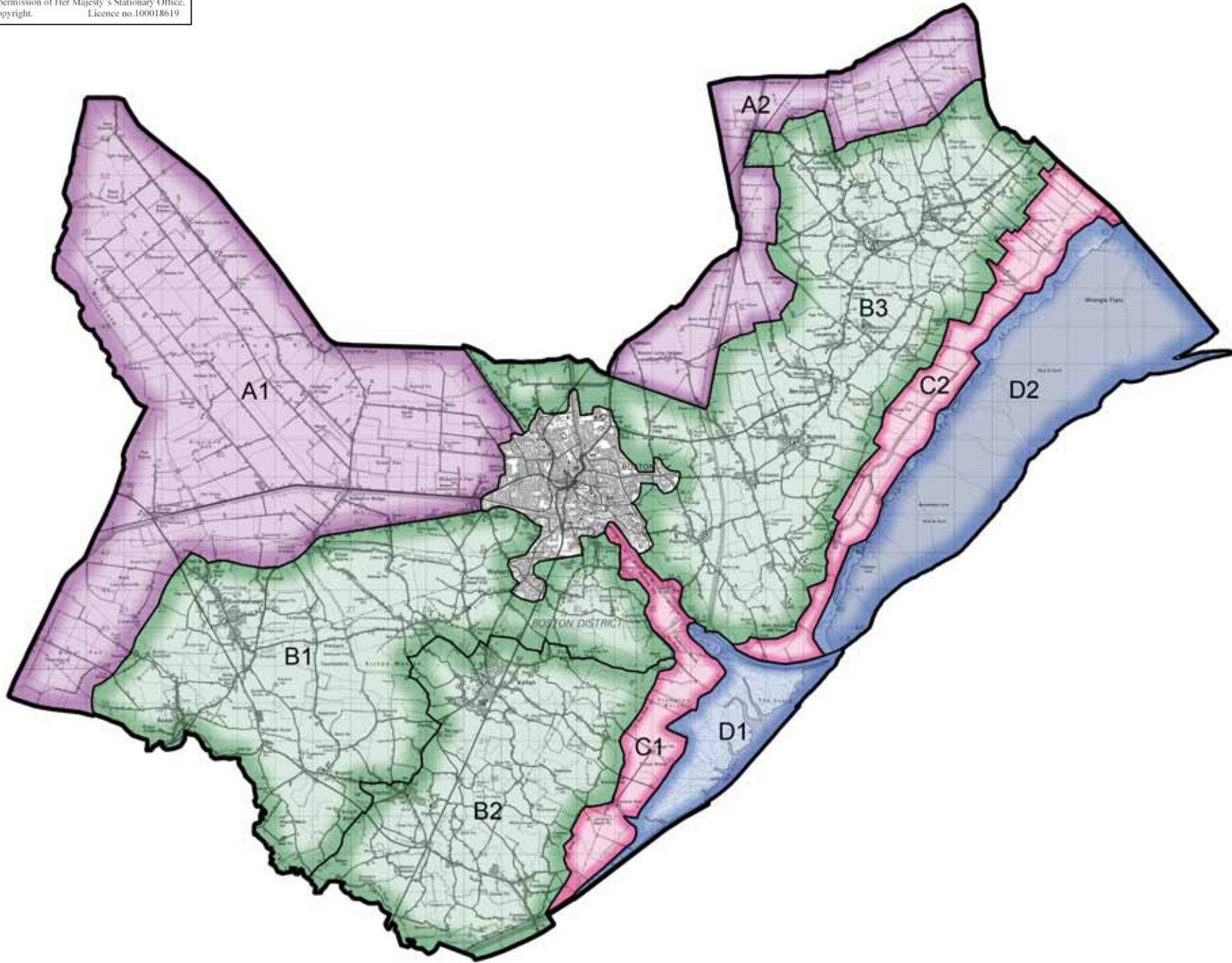
February 2009	ECUS Ref: DW/612/05 revA
Scale:	1:100 000 at A3



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KEY	
	Boston Borough Council Boundary
	Holland Reclaimed Fen
	Welland to Haven Reclaimed Fen
	Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen
	Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen
	Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen
	Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh
	Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh
	Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh
	Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh

Boston Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 6: Landscape Character Types and Areas

Scale 1:100 000 @ A3

20th Nov. 2008

ECUS ref:
MS/1965/06

ECUS

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Appendix 1. Glossary

Adoption:

The official confirmation of a Development Plan or Local Development Document as having statutory status by a Local Planning Authority.

