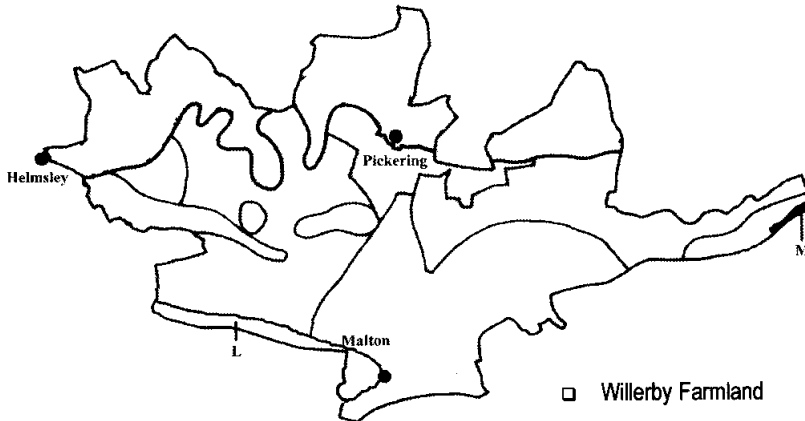


Area M Wolds Footslope**Preface**

After a detailed study it has been identified that the narrow strip of land which extends from the eastern edge of Ganton in the west to Staxton in the east, exhibits characteristics more in common with the Yorkshire Wolds to the south than with the Vale of Pickering. Indeed, it is felt that the landscape should form part of *The Yorkshire Wolds* of the study Area 27 regional character area as defined by the Countryside Commission and English Nature. However, it is included in this assessment because it lies north of the A64 and, therefore, within the study area.

Key Characteristic Features

- Gently sloping terrain.
- Chalky thin soil.
- Strongly rural.
- Open views out across the Vale of Pickering.
- Urbanised A64 road corridor.

Landform and Context

The Yorkshire *Wolds footslope* comprises a single, broadly linear strip of land that extends eastwards from Ganton eastwards to the boundary of Ryedale District A64 at Staxton. As suggested by its name, this area forms part of the north facing footslopes of the Yorkshire Wolds, which rise to form a prominent escarpment south of the A64. Underlain by chalk, the area comprises uniformly sloping terrain, which becomes increasingly gentle towards the Vale of Pickering as the thick glacio-lacustrine deposits of the Vale of Pickering appear around the 30-35m contour. South of the B1257, outside the study area, the land steepens, rising to a height of around 180m AOD.

The *Wolds footslope* occupies a small scale single and broadly linear area that extends eastwards from Ganton and the golf course, to include the villages of Willerby and Staxton. The eastern edge of the area is defined by the study area boundary at Spital Road. The shallowness of the predominantly chalky soils that characterise the Yorkshire Wolds and its footslopes contrast strongly with the deeper soils of the Vale of Pickering, which in much of the eastern Vale includes extensive peat deposits.

Land Use and Landscape Pattern

The landscape is generally rural in character and includes both pasture and arable farmland. Fields are generally of medium size and bounded by hedgerows, with few hedgerow trees. In places the field pattern becomes more linear with fields orientated parallel to the A64, although field enlargement and loss of hedgerows have largely diluted this pattern.

Settlement

Due to its small scale, settlements within the Wolds footslopes is limited to the village of Staxton/Willerby. This settlement follows the broad pattern seen elsewhere along the southern edge of the Vale of Pickering, in that it is linear in character, lies on a springline and, retains a strong character that is based on the use of traditional building materials and architectural styles.

Subjective Response

Though geographically small within the study area, as part of the Yorkshire Wolds, the Wolds footslopes form part of a much larger and more prominent landscape, which extends along much of the Vale of Pickering's southern edge. Like the Howardian Hills and the Fringe of the Moors to the west and north respectively, the Wolds serve to enclose and impart character to this part of the Vale. Although not formally recognised by a national designation, the Yorkshire Wolds are an attractive landscape and one that is highly sensitive to change. Whilst forming part of the Yorkshire Wolds, the Wolds footslope lacks some of its attractive rural character. The A64 corridor and its associated villages, in particular become increasingly urbanised in an easterly direction as it comes under the influence of Scarborough. Features such as street lamps, roadside cafes and lays-bys all serve to dilute the area's rural character.