AOD:

Above Ordnance Datum.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP):

These are plans which recognise, highlight and provide a framework for protecting individual species and habitats at the national, regional and local level.

Conservation Area:

An area of special architectural or historic interest, and a distinctive character or appearance, with statutory protection.

Core Strategy:

A framework Development Plan Document which sets out the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority's area, with objectives and policies to deliver that vision.

Countryside Stewardship Schemes (CSS):

These schemes enabled farmers to be paid grants to follow more traditional farming methods that enhance the landscape, encourage wildlife and protect historic features. They have now been replaced by Environmental Stewardship (ES).

Dendritic:

A hierarchical branching pattern, often found in fluvial systems with a shallow gradient.

Detractors:

A feature or element which can generally be agreed upon as reducing the value or quality ascribed to a view or landscape.

Development Plan Document (DPD):

Spatial planning documents that form part of the Local Development Framework.

Drains, Dykes and Ditches:

These are all forms of drainage channels; the drains being major in size and scale, dykes being intermediate and ditches being the minor ones. They are all constructed to drain the water from the surrounding land, are often embanked by the excavated material recovered from their construction and maintenance.

Dylings:

These are rare forms of land drained and cultivated in medieval times by a series of raised platforms and ditches which now remain as distinctive field patterns, and are most commonly found in the Fens.

Environmental Stewardship (ES),

This replaces the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) and works on several levels including: the Entry Level Scheme (ELS), and the Higher Level Scheme (HLS). It aims to encourage farmers and land managers across England to deliver effective environmental management. The HLS component of ES is strongly focused on environmental outcomes through the use of Joint Character Area (JCA) targeting statements.

Floodplain:

The land where a river may rise above its banks or when high tides or stormy seas may cause flooding of low lying coastal areas.

Geomorphology:

The study of the origin of landforms based on natural processes.

GIS:

A system of hardware and software used for storage, retrieval, mapping, and analysis of geographic data.

Appendix 1. Glossary

Joint Character Area (JCA):

Refers to the broad landscape character areas described by the Countryside Agency's Character Map of England.

Key Landscape Characteristic:

An element that contributes strongly to local distinctiveness.

Land cover:

The combination of land use and vegetation that covers the land surface.

Landscape:

This refers to the visual appearance of the land, and also the experience of those living in and moving through it.

Landscape Assessment:

The breaking down of the landscape into its component elements in order to evaluate its qualities and then describe its character.

Landscape Character:

A distinct pattern or combination of elements, including those which are experienced through day and the seasons, that occur consistently in a particular landscape.

Landscape Character Type (LCT):

A generic term for landscape with a consistent, homogeneous character. Landscape character types occur in different regions and share common features or combinations of features such as geology, topography, vegetation or human influences.

Landscape Character Area (LCA):

A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, which forms part of a landscape character type.

Landscape Classification:

An analysis of the landscape character and key features in order to apply a broad categorisation of Landscape Character Types and Areas to a landscape.

Landscape Description:

A systematic record of features relating to the landscape, which may also include descriptions of how these features interact and affect perceptions of those viewing and experiencing the landscape.

Landscape Element:

A component part of the landscape such as skies, woodland or roads.

Landscape Feature:

An element which stands out in the landscape and draws attention such as wooded hilltop or church spire.

Landscape Impacts:

The changes to individual landscape elements and characteristics and the resulting effect on the landscape character.

Landscape Quality:

A judgement about the physical state and intactness of the landscape from a visual and functional perspective. It also reflects the state of repair of individual elements that make up the landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity:

A term based on the inherent sensitivity to change of a landscape in terms of its landscape character.

Local Development Document (LDD):

Any document making up part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Appendix 1. Glossary

Local Development Framework (LDF):

Introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) as the replacement for Local Plans. It is the term used to describe the whole package of planning policy documents (Local Development Documents) which sets out the planning strategy and policies.

Local Plan:

A Local Plan sets out the planning policies and allocations of land for development in a local authority area.

Local Wildlife Site:

Sites which have a local designation for their nature conservation value. They include both nature reserves and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.

Passerines:

Bird species which can be generally described as 'perching birds'.

Pillbox

A small, squat military defence structure with a flat roof.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG):

Government guidance to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS):

A range of documents superseding and updating Planning Policy Guidance, and generally placing more emphasis on sustainable development principles.

Ramsar:

A wetland site of international nature conservation importance which is

afforded special protection.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS):

A strategy at the regional scale which seeks to provide an overarching framework and basis for local planning authorities in the preparation of their Local Development Frameworks.

Riparian Habitat or Vegetation:

Habitat and/or vegetation which occurs alongside freshwater waterways.

Saltern Mounds:

A relict artefact or spoil heap from historic salt making operations. Many are from Roman or Medieval periods.

Scrape:

In this document the scrapes referred to are man-made shallow depressions designed to catch and retain water thereby creating more variety of wildlife habitats and in particular those suitable for wading birds.

Shrunken Medieval Village:

A site of a medieval settlement which has been partially abandoned, usually leaving little but the remains of earthworks. Where there are fewer than three inhabited houses the convention is to regard the site as deserted; if there are more than three houses, it is regarded as a shrunken medieval village.

Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI):

A site may be selected due to the presence of a notable species and/or an important habitat.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):

SSSIs are identified by English Nature to be of special interest because of

Appendix 1. Glossary

their flora, fauna, geological or geographical features, and are afforded special protection at the national level.

Scheduled Monuments:

Scheduled monuments are archaeological remains of national importance, which are given legal protection by being placed on a national list or schedule (the current legislation governing scheduled monuments is the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979). The schedule is maintained by central government (Department for Culture, Media and Sport), whilst individual scheduled monuments are in a variety of public and private ownership. List and individual records of archaeological artefacts including structural remains and individual artefacts, which is maintained by a County Council.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC):

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive.

Special Protection Area (SPA):

Special protection Areas are designated under European Law for the protection of birds.

Stakeholder or Interested Party:

Any person, group or business that has an interest or will potentially be affected by a particular activity, plan or project.

Vernacular:

A term used to describe buildings constructed in a local style, from local materials.

Visual Sensitivity:

The sensitivity of viewers to changes in views in the landscape depending

on the location and context of the viewpoint, the activity of the viewer and the importance of the view.

Appendix 2. Methodology

Our Approach to the Assessment

The approach to this study was developed in accordance with the brief issued by Boston Borough Council in 2008 and subsequent communications with the appointed project officers.

The methodology for the landscape character assessment was developed in line with best practice guidance including the following:

- *The Landscape Character Guidance for England and Scotland 2002*, published by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency.
- *Topic Paper 3. Landscape Character Assessment - how stakeholders can help*, published by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency.
- *Topic Paper 6. Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity*, published by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency.
- *Topic Paper 4. Use of GIS and other computer methods*, published by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency.
- *Topic Paper 5. Understanding Historic Landscape Character*, published by Scottish Natural Heritage, the Countryside Agency, Historic Scotland and English Heritage.

The landscape character assessment involved the following stages which were carried out as part of our integrated approach. These are described in more detail below.

- Desktop Study.
- Community and Stakeholder Consultation.

- Field assessments.
- Assimilation of the findings into the draft and final reports.

Desk Study

The desk study was carried out by ECUS as an initial phase of the Landscape Character Assessment. The findings were published in Boston Borough Landscape Character Assessment - Desk Study November 2007. The desk study looked at a wide range of available sources of data provided in GIS format by Boston Borough Council. The draft of the *Historic Characterisation of the Wash* and further information provided by stakeholders was incorporated into the desk study during the second phase of the assessment.