Sensitivity to Change

Due to its relative elevation and visual prominence, much of the landscape of the Wolds footslope is visible from the lower lying Vale of Pickering, where it is seen against the backdrop of the Wolds escarpment.

It follows, therefore, that any development could potentially have a widespread impact.

Although small scale, relatively scattered changes to the landscape pattern could, and have been, absorbed, the cumulative effect of piecemeal changes can result in a degraded landscape, as exhibited by the A64 corridor, where the overall integrity of the visual structure has been lost.

In some parts of the area, pressure from intensive farming has led to field enlargement and the removal of hedgerows. This has resulted in the erosion of the hedgerow network and an overall loss of visual structure and cohesion.

Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Strategy

This is a predominantly rural landscape of sloping land nestling at the foot of the Yorkshire Wolds. The Wolds impart a considerable visual presence and serve to create a relatively enclosed, small scale landscape. Whilst the A64 corridor show evidence of urban influences this is predominantly a rural landscape, which has an attractive character due mainly to its juxtaposition against the Wolds than to any intrinsic landscape features. It is a visible landscape that forms part of an important recreational gateway to the East Coast and the North York Moors and should be enhanced.

Land Management

The visual structure of the landscape should be assessed from the low lying Vale of Pickering to ensure that the relationship between the Wolds footslope and the Wolds escarpment is well-balanced.

The current distribution of tree cover could be increased, particularly near villages.

A primary objective should be to avoid any further urbanisation of the landscape, particularly along the A64 corridor

Panoramic views out across the Vale towards the Fringe of the Moors to the north are a distinctive feature of this landscape, which should be considered when planning landscape change.



Source: Environment Agency

Staxton (GR 018793)

Area M

Wolds Footslopes



View from elevated parts of the Yorkshire Wolds escarpment onto the Vale of Pickering and the springline Wolds Footslopes villages.



The gentle gradient of the Wolds Footslope becomes flat at the Vale of Pickering.

Field Boundaries

New planting should be designed to strengthen the existing hedgerow network, defining the land and field boundaries in areas where it has been depleted, particularly around settlements, along lanes and the A64 corridor. Gaps should be replanted using locally occurring native species such as hawthorn, holly or hazel. In particular, any opportunities to reinstate the more elongated field pattern of fields orientated along slopes should be investigated.

Any suburbanised hedges that contain exotic species such as laurel or conifer should be replanted.

The number of hedgerow trees could be increased, particularly along the A64 corridor. New hedgerow tree planting should comprise locally occurring native species of ultimately statuesque proportions, such as oak and ash.

Trees and Woodlands

New woodland planting would both help to emphasise the southern boundary of the Vale and its relationship with the Wolds escarpment and to reduce the effects of suburbanisation. Any new planting of woodlands or shelterbelts should comprise tree and shrub species native to the area to produce a good woodland mix. New woodlands would be most beneficial in areas where they can be used to extend the existing woodland cover or where there are good hedgerows or scrub, which serve as wildlife corridors.

Settlements and Buildings

Any farm building where there is proposed redevelopment or restoration should be checked for roosting bats and nesting birds, in particular barn owl, swallow or house martin. Work should avoid the bird-breeding season and should seek to preserve any bat roost wherever possible.

Coalescence of settlements along the A64 corridor through further industrial or residential ribbon development should be resisted.

Infrastructure

Detailed landscape assessment should be considered to assess the scope for improving the A64 corridor.

Priorities for Action

- Undertake a landscape assessment to identify opportunities for enhancing the A64 corridor.
- Strengthen the existing hedgerow network through management and replanting.
- Undertake new woodland planting.

S e c t i o n 5
The Way Forward