The sources of data included a review of both natural and cultural elements:-

- Geology and soils.
- Topography.
- Roads and settlements.
- Rivers and drainage.
- Vegetation.
- Landscape and historic designations including Scheduled Monuments, Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas.
- Nature conservation designations including, National Nature Reserves and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves, RSPB Sites, Ramsars, SSSIs, SPAs, SACs, and SNCIs.

Appendix 2. Methodology

A preliminary site visit was carried out for the purposes of familiarisation with the landscape and to gain an overall impression of variations in its character.

The national framework provided by the Character of England Map along with other landscape character assessment in the area was used to set the context for the study. Background information on the landscape of Boston Borough was provided by Boston Borough Council. This was reviewed to provide an understanding of the overall physical, cultural and natural influences on the landscape. The printed and GIS map data was overlaid and analysed to understand how the natural, human and physical influences interact to create patterns of landscape character. These include the patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, and settlement and field patterns. This was used as the basis for proposing the boundaries for areas of common character and initial written descriptions for each of these areas. The assessment does not include land within built up areas but does consider the broad pattern of settlements.

The gathered information was brought together along with Ordnance Survey map data to draft subdivisions of Landscape Character Types into Landscape Character Areas of common character to be validated in the field. These were mapped onto GIS. In line with best practice guidance, the proposed sub-divisions include draft Landscape Character Types and Areas. A Landscape Character Type will have a common pattern of landscape elements and influences. Landscape Character Types may occur in several locations in a study area or just in one place. Landscape Character Areas are unique individual geographical areas within the Landscape Character Types. Landscape Character Areas will have some of the characteristics with other areas of the same type but will also have their own specific identity.

The draft Landscape Character Types were named to reflect the main influences on landscape character and also to relate to naming of similar

types in adjacent local authority areas. The Landscape Character Areas were given geographically unique names according to the main settlements located at either side of each area as well as referring to the Landscape Character Type. The descriptions for Landscape Character Areas refer to the Landscape Character Type that they sit within and the individually distinctive features of that area. Boundaries were drawn around areas of broadly similar character. However, in most cases the character of a landscape changes gradually and there may be character transition zones at the edges of these areas where the influences on the landscape are less consistent than in the centre.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation

A draft of the initial desktop study was passed to Boston Borough Council who consulted stakeholders on its contents. Possible revisions were highlighted and those which were considered to be appropriate were incorporated into the final desk study report.

Further consultation with communities, stakeholders and Council Members was undertaken in the summer of 2008. The aims were to inform them of the purpose and the process of the landscape character assessment, and also to draw on their local knowledge of Boston's landscapes to inform and enrich the study at an early stage. This process was discussed and agreed with Boston Borough Council. It took the form of advertising the project, inviting comments on questionnaires, and inviting the above groups to attend workshops, all of which are described in greater detail below.

Stage 1: Questionnaire Development and Distribution.

A questionnaire was developed to explain the project. Its purpose was to invite comments about features in the landscape which were valued or disliked, and concerns which people may have about current, past or potential future changes which had already or may affected the landscape character. Consultees were also invited to make any other general comments on landscape character. This questionnaire was sent out to local Parish Councils

Appendix 2. Methodology

and a wide range of interested parties and stakeholders as listed by Boston Borough Council. It was also posted on the Council's website and advertised in the local press. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 4.

Stage 2: Workshops

Three workshops were arranged by Boston Borough Council. The following groups and the public were invited to attend; Parish Councillors, Council Members and stakeholders (by personal invitation) and the public (by advertisements in local newspapers and on the Council's website). These workshops took place between July and August 2008 in Boston Town Hall.

Each workshop involved a presentation by ECUS and a Council officer outlining the purpose and nature of landscape character assessment and how the participants could contribute and help with the process. Comments were then invited and participants were encouraged to label maps with their own comments on post it notes and speak in person to ECUS and the Council's planning officers present at the workshops. One outcome of these workshops was that some participants offered to identify areas and features of interest on the ground and as a result, prior to the commencement of the field work, a tour of Boston's landscapes was carried out with some of these consultees and a planning officer. This valuable exercise highlighted many important features, elements and issues relevant to the study. It also helped to demonstrate why these were valued by others.

Stage 3: Collation of Responses

The responses were summarised and collated. The findings are summarised in the Consultation section within the main report.

When collating the consultation responses the main features and issues were highlighted. The relative number of responses and nature of the comments for each draft Landscape Character Area were also considered when assessing the sensitivity of the different character areas. This was achieved by including summarised consultee responses on the field survey sheets and maps used during the field assessment work.

Field Assessments

Field survey forms were developed to record data for each Landscape Character Area in a consistent manner and information on landscape character and its sensitivity to change. Techniques and criteria for judging sensitivity were developed to suit the brief for this project. The categories of criteria for assessment of landscape character sensitivity to the potential changes were made with particular reference to the guidelines and suggestions outlined in *Topic Paper 6. Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity.*

The survey sheets recorded factors which influence landscape character sensitivity including; landscape quality and value, the distinctiveness, strength and intactness of the existing character, the number and nature of detractors along with the existing landuses. It also included an assessment of visual sensitivity and the potential for mitigation of landscape and visual impacts. The overall sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area to change was assessed using professional judgement and the criteria set out in Table 1.

Prior to commencing the field work, a pilot study of the survey forms was carried out and improvements were made particularly to the sections assessing landscape sensitivity.

The field work was carried out by a team of Landscape Architects trained in the field of landscape character assessment. This work was carried out during the summer of 2008. Each draft Landscape Character Type and Landscape Character Area was visited. Two survey points were selected in each area which were publicly accessible and representative of the overall character of the area. Data was recorded systematically on the survey forms along with a clear photographic record. Detailed notes regarding key landscape characteristics, aesthetic factors in the landscape, evidence of forces for change and landscape and visual sensitivities were made at each survey point on the survey forms and additional notes were recorded whilst driving around the character areas. Draft Landscape Character Type and Area boundaries were checked and confirmed or redefined, during the field work.

Appendix 2. Methodology

Reporting

All the information from the consultations, desk study, and field work was reviewed and collated into a draft report which included the confirmed boundaries and names for all Landscape Character Types and Areas. Key characteristics and features were highlighted for each Landscape Character Type and Area. A description was prepared for each Landscape Character Area including its location, landform, level of enclosure and views along with landuse, settlement patterns, heritage features and accessibility. Perceived forces for change were listed and judgements on the overall sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area to change were described. For each Landscape Character Area recommendations were made on the design and location of potential development to minimise landscape and visual impacts.

Stage 4: Reporting the Draft Assessment

A draft assessment was produced in March 2009 and this was placed on the Council's website and presented at an open meeting in May 2009 to which all interested parties were invited. It was also publicised by means of a press release and a notification to all stakeholders. Comments on the draft assessment were invited and these were collated and taken into account in producing the final assessment.

Level of Sensitivity	Description of criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strongly represented or distinctive landscape. • Few detractors. • Intact and in very good condition. • A high concentration and/or level of designation(s). • A high proportion of interest from stakeholders. • The introduction of more and/or new features would be likely to have a significant negative effect on key landscape elements or characteristics which could not be easily restored or mitigated for. • Likely to occur where the change or a noticeable change is visible over a wide area which could not easily be mitigated for. • The number and/or sensitivity of viewers may also be high.
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A moderately distinctive landscape character. • Some detractors, or of moderate condition and intactness. • A moderate level and/or number of designation(s). • A moderate proportion of interest from stakeholders. • The introduction of more and/or new features would be likely to have a noticeable effect on one or more key landscape elements or characteristics which may be restored or mitigated for in time. • Likely to occur where the change is visible within the immediate landscape or could be partially mitigated for. • The number and/or sensitivity of viewers may also be moderate.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An indistinct or weakly represented landscape character • Many detractors which is fragmented or in poor condition. • A low number and/or level of designation(s). • A low proportion of interest from stakeholders. • The introduction of more and/or new features would be likely to have a minor effect one or more key landscape elements or characteristics, could be easily mitigated for and may have the potential to enhance the landscape character. • Likely to occur where the change is not readily visible due to it being enclosed or it may be easily mitigated for. • The number and/or sensitivity of viewers may also be low.

Table 1. Criteria for Assessing Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity

Appendix 3. Field Survey Sheet

Landscape Character Assessment For Boston District

Time started	
Time finished	

Select 2 points in each of the X character areas. Carry out broad survey for each survey point and then add supplementary notes as drive around the area.

Survey Point Reference No.	
Survey Point Grid Reference	
Date	
Landscape Character Type	Inland Fens
Landscape Character Area	A1 Holland Inland Fens

A – Landscape Character

Key landscape characteristics: TICK OR CROSS OUT NOTES FROM DESK STUDY Annotate with any additions or changes to list of key characteristics

Geology/Soils	
Landform	Flat
Views/enclosure	Open with far reaching views
Land use/cover/pattern/scale	Rectilinear and geometric large scale arable fields, occasional improved grassland
Hydrology	Rectilinear pattern of drains with occasional more sinuous watercourse/drains
Vegetation: trees, woodland, hedgerows, verges	Occasional broad leaved woodland
Settlement/pattern/scale/form/Heritage	Scattered dwellings
Access/transportation/pathway links	Geometric rectilinear pattern of minor roads of nw /se orientation, with linking trackways and occasional footpaths
Heritage features	Scattering of listed buildings
Architecture	?
Tranquillity	?
Detractors	?

Landscape Character Assessment For Boston District

Aesthetics: Highlight the key aesthetic factors in the landscape including built form.

Colour	Monochrome	Muted	Colourful
Texture	Smooth	Textured	Rough
Form	straight	angular	rounded
Line	geometric	Irregular pattern of colour & texture.	
Diversity	Diverse	Simple	Uniform
Scale	Large	Medium	Intimate
Pattern	Repeating patterns of colours, texture etc	Irregular pattern of colour, texture etc	Randomly distributed colour, texture etc

Overall Landscape Character

Encapsulate in a sentence or two how the landscape elements combine to create an overall landscape character.

Take photos representative of landscape character and record on photo sheet & GIS map

Confirm LCA/LCT boundaries on GIS map if new LCA/T or unsure if existing ones are correct.

B – Forces for change

Forces for Change – what changes have taken place in the landscape and have they had a positive or negative effect?

Appendix 3. Field Survey Sheet

Landscape Character Assessment For Boston District

C - Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Quality

How distinct and intact is the landscape?

How distinctive or strongly represented is the landscape character? (select one and add comments)	A strongly represented or distinctive landscape character with few detractors.	A moderately distinctive landscape character with some detractors.	An indistinct or weakly represented landscape character with lots of detractors.
How intact is the landscape? (select one and add comments)	Very intact & in good condition.	Moderate condition & intactness.	Fragmented & in poor condition.

Landscape Value

How much value are people likely to attach to this landscape?

What is the concentration of designated sites (nature conservation, built environment, Areas of Great Landscape Value (select one and add comments)	A high concentration of international, national and local designated sites and visible cultural interest (for nature conservation, built environment, AONB, AGLV)	Some nationally and locally designated sites and visible cultural interest (for nature conservation, built environment, AGLV)	Few nationally and locally designated sites and visible cultural interest (for nature conservation and built environment, AGLV) Scattering of listed buildings Few TPOs X
Stakeholder Responses	High level of interest/number of comments.	Moderate level of interest/number of comments	Low level of interest/number of comments X
Physical and perceived key landscape characteristics How much effect would changes have on the landscape character? Note the most vulnerable key characteristics and patterns.	A significant negative effect on key landscape characteristics and patterns which could not be easily restored	A noticeable negative effect on key landscape characteristics and patterns which may be restored in time.	A minor effect on key landscape characteristics and patterns and changes may have the potential to enhance.

The landscape character sensitivity should be judged according to the combined landscape sensitivity, visual sensitivity, landscape quality and value including the level of stakeholder responses.

Landscape Character Sensitivity Rating	High Landscape Character Sensitivity	Moderate Landscape Character Sensitivity	Low Landscape Character Sensitivity
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Landscape Character Assessment For Boston District

D - Visual Sensitivity

Enclosure, Views and Viewers

Describe the degree of visual enclosure ? (Select one & add comments)	Limited degree of enclosure influenced by topography (fairly flat) and/ or landscape features such as trees, woodland or existing settlements.	Some enclosure influenced by topography (gently undulating) and/ or landscape features such as trees, woodland or existing settlements.	High level of enclosure influenced by topography (hilly) and/ or landscape features such as trees, woodland or existing settlements.
How far do views typically extend? (select one & add comments)	Far reaching views of more than 10km beyond the landscape character area boundary.	Mid-range views of 1 to 10 Km which may extend beyond the landscape character area boundary.	Close views of <1Km which are likely to be within the landscape character area boundary.
Viewers - Who can see this landscape? (select as appropriate & comment on numbers, locations, screening etc.)	Residents/recreational users and tourists	Minor roads users	Major transport corridors (motorways, railways and A roads) None
Visual Sensitivity Rating	High Visual Sensitivity	Moderate Visual Sensitivity	Low Visual Sensitivity

E- Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity

What is the potential for mitigation of landscape and visual impacts?			
Comment on how sensitivity could be mitigated for			
Landscape Character Sensitivity Rating	High Landscape Character Sensitivity	Moderate Landscape Character Sensitivity	Low Landscape Character Sensitivity
Visual Sensitivity Rating	High Visual Sensitivity	Moderate Visual Sensitivity	Low Visual Sensitivity
Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity Rating	High Landscape Character Sensitivity	Moderate Landscape Character Sensitivity	Low Landscape Character Sensitivity
Comments Does this seem right? Comments on overall landscape sensitivity rating?			

Appendix 3. Field Survey Sheet

Landscape Character Assessment For Boston District

F – Supplementary Notes/checklist for LCA beyond both Survey Points

Record on driving around LCT

Landform	Flat	
Views/enclosure include examples of landmark views esp if highlighted by stakeholders.	Open with far reaching views	
Land use/cover /pattern/scale	Rectilinear and geometric large scale arable fields, occasional improved grassland	
Hydrology	Rectilinear pattern of drains with occasional more sinuous watercourse/drains	
Vegetation: trees ,woodland, hedgerows, verges	Occasional broad leaved woodland	
Settlement/pattern/ scale/form/Heritage	Scattered dwellings	
Access/transportation /paths/highway links	Geometric rectilinear pattern of minor roads of nw /se orientation, with linking trackways and occasional footpaths	
Heritage features	Scattering of listed buildings	
Architecture	?	
Aesthetics	?	
Tranquillity	?	
Detractors		
Forces for change		

Landscape Character Assessment For Boston District

Space for additional notes; record on driving around LCT:

G– Summarised and highlighted stakeholder input for info and route planning

Appendix 4. Consultation Questionnaire

Boston Borough Landscape Character Assessment

- **What do you value about the character of Boston Borough?**
- **How are changes in the landscape adding to or detracting from this character?**
- **What are the changes that are likely to affect the landscape of Boston in the future?**

This is your chance to take part in a survey to find out what makes the landscape of Boston Borough special. Please take the time to return the attached questionnaire by Friday 25th July 2008.

Appendix 4. Consultation Questionnaire

The project

Your response to this survey will help us to develop a Landscape Character Assessment for Boston Borough. This project will promote a deeper understanding of what makes Boston Borough's varied landscapes distinctive and unique. Information gathered through this survey will be added to consultations, field surveys and research. It will provide a reference document for everyone with an interest in the future of the Borough's landscape – including residents, businesses and visitors, students, national and local agencies, farmers and other land managers. The study will form a baseline of data against which proposals for change can be judged in an objective and transparent way.

What is 'character'?

The character of an area – be it a field or a village or a coastline – is how it 'looks and feels', what makes it distinctive and different from somewhere else. The character of an area is very important because it contributes to people's feeling of belonging, sense of place and well-being. For instance, you may value certain distinctive features of an area, such as:

- Geology and shape of landscape, for example the expansive agricultural fields, the sea banks and extensive tidal salt marshes and mudflats
- Views in the landscape, such as open views across fields and clear expanses of coastline
- Water courses such as large straight water filled drains and winding ditches
- Unique mix of heritage features, villages, productive agricultural land
- Trees clustered around settlements
- Patterns of fields and hedges
- Local breeds of livestock and agricultural and horticultural land use
- The diversity of plants and animals in Nature Reserves
- Opportunities for quiet enjoyment like walking, painting, birdwatching
- Rich archaeology such as field patterns, medieval earthworks
- Locally distinctive buildings such as traditional windmills
- Memorable views and landmarks such as Boston Stump, church spires or particularly beautiful places

What is making or could make the landscape change in the future?

We want to ensure that future change retains and enhances the special characteristics of the landscape that are valued by residents, businesses and visitors within a prosperous economy. Through good planning and management we need to ensure that the Boston Borough meets the changing needs of its communities and stays economically viable. Boston Borough, like many other areas in the UK, faces challenges that present opportunities for and threats to its unique landscapes. Some examples include:

- Ensuring change strengthens the local distinctiveness.
- Promoting innovative and high quality design which takes inspiration from its surroundings.

Appendix 4. Consultation Questionnaire

Questionnaire

About You:

Please tick the following box that most applies to you:

- Resident of Boston Borough**
(please specify town/village name)
- Business owner** (please specify business type)
- Farmer** (please specify if owner or tenant)
- Visitor** (please specify home town)
- Other** (please specify)

If you don't live in Boston Borough then how often do you come into the Borough for work or recreation?

Please tick the box which most applies to you:

- Daily**
- Weekly**
- Monthly**
- Yearly**
- Less than yearly**

Appendix 4. Consultation Questionnaire

Tell us your views:

1. What aspects of Boston Borough's landscape character do you value and why? For example, are there specific areas that are particularly important to you. Tell us where they are and what makes them so special to you.

Please feel free to use the list in the 'What is character' section above for inspiration, but do not feel you can only comment on these headings. We are interested in what you think contributes to the character of the area.

2. What concerns, if any, do you have about how the character of Boston Borough's landscape or the part of it that you know well, has changed in the past?

Appendix 4. Consultation Questionnaire

4. What specific environmental, social and/or economic factors do you think may significantly affect (positively or negatively) the future character of Boston Borough's landscape and how?

5. Do you have any other comments about the character of Boston Borough's landscapes and the way that change is managed in the future?

Appendix 4. Consultation Questionnaire

Thank you for contributing your views

Please send completed questionnaires by 25th July 2008 to:

Alan Flintham
BBLCA Project
c/o Boston Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
West Street
Boston
Lincolnshire PE21 8QR

We invite you to a **Community Workshop** which will provide an opportunity to discuss your views on the landscape character of Boston Borough in more detail.

Date: Monday 14th July 08 – 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Venue: Boston Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston

Further details will be made available on Boston Borough Council's website www.boston.gov.uk/consultation

If you have any questions about the survey and the project then please contact:

David Mayfield or Alan Flintham
Planning Officers
Boston Borough Council
(address as above)
Tel: 01205 314200
Email: Alan.Flintham@boston.gov.uk

Landscape Architects, ECUS Ltd (www.ecusltd.co.uk) are undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment project on behalf of Boston Borough Council. This phase of the project began in June 2008 and is due to be completed later this year.

If you would like this information in another language, large print or Braille please contact Boston Borough Council

Appendix 5. Sources of Information

A History of Lincolnshire. 1970 by Alan Rogers, published by Darwin and Finlayson

The European Landscape Convention (CETS No. 176). Available from: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/Conventions/Landscape/>

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Wash Estuary Strategy Group

Draft Historic Landscape Characterisation of The Wash. (2008 unpublished).

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Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency.

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Appendix 5. Sources of Information

Lincolnshire Wolds Character Area 43. Available from: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk>.

Central Lincolnshire Vale Character Area 44. Available from: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk>.

The Fens Character Area 46. Available from: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk>.

State of the Natural Environment 2008- 2.2 Landscape Characterisation and Change. Available from: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk>.

Other website sources:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>

<http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk>

<http://www.lincsbiodiversity.org.uk/>

<http://www.lincsmarshes.org.uk/>

www.magic.gov.uk/website/magic

<http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk/map.aspx>